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Music and Intergroup Communication

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Summary and Keywords

Music is a powerful form of communication. Many of the functions of music are shared across cultural groups (e.g., its uses in ritual celebration, group coordination, coalition signaling, dance, and the like), and certain musical phenomena are universal (e.g., recognition of octaves, distinguishing music from noise). These universals mean that music has the capacity to bring groups together, offering a communication code that is simultaneously expressive and emotionally intense, while also lacking in traditional semantic meaning (and thus reducing the opportunities for miscommunication between groups). However, music often serves to divide groups, with forms of music signaling or constructing group memberships that are distinct from and in opposition to other groups. Music can even be used to incite intergroup division and hatred, particularly when music and lyrics are combined. As we explore the ways in which communication unites and divides humans, we must look at codes beyond traditional verbal and nonverbal communication. Music is one such code meriting more focused attention from intergroup communication scholars.

Keywords: music, intergroup communication, intergroup contact

Introduction

Music, it is commonly said, is a universal language. The implication of this statement is that music thus can transcend group boundaries and is a pathway towards (to quote Elvis Costello/Nick Lowe) “Peace, Love, and Understanding.” In contrast to this ideal, music can also emphasize and reinforce group memberships and differences. Sometimes, group differences in musical styles can make intergroup musical understanding difficult. At times, music is also used to incite intergroup hostilities and foment hatred.

The fact that music is tied to group memberships is clear. As will be discussed more below, styles of music are tied to (indeed are often integral parts of) cultural and national groups. These associations can lead to stereotypes that members of certain groups are better at playing certain types of music: White people can’t play jazz, Canadians can’t play salsa, and only the Welsh can do a male voice choir properly (Vanweelden & McGee, 2007). Such perceptions are presumably grounded in ideas of authenticity and the difficulties in coming to terms with “another group’s” music. These stereotypes extend to gender groups in ways less tied to musical authenticity and more directly derivable from gender stereotypes (e.g., beliefs that men play heavy metal and specialize in drums and electric guitars, while women play classical music, especially on the flute). This chapter examines the ways in which we can consider music a form of communication, the degree to which music is legitimately a universal language, and the potential for contact involving music to ameliorate intergroup tensions.

Music as Communication

Space precludes a detailed discussion of the ways in which music can be usefully considered as a form of communication (see Harwood, 2015, for such a discussion), but a brief justification is warranted. This initial discussion addresses music absent its lyrical content; clearly at times music interacts with verbal content (in song, for instance), and that verbal content is obviously communicative in the sense that communication scholars are comfortable with.

Music differs from verbal communication in its ability to express precise semantic meaning. It *can* express some limited concrete ideas: Koelsch et al. (2004) demonstrate that specific musical sounds prime semantic meaning in the brain in a similar manner to verbal communication. Nonetheless, the ability of music to express semantic meaning is clearly very limited. Music's constrained referential force may actually be communicatively *functional* in certain ways. Music has what Cross and Morley (2009) call *floating intentionality*: its precise meaning is open to interpretation. Compared to verbal language, there is increased ability for two people to hear "what they want to hear" in music. Hence, the potential for *disagreement* over the content of music is considerably reduced relative to the potential for disagreement over the content of words. This comes to be important in understanding how music might transcend group differences and provide a point of (apparently) shared understanding between groups. This idea connects to concepts such as "strategic ambiguity" in the communication literature, wherein people are intentionally vague so as to maintain harmony (Eisenberg, 2006)—indeed, Eisenberg's work suggests that one function of ambiguity is the preservation of "unified diversity." Interestingly, in music it is possible to experience "shared intentionality" (listening to or playing the same piece cooperatively) while simultaneously having very different specific individual experiences of the music or interpretations of its meaning ("floating intentionality").

Music is also communicative in the sense that it communicates *about* itself—each moment in a musical composition sends signals about the next moment. It is a dynamic and temporally organized auditory stimulus, and as such resembles spoken communication in substantial ways (Huron, 2006). Of course, simplistic assumptions that music and spoken language are somehow the same type of thing need to be queried, and such queries often yield answers suggesting that they are actually quite different types of thing (Patel, 2008)! Nonetheless, they share a temporal organization, an acoustic medium, and certain specific forms (e.g., solo vs. group). They may also share an interesting evolutionary origin (Hagen & Hammerstein, 2009). Music sends strong messages about emotion (Egermann, Fernando, Chuen, & McAdams, 2015), and about physical movement (Leman et al., 2013): music "moves" us in every sense of that term. Such effects suggest that music *communicates* to us in meaningful ways. The focus of this chapter is not to make an extended argument for music as a legitimate topic of discussion for communication scholars, but it is hoped that this short discussion provides at least a shorthand sense of what it means to approach music as a form of communication.

A Universal Language?

To what extent is music truly a universal language? A number of features of music do indeed appear to be universal (Higgins, 2012). All cultures recognize octaves, all cultures distinguish something called "music" from other forms of "noise," and all cultures associate music with movement such as dance (indeed, in some cultures music and dance are called by the same term: Waterman, 1991). All cultures use some form of musical scale (a series of tones across the octave) around which melodies are organized, and those scales share certain features (e.g., uneven spaces between tones and a range of 5–9 tones in a scale). Melodies also share characteristics across cultures, such as small movements between pitches being more common than large musical jumps. On a more experiential level, we are fairly good at decoding the basic emotional signals sent by music, even when it is from a radically different culture (Egermann et al., 2015). At the social level, music is universally more commonly performed in groups than individually, and by men, indicating some cross-cultural similarities in the social organization and performance of musical activity (Savage, Brown, Sakai, & Currie, 2015).

However, these commonalities do not, of course, render all music fully interculturally accessible. The precise nature of scales, rhythmic patterns, musical organization, instrumentation, and virtuosity all differ tremendously across cultures, and mean that Tuvan throat singing, for example, is fairly difficult to understand and appreciate for an average non-Tuvan listener. Patel (2008) notes that music from other cultures can be appreciated on the level of "sonic goulash"—the sonic

experience of hearing something entirely unfamiliar can be enjoyable, even if we have very little idea of what is “going on.” Some forms of “foreign” music can also be understood by imposing our own musical schemas on them. As a Westerner, it is possible for me to “count” out a beat to Indonesian gamelan (1, 2, 3, 4), but it is quite likely that the beat I am counting is not the same as the beat around which the original musicians organized their production. Hence the “punctuation” of the music—the sense of where musical phrases begin and end, for instance—might be very different between a native and non-native listener. It is possible through extended listening and study to become literate in other cultures’ music(s), but this is not a simple process. We are all very literate in our own culture’s music (implicitly, if not explicitly: Serafine, 1988) and can be resistant to thinking of music differently (Higgins, 2012). Indeed, unfamiliar sonic stimuli may be sufficiently disturbing to our sense of normalcy that they trigger intergroup discrimination as an attempt to restore a sense of social order (Maher, van Tilburg, & van den Tol, 2013).

Music as Group Signal

This section outlines the ways music signals group memberships, and at times group antagonisms, building from “low-level” acoustic features, through traditional musical factors, to lyrical content and the social context of music making and music listening.

Timbre

The timbres we hear in music correspond to the different “sounds”—the difference between a flute and a guitar playing the same musical note at the same volume is timbre. Timbre can be analyzed such that key differences in timbre can be described in terms of acoustic characteristics such as envelope and harmonics; informally, timbre is often characterized in terms of the “texture” of the sound, with a bassoon, say, being heard as “warmer” or more “woody” than a banjo. Human singing voices also differ in terms of timbre: Tom Waits has a “rougher” sound to his voice than Frank Sinatra.

Timbre is important in intergroup understandings of music for a few reasons. First, timbre provides the most immediate clues as to instrumentation, and instrumentation of music is a group cue—particularly in terms of geographic region. For many people, a mizmar signals North Africa, a slide guitar signals the American South, and panpipes signal the Andes. For those scanning the radio dial in the US Southwest, the timbre of the accordion can immediately signal a station playing “Mexican music.” Second, timbre signals musical genre. Musical genres or styles are themselves meaningful categories: we identify as fans (or players) of particular styles and as less fond of others. We recognize the style or genre of music incredibly quickly—often in less than a second (Gjerdingen & Perrott, 2008), and hence it is clearly conveyed by the timbre of the sound we are hearing rather than by core musical properties such as key or meter. That accordion on the radio doesn’t merely signal Mexican music, but specifically signals Norteño/Tejano music, a categorization that can be made well before the melody or rhythm of the piece become apparent (see also the next section for more on genre). Third, timbre plays a role in eliciting emotional responses to music. Heavy levels of distortion (nonlinearities) trigger negative emotions such as fear or aggression; interestingly, musical distortions are similar to the timbral qualities of animal distress calls (Bryant, 2013). Softer, less distorted tones indicate more calming emotional qualities. Emotional responses to music are of course critical to our understanding of what the music is trying to convey. Emotional responses are important in an intergroup sense due to their connections to feelings of threat or safety. Outgroup music featuring threatening timbres (distortion) is likely to engender negative emotional responses (such as the fear and aggression mentioned earlier) and reinforce intergroup antagonism.

Finally, the human voice itself is a unique timbre. One plausible explanation for the popularity of vocal music over instrumental music is simply the timbre of the human voice. The voice is a reminder of the human origin of music, and hearing vocals suggests a human connection in the music—controlling for other features it is reasonable to predict that vocal music might be associated with heightened feelings of human connection and superordinate identification (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) than instrumental music. In other words, while instrumental music may often trigger a specific group membership, the timbre of the human voice might trigger a higher-level species identification, albeit the language and content of the lyrics might trigger competing identities, as outlined later.

Genre/Style

In addition to these acoustic issues, musical features such as melodic and harmonic development as well as rhythm and meter also indicate group membership—particularly insofar as those features characterize particular group-connected genres or styles of music. Samba triggers Brazil, rap suggests African-American, and township jive triggers thoughts of South Africa. Hence, national, regional, or ethnic identities have “their own” musics, and hearing those musics will trigger the category for in- and outgroup members. Certain musical styles also engender their own group memberships, independent of national, ethnic, or other outside group memberships. Styles such as punk, ska, or electronic dance music (EDM) have developed their own ingroup cultures involving fashion, dance, political ideology, and styles of verbal communication (Laing, 2015; St John, 2006). In such cases, the musical style *becomes* the group membership. In these cases as well, features of instrumentation, rhythmic patterns, harmonic structures, and the like serve to define the boundaries of the musical style itself, and hence whether this is “our” music or “your” music.

Inferences about Musical Participants

Music is understood as an “honest signal” (to use a term popular among ethologists and ethnomusicologists: Cross, 2009; Darwin, 1872/1998). Honest signals are those that convey accurate meaning to a receiver. So, for instance, the volume of a particular musical performance (pre-amplification) might indicate the number of people involved in the production of it. In tribal human groups, such a performance would be an honest signal of group size, and hence an honest warning of the likely resistance with which any attack would be met. A particular form of honest signaling is the coalition signaling function of music. The quality of a musical performance (its coordination and complexity) serves as an honest signal of group resources, history, and collective organization. A group that has the time, energy, resources, and technical skills to produce a high-quality musical performance is a group that is likely to be a powerful adversary in any conflict. A group that has the history together to have developed its own forms of musical performance is a group that is unlikely to be easily broken apart. A group that performs music in a coordinated manner is likely to be able to coordinate other activities.

Hence, musical performance can serve a powerful signal of coalition strength and organization. Indeed, some theorists suggest that this signaling function may explain the earliest emergence of human musical activity (Hagen & Bryant, 2003). Evidence exists for the coalition signaling function of musical messages in non-human species; some bird species, for instance, produce more coordinated duets with their mating partners as they spend more time as a pair, and the coordination of musical duets influences whether other birds engage in territorial invasions (Hagen & Hammerstein, 2009; Hall & Magrath, 2007). The production of music in any form may also lead to inferences of a group’s *humanity*. We all understand and appreciate music as a cultural product, and as a form of emotional expression. As such, witnessing an outgroup performing music sends the message that the group is human in meaningful ways—they are not without culture, and they are not incapable of emotional experience (Haslam, 2006).

These inferences about musical participants extend to situations involving listeners to music. As described by Bryant (2013), shared musical taste is often used as a signal of social affiliation, and to the extent that one invests time, energy, and resources into the musical interest, it serves as an honest signal of the social affiliation (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Giles, Denes, Hamilton, & Hajda, 2009). Being a “good” punk involves not merely saying you’re a punk: it involves spending money on music, attending concerts and festivals, engaging in the time and effort to get the look right, and so on. It is unlikely that someone would engage in that effort without a sincere involvement in the collective activities and aims of the group (Knobloch, Vorderer, & Zillmann, 2000; Mark, 1998).

Visuals

The ability to see musical artists performing yields a different experience from merely hearing them via a recording medium (such as an MP3 file). At its most extreme, the opportunity to see an artist perform can literally change specific elements of what we hear in the music—someone *appearing* to hit an instrument harder may be *heard* as playing louder (Schutz & Lipscomb, 2007). From an intergroup perspective, video information provides visual cues to performers’

group membership, both in terms of the appearance of the performers themselves (skin color cues to ethnicity, hair color cues to age, etc.), and contextual information (identifiable national settings might lead to inferences about performer nationality, visual aspects of presentation might lead to categorization of the style of the music). At times, this visual information interacts with the group-based stereotypes described earlier. A jazz performance might be downgraded in perceived quality when it is visually clear that the performers are all white; a reggae performance might be perceived as higher-quality when visuals confirm that it is performed by people with dreadlocks wearing rastacaps. Likewise, visuals will provide information about group composition: as expanded below, musical groups featuring people from different social groups might be an important source of modeling of effective intergroup contact. Visuals accompanying music might also play a role in reinforcing stereotypes of groups: Dixon, Zhang, and Conrad (2009) discuss the ways in which music video affects perceptions of African-Americans, for instance.

Lyrics

Music with lyrics provides new routes to cue group memberships and intergroup processes. At the most straightforward level, lyrics imply language, and hence once performers use lyrics they can relatively quickly be categorized into language groups. Language groups might trigger immediate in-/outgroup categorization, as well as suggesting stereotypes of the relevant language group (e.g., a song in French might be perceived as more romantic than one in German due to our stereotypes of those national groups). Accent can also trigger group categorizations: Belle and Sebastian's Scottish origins and Lucinda Williams' roots in the American South are both clear from their accents when singing. In other cases, accent can be deceptive as when British rock singers drift into American accents, presumably accommodating towards the cultural origins of rock and roll.

Beyond these cues, lyrics clearly convey semantic meaning (at least when they are comprehensible, and/or read from lyric sheets). Hence, the full array of social influences and group-related consequences of language use are apparent in music with lyrics. Music can explicitly express intergroup hatred, as is the case with the songs of Simon Bikindi, for instance, whose work was credited with inciting Hutu attacks on Tutsis during the early 1990s conflict in Rwanda (Snyder, 2007). Music can also express sentiments of intergroup love and harmony, sentiments that can enhance such ideas and thoughts in listeners (Greitemeyer, 2011). The influence of language on intergroup conflict and harmony is described in detail elsewhere in this encyclopedia. Here, there is space only to discuss the ways in which adding music to lyrics changes the impact of the lyrics.

Lyrics accompanied by music can gain power due to the repetition with which music is consumed—we tolerate musical repetition to a much larger degree than we tolerate repetition in other domains (Margulis, 2014). Hence, a verbal message is likely to be consumed more frequently if it is paired with music. An extreme form of this comes in the shape of intrusive cognitive repetitions of verbal phrases, which typically tend to be song fragments: “earworms” (Liikkanen, 2012; Williamson et al., 2012). I am unaware of any research examining the effects of group-related earworms, but one can imagine that a racist message with the right “hook” might become a particularly pernicious form of intrusive cognition. Song also encourages the active production of lyrics—we sing along. Hence, unlike spoken or written verbal messages, song lyrics are actively repeated by the listener. Indeed, they may even be repeated at times when all we hear is the melody—the melody of a familiar song is sufficient to trigger its verbal content (Peynircioğlu, Rabinovitz, & Thompson, 2008). Song lyrics also have emotional meaning associated with them that is enhanced and complemented by the music; hence a given verbal message may be experienced as more emotionally powerful due to its musical context than it would be if the music was lacking (consider “Someone left a cake out in the rain,” for example). Hence, messages of intergroup hatred or harmony may gain emotional resonance when sung rather than spoken.

Intergroup Contact and Music

Intergroup contact occurs when someone encounters an outgroup member. As elaborated in Allport's (1954) classic analysis, and confirmed through subsequent decades of research (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), intergroup contact is an effective way of improving intergroup attitudes. Encountering outgroup members offers the opportunity of disconfirming

stereotypes, reducing intergroup anxiety, and developing meaningful interpersonal relationships across groups, which can reduce the potency of group boundaries. Of course, it is important that the contact is positive—negative intergroup contact does nothing to help intergroup attitudes, and may damage them (Allport, 1954). Music offers an interesting venue to explore issues of intergroup contact, for reasons elaborated in the following subsections. Broadly, these sections address forms of contact in music that vary by who is playing, who is listening, and the degree to which the music itself (or the people playing the music) *represents* the relevant groups.

Contact with Music

One experience that music offers is exposure to a cultural artifact *independent* of the people who produced it. I can listen to a CD and make inferences about the people who produced the music on it, without any actual knowledge of those people as unique individuals. Much Western exposure to other cultures' musics occurs this way: listening to recordings of artists who are not local and who are invisible (barring perhaps artwork accompanying the media). Many popular "world music" albums are compilations of work by multiple artists (e.g., the popular Putamayo recordings largely take this form), which makes the sense of actually connecting with a specific outgroup member even more distant. Nonetheless, contact with the outgroup member's cultural product should yield some effects similar to those occurring with direct contact. Assuming that the music listening experience is enjoyable, exposure to outgroup music should provide a sense that the outgroup can provide enjoyment. There is also a "humanizing" element to hearing outgroup music—it demonstrates that "they" have culture and experience the world in ways that are at least in some form parallel to our own. This humanizing character plausibly overcomes the potentially *dehumanizing* aspects of intergroup relations. Music's effects can be strengthened if the outgroup is playing identifiably "outgroup music" (e.g., Brazilians playing identifiably Brazilian music). Such musical contact should retain relatively high levels of *group salience*. That is, while the music is playing it would be relatively difficult to "forget" that the musicians are members of another group, and hence their group membership remains a salient part of the listening experience.

Group salience during contact is important for contact to generalize beyond the specific outgroup individuals involved (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). When outgroup members' group memberships are salient we will extrapolate from their personal characteristics to other members of the group ("Whoever made this music was a cultured and skilled Tunisian, I bet other Tunisians have similar characteristics!"). When group memberships are not salient, the outgroup member might be viewed as having positive characteristics, but those characteristics are less likely to be connected, and hence generalized, to the group. If Tunisians are playing mainstream rock and roll, it is easy to forget that they are Tunisian. Group-specific music provides a strong and salient reminder of group membership, and one that persists over time—at least for as long as the music is playing. Rodríguez-Bailón, Ruiz, and Moya (2009) demonstrate that contact with outgroup music is associated with more positive intergroup attitudes, and Neto, da Conceição Pinto, and Mullet (2016) demonstrate that such effects can be quite long-lasting. Despite this promise, researchers should also remain cautious about assuming positive effects from mere exposure to outgroup music. As discussed earlier, some outgroup music is difficult to understand, and hence might have similar effects to negative interpersonal contact. There is also some risk in exoticizing or fetishizing the "other" and if music is to be used as part of an intervention to increase tolerance, strategies need to be used to avoid such responses (White, 2012).

Contact with Musicians

If outgroup members' music is experienced in a richer form than simply an audio recording (e.g., via live performance, or video), then the abstract experience of the music is complemented by more immediate and personal contact with the musicians. The outgroup members are directly observed playing the music. This provides a form of contact similar to parasocial mediated contact—the outgroup is experienced directly, albeit in a one-way, non-interactive manner. In addition to the general humanizing effects of music, this type of musical contact has additional benefits. Listening to music with other people is associated with empathic responses: when we jointly experience music together we experience the passing of time in a shared manner. We also project our own emotional responses onto those who are with us—in the case of observing musicians play, we see their specific responses to the music in the form of nonverbal behaviors, and our own responses to the music are shaped by the musicians' responses. Again this encourages a sense that we are jointly

experiencing the event. Given music's inherently emotional content, feelings of shared emotional experiences are hence common when we co-experience music, and hence empathy emerges (Rabinowitch, Cross, & Burnard, 2013).

Music also has complex temporal and rhythmic patterns, and its temporal form enhances a sense of "spending time" (indeed *experiencing* time itself) jointly with another individual (Overy & Molnar-Szakacs, 2009). Most musical settings encourage movement to the music, movement that will be coordinated with the musicians. Coordinating movement with another human being is associated with liking and cooperation (Hove & Risen, 2009; Wiltermuth, 2012). Simply moving in a synchronized manner with someone else makes us like them and cooperate with them more, and in some research has been shown to lead to having a sense of an "overlapping self" with the other person (Paladino, Mazzurega, Pavani, & Schubert, 2010). Thus, listening to outgroup music in a live setting may lead to a greater sense of overlap between ingroup and outgroup and an integration of an outgroup member into one's sense of self.

Vicarious Contact with Musicians

In some circumstances, it is not merely outgroup members who are observed playing music, but rather a collaboration between members of the ingroup and the outgroup—contact that could be described as "vicarious" in nature. That is, the observer doesn't merely experience the outgroup, but also observes *contact between* the ingroup and the outgroup. Vicarious contact is particularly powerful because the observed contact can serve as a model for how the self could also engage with the outgroup. This can be particularly powerful in the musical context for reasons that are easily extrapolated from factors already discussed. The in- and outgroup are observed engaged in joint emotion, and hence the personal experience of empathy is complemented by a model of shared emotional behavior among the musicians. Musical behavior also involves a very high degree of temporal synchronization: the in- and outgroup performers are engaged in joint behavior that is highly and tightly synchronized in time. Observing such high levels of synchronization (i.e., by watching or listening to a musical performance featuring in- and outgroup members) deepens a message that in- and outgroup can coordinate effectively with one another and have close relationships (Lakens & Stel, 2011).

As described earlier, music serves powerful coalition signaling and honest signaling functions; as such, vicarious musical contact has clear potential to demonstrate that in- and outgroup musicians have formed a shared group, one that is highly organized and has a history together (these points are elaborated in Harwood, Qadar, & Chen, 2016). This suggests an interesting categorization process that might occur when intergroup musical contact is observed: the musicians' cultural (etc.) group memberships might be seen as less important than, or transcended by, alternate categories that are either (i) local but common to the two individuals (e.g., they are all members of that particular band: Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), or (ii) cut across the original categorizations (e.g., they are all "musicians": Brewer, 2000), or (iii) building from the notion that music is a universal language, perhaps superordinate identities such as "human" (Turner et al., 1987). Finally, and in addition to modeling effective intergroup behavior, at least some intergroup musical collaborations also model the value of diversity in human experience. Some forms of music exist only because of cross-fertilization between musical styles, and often because of contact between musicians from different (group-based) origins—typically cultural or subcultural groups (e.g., Ska, Cajun, Norteño). Similarly, some specific musical "events" could not exist without visible collaboration between people from different groups (e.g., "Graceland," the Buena Vista Social Club, Charlie Haden's Liberation Music Orchestra). In all cases, the collaboration across social groups yields a product that explicitly advertises its own diversity and the benefits of the intergroup contact.

Direct Contact within Music

It is not unusual for members of different social groups to *play* music together. In the *doing* of music, the issues discussed earlier are magnified. The synchronization is not merely observed; it is directly experienced. The empathy is amplified in the coordinated emotional expression necessary for an effective performance. The "honest" signaling of music is experienced more directly when one is personally participating in creating it. Additional musical factors enhance these effects. For example, performing music together involves a considerable level of mutual gaze: you can't play effectively together if you don't look at each other (Kawase, 2014). Mutual gaze is (probably coincidentally) also associated with interpersonal attraction, and hence joint music making will involve behaviors likely to enhance interpersonal attraction

between the musicians. Musicians playing together presumably also share taste in music (at a minimum, hopefully the music they are playing!)—a factor associated with interpersonal attraction (Boer et al., 2011). Musicians also move together, and their physical coordination is associated with empathy and liking (Wiltermuth, 2012). Such ideas have contributed to explicit interventions to use intergroup musical activity to reduce intergroup hostility (e.g., Daniel Barenboim’s Jewish–Palestinian West Eastern Divan Orchestra, Found Sound Nation’s “OneBeat” project). There are limited data on the effectiveness of these programs, however Kuchenbrandt, van Dick, Koschate, Ullrich, and Bornewasser (2014) show promising effects in the German–Polish context among members of a youth music program. As a means to reduce hostility in a widespread manner, these interventions are, of course, somewhat labor-intensive and often only accessible to people with some degree of musical skill.

Certain of the phenomena involved in actively playing together also apply to shared *listening* experiences with members of outgroups. In such a scenario, one is often engaged in coordinated physical activities (e.g., dancing) with outgroup members and may be inferring a shared emotional experience as a result of experiencing the same musical stimulus. In some cases, shared listening experiences offer profound emotional connections to other individuals—in particular festival experiences offer transcendent emotional responses in some individuals (Lamont, 2011). Other aspects such as the mutual gaze necessary for performance are less salient in joint listening experiences, and apply primarily to musicians rather than listeners.

Discussion and Future Directions

To play and listen to music is to engage in a profound human *social* activity. Musical activity—even solitary listening—involves an engagement with others. Schütz (1951) notes that the musical listener is, in a sense, entering into the performer’s (and/or composer’s) “stream of consciousness” during listening. As such, we can connect even to long-dead performers or composers for the period during which we experience their music. Schütz draws particular attention to the dynamics of time and to the fact that the *joint temporal experience* precipitated by music offers unique channels for human connection. When listening we are “living together through the same flux, are growing old together while the musical process lasts” (p. 93). Schütz emphasizes the manner in which sharing music with another person represents the kind of joint and shared experience that is at the heart of human communication: the ability to know another person and have a sense of what they are feeling. To the extent that Schütz is correct about the interpersonal experience of music making, we should be optimistic about the potential of music to help us achieve intergroup tolerance and appreciation.

However, social identities are strong influences on our behavior (Turner et al., 1987). As with any other form of communication, humans have strong instincts to use music to signal intergroup differences and distinctiveness and to support ingroup identities and intergroup antagonisms (Baker, 2013). At their worst, these instincts are apparent in explicit incitements to genocide in the songs of Simon Bikindi, or the explicit racism of “White power” bands such as Skrewdriver (Corte & Edwards, 2008). It is the lyrics in such music that convey the core message, but as described earlier, the music is critical to the repeated exposure to such messages.

The interpersonal connections forged by music, and its potential for intergroup divisiveness may appear diametrically opposed. However, they both speak to music’s ability to connect us with others; sometimes those connections are benign, and sometimes they are bonds that facilitate hatred of others. Music serves intragroup solidarity functions, whether or not that solidarity is related to intergroup tensions or conflicts. Music has a profound cultural connection with ritual, for instance. We learn the value of ritual through music (Eckerdal & Merker, 2009), and the central rituals in our individual and collective lives are almost always accompanied by music; literally from cradle to grave (de Vera, 2011). Even as soccer fans’ chants antagonize the outgroup, they build solidarity among the ingroup (Armstrong & Young, 1999).

Given these diametrically opposing possibilities for music in intergroup relations, further research is needed to distinguish when, where, how, and why music serves intergroup harmony or discord. *First*, music and intergroup communication research needs to carefully distinguish the role of music from the effects of lyrics and video. Much music we consume comes accompanied by words and visuals. If we want to understand potentially harmful or beneficial effects

of music, we need to be clear on whether we are examining music itself, or a more complex message that integrates music with other things. In particular, research on music video sometimes discusses the effects of “music” while actually largely uncovering effects of images that have been paired with the music (see Lennings & Warburton [2011] for a rare attempt at disentangling music, lyrics, and video, one which suggests that in some contexts at least it is lyrics that are most powerful). *Second*, once we understand the potential independent effects of these different stimuli, we must understand their interdependence. This chapter has already addressed how music encourages repeated consumption and articulation of lyrics. We need to know more about other interdependencies—for example, whether simply hearing music (without words) activates known lyrics and the sentiments that go along with them, or the extent to which music encourages “uncritical acceptance” of lyrics. *Third*, we need to understand more about how group memberships defined by music interrelate with group memberships outside of music. Are national boundaries overcome when an outgroup member is interested in the national music (e.g., a non-Brazilian who loves samba), or is the nonnational viewed as a threat to ingroup integrity or distinctiveness? We should also explore the musical specifics of songs designed to achieve intergroup antagonism. Among European football (soccer) fans, songs targeting the other team’s fans are a fundamental part of game-day culture. The songs use a fairly restricted vocabulary of melodies, many from popular songs and nursery rhymes. The use of well-known melodies is clearly understandable, but it is unclear whether certain tunes are chosen for specific musical characteristics (e.g., a taunting tone in singing to grown adults using a nursery rhyme). Further examination of the emergence of such cultural patterns is warranted.

Further Reading

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