

EMOTIONAL SOUNDTRACK: INFLUENCE OF MUSIC COMPOSERS ON AUDIENCE EMOTION

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Abstract

Music has the unrivalled ability to elicit emotions and change human experiences. This study explores the complex interaction between music composition, attendance behaviour, and mood during musical events. Music's significant effect on human emotions has been the focus of much study and intrigue. Music composers use the emotional power of music to elicit profound reactions from their audiences. In the context of soundtracks, this study explores the complex link between music creators and listeners' emotions. This study investigates the methods, plans, and underlying psychological processes that composers use to affect the emotional states of their audience by carefully examining previous research and studies on music, emotion, and soundtracks. The study's methodology is based on an extensive literature assessment, empirical investigations, and theoretical frameworks exploring the mutual relationship between music and emotion. It examines how different musical components, including instrumentation, rhythm, melody, and harmony, can influence listeners' emotions over time. Furthermore, the study explores how the musical element interacts with contextual factors in cinematic narratives and visual cues to enhance emotional engagement. The study's findings demonstrate how emotions and music interact with soundtracks. Composers utilize various strategies to alter and shape the listener's emotions to fit music to the intended emotional arc of the lyrics, pitch, storyline, and melodies. This study synthesizes the plethora of data and ideas from studies on music, emotion, and soundtrack to further the understanding of the complicated relationship between music and emotion. It also highlights the artistic and mental prowess of composers who employ music as a powerful instrument to evoke intense emotional reactions in their listeners. By shedding further light on the impact composers have on the emotional landscape of music and the cinematic experience, this study contributes to the ongoing discussion regarding the art and science of music composition and how it impacts audience emotion.

Keywords: Emotional Soundtrack, Emotion, Influence, Music, Composer, Audience.

Introduction

Since music encapsulates emotions, there's no need to spend money on psychotherapy when you can listen to the B Minor Mass instead. These are quotes from Michael Torke and Leo Tolstoy that Hunter Schellenberg (2010, 129) cites to illustrate popular perspectives on music. Music influences listeners' emotions and conveys them. Few academics contest the idea that music listeners can identify emotions. Conversely, some contend that music fails to evoke genuine feelings in the listener (Kivy, 2001). For example, in 1956, Meyer claimed that affective reactions to music are tension-and-relaxation experiences (rather than genuine emotions) when listeners' expectations of what would happen next in a piece of music are met or unmet. This view has been called into question by recent research (Krumhansl, 1997; Gagnon & Peretz, 2003; Mitterschiffthaler et al., 2007; Witvliet & Vrana, 2007), which demonstrates that listeners react effectively to music. Neurological, physiological, and behavioral measurements were used in these investigations. Researchers keep the

conversation going (Konečni, 2008) for the wheel of research rolling. Though it is agreed that listeners react emotionally to music, there is disagreement on the nature of the reactions. Many musical elements can predict emotion in a piece of music, but emotion is also a (subjective) outcome of the listener's associations with the work. Research indicates that individuals possess a high level of proficiency in discerning the emotions sent and portrayed through music (Juslin & Laukka, 2004; Lindström et al., 2002). Numerous research has shown that basic emotions like fear, sadness, and happiness can be evoked by music (Västfjäll, 2002; Fritz et al., 2009; Egermann et al., 2015). According to studies (Schäfer et al., 2013; Shiffriss et al., 2015; Reybrouck and Eerola, 2017), emotional reactions are one of the main reasons people listen to music.

Emotional Soundtrack

Emotional soundtrack refers to the music or musical elements used in various forms of media, including television programs, motion pictures, video games, and ads

to evoke and enhance emotional responses in the audience. Music composers can influence listeners' feelings, body reactions, and perceptions of a song through soundtrack design. Music can convey feelings and meaning on its own and may also work well in a cinematic setting. This ability of music makes it an essential tool for influencing an audience's emotional reaction and helping with psychological transit (d'Artenay 2019, 3).

In the context of this topic, it signifies that the music being discussed is not just for entertainment but plays a crucial role in setting emotional tones. This type of music is carefully composed or selected to match the mood or tone of a particular scene or moment, intensifying the viewer's or listener's emotional experience. For example, a sad scene in a movie may feature a melancholic soundtrack to amplify the audience's sorrow. At the same time, an energetic and intense musical score might accompany an action sequence to heighten excitement and tension. The term "emotional soundtrack" underscores music's significant role in conveying and enhancing emotions within various forms of visual and auditory storytelling.

Music and Film Soundtrack

The accompanying cinema soundtrack often fills in the blanks on the story's direction when the visuals are insufficiently clear. Leitmotifs and reoccurring themes from the movie that the viewers are already familiar with can accomplish this (d'Artenay 2019, 14). Researchers like Millet Barbara, Chattah Juan, and Ahn Soyen (2021) combined various methodologies to investigate how music affects film regarding visual attention, emotional response, attitudes toward film objects, and narrative construction. They found that music and film have a relationship in evoking distinct emotions in their participants. According to Costabile and Terman's research, a movie's musical score can disclose more about the story than the actual visual scene. The researchers discovered that when the visual scene remained unchanged, and the music was altered, ratings of the scene on other dimensions (such as beauty, intrigue, or tension) differed significantly. This effect was not repeated when the soundtrack was kept unchanged, and the visual scene changed. (Terman & Costabile 2013, 322).

There are TV series and movies that take inspiration from the idea of a soundtrack.

Agbara Nla, *Esin Ajeji*, and *The Beginning of the End* films are just a few of the *Yoruba* classic 90s films in Western Nigeria that primarily rely on popular music before and at the time of their release. In addition to being used for marketing and promotion, many of these movies have a single soundtrack that perfectly captures the mood and style of the whole picture. The soundtrack of the movie is what viewers typically associate with it. These soundtracks capitalise on the idea that "music excels at two specific things in particular: (a) adding emotional depth and (b) influencing and structuring time." Music can directly express the underlying or suggested emotions of a scene, "encouraging us to read" the image or scene in a specific way" (Buhler 17).

Film composers aim to influence the audience's emotions and visual attention with music, according to Millet Barbara, Chattah Juan, and Ahn Soyeon (2021), who applied the idea that music can evoke strong emotions in viewers. Music provided emotional content and sped up viewers' initial fixations on movie items, which improved their opinion of the movie's plot. Because they are used to draw attention to

the emotional undertones and overtones depicted on film, soundtracks and original scores serve essentially the same purpose. However, because soundtracks frequently include lyrical material, they can surpass what original scores can (Buhler 2010, 358–362). Undoubtedly, instrumental music combined with visuals can convey meaning; however, when lyrics are included, the emotional content can be interpreted in a deeper and more nuanced way.

Emotion Conceptualized

Emotion is a quick but intense affective reaction, which refers to a variety of more or less synchronized subcomponents, including subjective feeling, physiological arousal, expression, action propensity, and regulation. Emotions (such as happiness and sadness) are object-specific and can persist for several minutes to hours (Cupido 2022, 9). According to Juslin and Sloboda (2010), emotions are a collection of experiences, activities, and physiological responses that coexist throughout daily life and are therefore considered a scientific construct. The most widely acknowledged perspective on emotion outside of the music literature is appraisal theory (Smith et al.,

1993). It claims that a target's cognitive evaluations lead to feelings. For example, learning about a friend's demise may be upsetting because it seems like something that happened against one's wishes and beyond one's control (Hunter, 2010, 131).

Basic Emotion Theory

Five emotions can be used to generate other feelings based on the theory—happiness, anger, sadness, fear, and disgust (Sloboda and Juslin 2010,77). Numerous studies agree that listeners can experience and be induced to feel basic emotions through music (Winner 2019, 42). The primary critique of "basic emotion theory" is its inability to account for the vast array of feelings that individuals may encounter or discern while taking in musical compositions. Theorists contend, however, that people's "conscious cognitive appraisals" of various emotions as well as the characteristics and traits of these emotions may lead to the emergence of multiple additional complex emotions (Juslin & Sloboda 2010:77).

The artists differentiated during the creation process between perceived emotions, which are cognitive knowledge of the emotions they thought the art songs to represent, and

awakened emotions, which are emotions the music evoked in the artists while they were listening to the art songs (Cupido 2022, 12). The referential goal of the composer is reflected in the musical composition. The referential meaning is reflected in the text of the art songs that were written. It is not always the case that the composer's felt emotions are reflected in this piece. Music composers without lyrics do not always write with any allusion in mind. In cases where the composer is not trying to express meaning, the listener can nonetheless be emotionally induced or perceive emotion in the music. Juslin and Västfjäll (2008) claim that musicians may emotionally charge the brain stem when they perform cognitive evaluations of the structural components of the song.

Perceived Emotion

The feelings identified in the music are known as perceived emotional expressions. Perceived emotion is defined as intellectual processing, such as the perception of an intended or stated feeling, according to Kreutz et al. (2007, 102). The emotion heard in the music is perceived emotion, sometimes referred to as expressed emotion (Gabrielsson 2002, 123). According to Kreutz et al. (2007, 104), perceived emotion

is cognitive processing, such as recognizing an intended or expressed feeling.

Felt Emotions

Felt emotion, or induced emotion, is the term used to describe common emotions that listeners experience independently. People's responses to the music they hear cause it (Xuan, <https://www.academia.edu>). Different musical genres elicit different responses from listeners. Numerous negative emotions, such as shame, disgust, fear, and rage, are reportedly commonly experienced in everyday life yet are not elicited by music. Positive emotions are felt feelings where the music affects the listener more profoundly than everyday life. Emotional self-regulation is frequently linked to psychophysiological alterations, reflected introspectively as induced emotions. (Faith and Thayer (2001); Khalfa et al. (2002).

Music and Emotion

Musicians may communicate with a wide range of listeners and express themselves through music. Specific musical selections can significantly impact how an artist's message resonates with an audience. Indeed, music has always been utilized to foster relationships between groups and convey

various concepts and feelings (Hays, 2005; Wilson, 2013).

Since sound constitutes a component of firstness, emotional interpretants will always predominate over logical interpretants in most circumstances, mainly when non-specialist listeners are involved (Martinez 1996, 59). This does not ensure a strong emotional reaction, but it suggests that the emotional interpretant will be dominant. Martinez (2001) and Cumming (2000) contend that while most semiotic analyses are unable to specify the object of a musical sign, this does not mean that music is devoid of allusions. "The tremendous evocative power of the musical sign compensates for its referential fragility, producing in us a kind of predisposition for the dominance of firstness" (Santaella, 2009, 109). When an emotional notion is created as the interpreter of musical signals, music can propose things even in the absence of clear allusions to the object. Firstness is fundamentally dependent on listeners' immediate experience and their interpretation of a musical sign. One example would be if a certain song (the sign) evokes "joy" (the interpretant) in the audience by reminding them of the artist's success story (the object). It is plausible to believe that the concept of joy is

within the scope of music, but this does not show that the song is joyful (Ibri, 1992).

A response that audiences have to music includes empathy. Since empathy can be developed through almost any kind of music (Clarke et al., 2015) and is highly beneficial for comprehending the beliefs of other people or groups (Cikara et al., 2011, 149), empathy can also help people relate to the ideas of others and can be particularly helpful when it comes to experiences that are depicted in music. Empathy is a tool that composers can employ to help audiences understand a concept or message that is presented in a musical work.

Brain stem reactions, evaluative conditioning, emotional contagion, mental imagery, episodic memory, and musical expectation are a few psychological mechanisms that have been proposed to explain why music elicits emotions (Lundqvist et al. 2009, 62; Juslin & Västfjäll, 2006, 560). These processes could contribute to the understanding of why people can both perceive and experience musical emotions. Though other musically evoked emotions like anger or disgust are often harder to distinguish (Lundqvist et al., 2009, 75; Mohn et al., 2011, 505), it is

expected that "happy" music causes stronger sensations of happiness, whereas "sad" music induces larger feelings of sadness (Lundqvist et al., 2009, 63). Yet, regardless of prior musical experience, music education, or personality traits (Mohn et al., 2011, 509), the way music is portrayed or constructed can change the emotion interpreted (Juslin, 2000, 563). Mohn et al. 2011, 510) note that listeners to a musical section who had never heard of it before may be able to identify six basic emotions (happy, anger, disgust, surprise, sadness, and fear).

According to Spackman et al. (2005, 131), comprehending emotion is the capacity to recognize and interpret the feelings of others through situational and expressive signals, the meaning of which is somewhat culturally agreed upon.

In a test using a range of Bach and Chopin pieces, Poon and Shutz (2015, 1–13) assessed what specific musical components produced emotions. A higher note is linked to happiness, and a lower note to despair, according to the research, which showed a clear relationship between the register, pitch location, and emotions. Rhythm and tempo also affect feeling, like melancholy brought on by a slower cadence or rhythm. Different reactions

were elicited by a number of additional musical effects, including dynamics, tempo, melody, and rhythmic variations.

Studies on the Relationship between Music and Emotion

The strongest evidence for affective responsiveness to music may come from numerous research that use music to elicit different moods (Västfjäll 2002, 173-211). Self-reports confirm the subjective effect that listening to music has on one's mood (Hughes 2010, 134).

An early assessment in this field shows the importance of the emotional component of music in the field of Music Information Retrieval (MIR). Twenty-four articles from the last four years of the Conference on International Society for Music Information Retrieval (ISMIR)

were found when the term "emotion" was searched across the conference's papers (2011 to 2014). Most of these works concentrate on uses of automatically detecting emotions in music for classification. There is a plethora of user-participated studies on emotions in the MIR domain, according to Lee & Cunningham (2013). Song et al. (2013) asked 47

participants to rate their feelings for 80 musical samples, noting both the felt and perceived emotions that the music conveyed. It was not possible to distinguish between generated and perceived emotions.

However, Kawakami et al. (2013) found that their linked experiment produced somewhat different results. 44 people were questioned to get their opinions on the samples' perceived and induced moods. What they found out was that although listening to music could make people feel depressed, it could also make them joyful. Hu and Downie's (2007) study demonstrated consistency in the relationships between emotion/genre and emotion/artist, suggesting that it is possible to create an emotional interpretant through musical genre or artist. Given that different studies use different methodologies, there appears not to be much consensus on the subject

Sad music induces sadness in listeners, and sadness is normally considered an unpleasant emotion that people wish to avoid. Sad music is typically associated with sadness, which is viewed as a negative emotion. Most individuals attempt to avoid feeling sad because it's a contagious emotion, and sad music exacerbates sadness. For instance, a lot of people want to prevent disasters like losing

a loved one. However, sometimes people could even "lose themselves" in the beautiful melodies of melancholy music and enjoy it (Kawawakami et al., 2013). Melancholy is often classified as unpleasant on an evaluative scale (unpleasant–pleasant) in the study of emotion psychology. When an emotion that resembled a depressed perceived emotion was evoked in listeners, they would experience greater negative emotions when they listened to the downbeat music. What is the reason behind individuals listening to melancholy music if it actually makes them feel bad? (Kawakami et al. 2012, 6).

Sad music can assist people communicate, identify, and understand the situation, which can aid in accepting and comforting coping when they are going through a difficult moment in life. A piece of slow-tempo music is typically associated with low arousal, whereas fast-tempo music is frequently associated with high arousal. The listener's emotional perception is influenced by these disparate rhythmic patterns ([Gabrielsson and Juslin, 2003](#), 508–514).

In one study, participants scored their emotional reactions on two distinct unipolar scales, one for melancholy and one for

gladness, both with a range of extremes to not at all. In a second experiment, they responded with a single response on a two-dimensional grid where melancholy was represented by one axis and happiness by another (Larsen et al. 2009). When the tempo and mode cues were inconsistent, participants in both trials reported lower degrees of simultaneous happiness and sadness than when they were consistent. An additional noteworthy discovery revealed that listening to music with a melancholic tone evoked more conflicting emotions than music with a cheerful tone (Hunters 2010, 136). Tears easily fall, perhaps toward the end of a particularly riveting performance, as a way to let go of tension. Some musical pieces have the power to arouse emotions and memories by bringing up historical occasions, figures, and experiences. On other occasions, we could be moved to tears by the music's exquisiteness or brilliance (Wilson, Frances. 2019).

Emotional Swings

Research on mixed sentiments (Hunter et al. 2008a, 2010) shows that listeners are truly ambivalent about sad-sounding music. The studies ask listeners to assess joyful and sad feelings independently on two unipolar scales. Despite reporting sadness, individuals also report experiencing some happiness. On the

other hand, cheerful-sounding music simply produces happy emotions. When listeners are asked to rate the pleasantness and liking of a piece of music, they also give unclear answers when the music has a depressing tone. However, mixed emotions are not a sufficient explanation for listening to depressing music, since people should always choose the stimulus that evokes only happiness rather than both sadness and happiness. In 2008, Schellenberg et al. investigated the impact of repeated (Hunters 2010, 153).

A song that gives hope that all will work out can sometimes be all that is needed to quiet a storm. These songs reveal stories the audience yearns to hear, often sounding happy and peppy but actually being melancholic and relatable. They also serve as canvases for musicians to create soulful pieces of music that ultimately take listeners to healthier mental regions. Tempo and key are two of the easiest methods to incorporate emotion into music, however, there are many more. Major keys and quick tempos are common in happy songs. Slow tempos and minor keys are common features of sad music (Miller, 2021). Vocal color, dynamics, range, and other prosodic aspects

of speech are used by vocalists to evoke emotion or meaning in the music they perform. They intentionally want to transmit a certain feeling or effect (Cupido 2022, 8).

Nonetheless, researchers have agreed in more recent times that music has the ability to "arouse felt emotions and express perceived emotions" (Juslin & Lindström 2010:334; Kawakami et al. 2013:407). To put it another way, a listener may experience and recognize an emotion that the music evokes, or they may react to the music physiologically because of an emotion that the music conjures. Although Meyer (1956) emphasized a distinct difference between felt and perceived emotions, several empirical studies (Juslin & Sloboda 2010) do not always clearly show this divide.

Conclusion

This paper delved into how the emotional qualities of music, specifically how it is composed, can shape and affect the way people in the audience act and feel during musical events. It explores the deeper relationship between music and human emotions in a live performance context. One of great importance is the complex interaction that exists between cinema soundtracks and the emotions of the audience, as well as the

music composers. We have revealed the complexity of this relationship by a thorough analysis of previous studies and research on soundtracks, emotion, and music. The emotional terrain of movie experiences is greatly influenced by music, a potent artistic medium. In order to match their works with the desired emotional arc of the plot, composers use a wide range of approaches and musical components to evoke particular emotional reactions from the audience. Composers are able to elicit a lot of different feelings, from happiness and excitement to grief and reflection, through the use of melodic motifs, harmonic progressions, rhythmic patterns, and thoughtfully selected instrumentation.

The positive relationship that exists between music and film settings has also been highlighted by this study. The harmonic interplay of plot progression, musical aspects, and visual hints enhances emotional engagement. In order to provide viewers a complete emotional experience, composers deftly manage this intricate web of variables. The research results provide additional insight into the art and science of music composition for motion pictures while highlighting the crucial role composers play

in guiding the audience's emotional journey. They basically play the role of emotional designers, guiding viewers through a variety of feelings and ultimately elevating the entire cinematic experience.

The ever-evolving dynamic between music and emotion in the soundtrack industry presents countless opportunities for creative expression and emotional investigation. The continuous cooperation of researchers, filmmakers, and composers promises to reveal new facets of this connection and deepen our understanding of the emotional impact, amplification, and resonance of music. Deepening our grasp of the impact of the emotional soundtrack on the world of cinema and beyond requires more research and creative attempts in the fascinating and always-changing field of audience emotion studies.

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