

Editor's Note

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THIS issue of *Empirical Musicology Review* comprises target papers and open peer commentaries on four topics that have been hotly debated in different communities working in empirical music research: The potential effects of music in human mating behaviour, the attitudes to certain musical genres and associated social benefits, the evolution of musical structure in highly commercial music, and the purported generalizability of findings obtained with the widespread Essen corpus of European folksongs.

The target article by Lee and Zaryab contributes to the on-going discussion on how music might impact on the perception of the sexual attraction and human mating behaviour in general. These questions are associated with the broader topic around the role in the human evolution and where there seems to be little consensus on the social and biological mechanisms that music might be a core part of. To what degree contemporary empirical research can contribute to resolving the broader debate around music evolution is itself a question of debate. But the controlled psychological approach that Lee and Zaryab are employing in their study can at least provide some insight into how measurable musical features such as groove might have a different impact on different genders and their perception of sexual attractiveness in a western society. The corresponding commentaries by Marin and Senn help to clarify further what the nature and the implications of their empirical data might be.

Quan et al.'s target paper investigates a question that belongs to the area of individual differences in musical preferences and attitudes. Specifically it asks whether openness to world music can serve as a useful predictor for socio-cultural integration in a new country and environment. It uses empirical data from students who recently moved to study at Australian universities and were faced with the integration into Australian society. Their data shows that the degree of open-earedness to world music can predict the ease or problems with socio-cultural integration to a degree. Together with the corresponding commentaries by Chilvers and Hadavi, their results beg the question to which degree the attitude towards world music is malleable and might be changed through interventions to produce easier socio-cultural integration in a new environment. If this was the case and changing musical attitudes in a student populations could be an effective and potentially fun mechanism to produce positive social outcomes, might similar mechanisms be applicable for the integration of other migrant populations?

While Lee and Zaryab use experimental data and Quan et al. use observational data from human participants, Clark and Arthur exploit a corpus of highly successful music as their primary source of empirical data. Comparing Western hit songs from the 1960s to pop songs that have hit the charts only recently allows them to draw inferences about the structural development and salience of melodies in commercial pop music. They notice several changes in the structure of pop melodies over time, including a trend towards more repetition and melodies becoming more unmelodious. But they admit these trends aren't overly strong and that there is a large amount of heterogeneity in the data. This is presumably why they add a question mark to the title of the target paper *Is Melody "Dead?"* The ambiguity of their results is also pointed out in the commentary by Frieler who—based on Clark and Arthur's empirical findings—finds it difficult to diagnose whether melody is currently dead or not. Thus, he compares the state of pop melody to Schroedinger's cat, which exists in a semi-dead state according to a well-known thought experiment from early quantum physics.

Verosky's target paper similarly adopts a critical stance on musical corpus research. He points to the paradox that a substantial number of empirical papers in our field have used the Essen Folksong Collection as a proxy for Western tonal music in general, despite knowing that very few—if any—modern listeners are regularly exposed to Central-European folksongs from the 19th century. His analyses reveal that Essen exhibits closer scale-degree correspondence with North-American children's songs than with the modern pop songs which contemporary listeners more typically encounter. Essen may thus rather mirror early musical exposure. In her commentary, Kragness explores this developmental perspective proposing insightful directions for future research.



The over-use of Essen most likely arose from unavailability of more diverse, digital musical corpora. *Empirical Musicology Review* is a proud contributor towards reducing this methodological obstacle. Most directly we do so through offering to publish concise Data Reports describing new corpora and other types of datasets with relevance for empirical music research which are hosted in open formats elsewhere on the web (e.g., OSF, Zenodo, GitHub, figshare). By providing a venue for publishing a citeable Data Report, we wish to reward the crucial, time-consuming work that colleagues carry out when assembling, preparing, and sharing resources with the community.

To further incentivize these efforts, starting from this issue, we have decided to introduce peer reviews of Data Reports in addition to the editorial review that we have offered so far. This will increase the value of Data Reports to authors in that they can list their publications as fully peer-reviewed. Unlike Open Peer Commentaries of target articles, peer reviews of Data Reports will not typically be published. Overall review criteria will be similar to those for regular research articles, but we will particularly emphasize the need for clear, comprehensive, and consistent reporting and accessibility of data in suitable formats.

This issue contains two new data reports. The former—by Arthur, Lehman, and McNamara—introduces the *Star Wars Thematic Corpus* (SWTC) containing 64 symbolically encoded *Leitmotifs* from John Williams' music for George Lucas' famous cinematic ennealogy. The latter—by Bell and Albrecht—presents the *Mysterium* corpus of Alexander Scriabin's complete solo piano *oeuvre*. Because *Mysterium* focuses on the thus far underrepresented late Romantic and early post-tonal period, the authors provide methodological considerations on how to handle unconventional and idiosyncratic notation styles. Hopefully, this will pave the way for future encodings of more modernist repertoires.