

Emotions induced by music: The role of the listening context and modality of presentation

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Scherer's and Zentner's (2001) identified a series of production rules that underlie the emotion induction through music, arguing that there is an interaction between a multitude of factors in the production of an emotional experience. In particular, they discuss how performance (e.g., physical appearance, expression, interpretative skills), listener (e.g., musical expertise, personality, mood), and context (e.g., location and event) features can modulate such experiences.

The study reported here investigates in more detail the impact of the location (contextual factor), and the effect of seeing the performers (performance factors) on the emotional experiences of listeners. The method consisted of quantifying the emotional responses of listeners, in four different conditions, using a short version (Coutinho & Scherer, 2012) of the GEMS (Zentner, Scherer & Grandjean, 2008). The first group attended to a live performance by Christophe Pergardi n (tenor) and Michael Gees (pianist). A second group attended to an audiovisual recording of the same performance in a classroom at the University of Geneva. The third and fourth groups listened the audio-only version and saw the video of the concert (without audio), respectively.

Our results show that both context and modality of presentation have a significant impact in the emotions induced in listeners, as well as in the consistency of those experiences, providing important evidence about the modulatory role of contextual and performance factors in emotional experiences with music. Our results have implications to the understanding of musically induced emotions as well as for empirical methodologies in the area of music and emotion.

Keywords: Performance factors, Contextual factors, Emotion, Music.