

**MUSICAL MEANING AND
COMMUNICATION
IN POPULAR MUSIC**
AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The notions of musical meaning and musical communication in popular music were studied using a qualitative methodology. Two songs from a Funk-rock band and 2 songs from a Jazz band were used as stimuli. Six members from the bands and a group of 14 participants listened to the songs individually and were asked to indicate those moments that called their attention, and to explain what the meaning of each song was. The main findings were that: a) while listening to the songs the musicians and the listeners did not experience the music as expressive of ideas or emotions most of the time, b) the meanings assigned to the pieces depended on objective characteristics of the musical objects that were linked with semantic referents by the respondents; c) those semantic referents were often provided by the lyrics of the songs. These findings were interpreted as evidence that musical meaning is not fixed but contingent and that the communication of intentions, ideas or emotions from musicians to listeners is not assured, but it can succeed if several conditions are present.

INTRODUCTION

Does music mean anything?...This suggestive question, which is also the title of a writing by John Sloboda (1998), is the general question that inspires the present study.

If in search for the answer we turn to examine the ways people use music in our contemporary western societies it is obvious that music is indeed *meaningful* to many people. Music is much more than an object of entertainment, it has also become an important tool for the regulation of our affective states (De Nora, 2001; Sloboda and O'Neill, 2001) and a fundamental reference for the construction and expression of a notion of 'who we are' (McDonald, Hargreaves and Miell, 2002).

This first answer is coherent with the common sense assumption that the musical and artistic experience in general is essentially subjective: musical meanings are as varied as there are people who compose it, play it, listen or dance to it. However, several disciplines and theoretical traditions have challenged this premise.

In the first place, musicology has taught us that music, and in particular classical music, *expresses* profound philosophical, religious and social messages that can be usually traced to a conscious communicative effort of the composer or at least to his or her biographical data (Bicknell, 2002). This tradition started perhaps when romantic composers like Liszt and Beethoven made explicit their intention of conveying poetic ideas and subjective emotional states through purely musical means (Scruton, 2005). From this point of view the meaning of a musical work is thus somehow within the musical sound, and it is the labour of the musicologist (the intellectual authority) to analyze it in order to reveal its '*true*' message (Dibben and Windsor, 2001).

Sociology has also indirectly shown us how what music means can have a large effect on society. First, the influential work of Adorno proposed that music can act as a mechanism for the subjugation of individuals to the capitalist ideology through the standardization of popular pieces that have the effect of making consumers believe that they are free choosing, when in fact their minds are being 'standardized' as well (Adorno, 1941). More contemporary studies have adopted a more optimistic view in which communities and subcultures can assign particular meanings to the music they prefer in order to express and recreate their values and beliefs (Russell, 1997; Bennet, 1999), and that people are quite selective when they choose what music they prefer to consume. In general terms then, from the point of view of Sociology music may have different meanings according to the social context in which it is consumed, but these meanings are not completely idiosyncratic, they are shared by groups or communities.

Psychology of music on the other hand, has suggested that the power of music to influence people's lives should not be explained as the outcome of a purely rational process akin to the role of the traditional musicologist. According to this discipline, although in order to "understand" a piece of music a number of (mostly unconscious) cognitive processes must take place, a person cannot really grasp what a piece of music signifies if he or she does not get in touch with its *emotional meaning* (Sloboda, 1998).

Thus, during the last fifteen years an important body of research has been developed within the field of music psychology in order to explain the processes of expression, perception and induction of emotion within and by music. Much of this research has been done with quantitative designs and elemental musical stimuli (e.g. short phrases, compositions or patterns of chords) in order to control and assess the relative influence of the myriad of independent variables that can influence the production or perception of emotion –timbre, pitch, harmony, melodic direction, loudness, articulation, rhythm, mode, tempo, and their interaction-.

Despite the advantages that these designs provide in terms of internal validity, at the same time these constrictions have had the effect of

overlooking the inherent social nature of music and its meaning. Just as it is the case with any other art form, we never experience music as a “neutral stimulus”: we always tend to approach it within a frame of discourses that bias our interpretation of the sounds within the boundaries imposed on us by our perceptual system (Dibben and Windsor, 2001).

This exclusion of cultural factors along with the mentioned choice for elemental stimuli and quantitative designs have limited the possibilities of music psychology to provide ecological valid theories to explain how people experience music in “real life”, where it is much common to listen to full pieces of music which are often accompanied by *lyrics*.

The present work can be considered an exploratory study in that it aims to fill that gap in the current scientific paradigm by examining the notion of musical meaning in the context of full songs of popular music; and because it intends to test the effectiveness of a qualitative methodological approach in the investigation of this topic.

Based on the inductive principles of Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and on the works of contemporary scholars like Nicholas Cook (1998, 2003) and Jean-Jacques Nattiez (1990), this study starts by questioning two basic assumptions that are common to most empirical work on musical meaning and on music and emotion: a) the idea that music *has* a meaning; and b) the idea that this meaning is communicated by a process where it is first intended by the composer, then portrayed by the performer and finally ‘read’ by the listener.

In the context of the present research these general premises are translated into empirical terms by using four songs from two bands (two songs each) and carrying interviews with the members of both ensembles and a group of listeners in order to answer the following questions:

1. Do the musicians have an intention of communicating a message or emotion to their audience?
2. If so, which musical and lyrical cues do they use to convey that message or emotion? How do they use them?

3. To what extent do the listeners' interpretations of the songs coincide with the ones intended by the members of the bands?
4. Which cues do listeners use to construct their interpretation of the pieces? Do they coincide with the ones used by the musicians? How do they use them to construct their interpretation of the song's message or emotion?

The thesis that musicians and listeners make use of musical (and lyrical) cues to construct their interpretations of what the songs “mean” or “express” is based on previous literature on expression in performance and perception of emotion in music (Sloboda, 1991; Juslin 2001); however, this assumption does not imply that the use of such cues is a conscious process. With that in mind, the interviews to obtain the data from the participants were designed so that they provided open and spontaneous answers that could be used as indirect clues of their phenomenological experience.

Thus, a technique of continuous measurement was implemented (similar to the one used by Waterman, 1996), in order to examine the participants' reactions during the process of listening to each song and the relation between those momentary responses to their interpretation of the song's meaning once they finished. This information was complemented by a basic musical analysis of the songs and of those moments which the participants highlighted more frequently.

Additionally, in order to obtain a wide range of information to examine the role of different factors on the process of creation and communication of musical meaning, the study was designed as follows:

- ♪ Each band represented a different musical genre and a different level of musicianship. One of them is constituted by four amateur musicians who play funk-rock music –a style associated with young audiences and festive environments-. The other one is constituted by five professional musicians who play “easy-listening” Jazz songs –a genre associated with quiet contexts and adult audiences-.

- ♪ In the funk-rock band the roles of composer and performer converge: all the members of the band participate in the writing of the material they play. The jazz band plays versions of standard songs, but they create original arrangements for them.
- ♪ The songs chosen as stimuli have characteristics that should elicit varied responses and interpretations from the participants. Thus, one of the songs by the funk-rock band has an upbeat ‘feel’ throughout its lyrics and music, whereas the other combines ambiguous lyrics with several changes in its musical style. The first the song by the jazz band has lyrics that talk about depression and a sombre accompaniment, whereas the other has a very upbeat music but the lyrics can be interpreted as conveying anger.
- ♪ The role of the lyrics in the construction of meaning by listeners was examined by including participants whose first language is not English and who presumably would not understand the words of the songs all the time.
- ♪ The procedure also included questions intended to explore the participant’s discourses about the genre of the songs, its possible uses, typical consumers, etc.
- ♪ The questions made to the participants and the analysis of the data emphasized the difference between emotions that are perceived as “within” the music and emotions perceived as “produced” by the music).

According to the principles of Grounded Theory, the information obtained from the interviews and from the basic musical analysis of the songs was first analyzed and classified (in this case using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis technique; Smith et al, 1999) and then meaningful connections were sought in order to build hypothesis and speculative explanations to the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Finally, and in congruence with the aim of constituting an exploratory study, further connections with previous literature on the topic were established. –In this sense, the literature review section of this report should be regarded as a

presentation of relevant topics that either provided the basic premises for the empirical work or that were raised by the analysis of findings, rather than as an exhaustive display of the available literature related with this already large phenomenon-

The analysis of the data revealed that although this methodological approach had obvious limitations in terms of variable control, it provided useful information that provides arguments to critic some of the epistemological premises that have underlain much of the research in psychology of music when it has studied the problem of musical meaning and the possibility of its communication.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 MUSICAL MEANING

Any general definition of meaning implies the notion of an object apprehended by the establishment of a symbolic link between the object and its reference to other objects, notions, images or network of concepts: “meaning exists when an object is situated in relation to a horizon” (Nattiez, 1990:9). However, in the case of music the question of what music refers to has not reached a consensual answer.

Meyer (1956: 6) described two extreme positions in this debate: *absolutists* believe music cannot refer to anything else but itself; that is, the sounds of a piece of music acquire meaning through their relation with other sounds in the same piece and with general musical structures like tonality and harmony. On the other hand, *referentialists* affirm music refers to extramusical “concepts, actions, emotional states and character” (Ibid).

Absolutists have usually resorted to a comparison between music and language to conclude that musical sounds cannot refer to external concepts, because they do not designate anything but other sounds that have already been or that will be heard within the same musical work (Nattiez, 1990: 116). From this perspective, musical meaning is usually reduced to “sense”, instead of “signification”: “sense” implies an abstract idea of directionality (like the direction of a melody), whereas “signification” involves an arbitrary link between a signifier and a concept. This comparison with language has also stressed the impossibility of music to work as a narrative, as it cannot make a connection between a subject and a predicate, or present facts in past tense (ibid: 127).

However, those who have supported this absolutist approach to musical meaning have often done it in terms of an a priori ontological consideration of

the immanent properties of music, rather than on empirical grounds. In fact, many of them have had to make use of extramusical referents to support their ideas (ibid: 110, 114).

On the side of referentialists, perhaps the most influential trend has been the work of musicologists and classical music critics who have taken for granted the idea that music can provide us with much more information than the aesthetic experience of listening to pleasant sounds. In this context, the historical selection of works that constitute the canon of classical music brought with it the idea that these pieces are not only valuable for their timeless quality, but because they also 'picture' the subjective world of their composers (their emotions, intentions or personalities). Thus, musical analysis not only reveals the musical structure of the piece; it also unveils the way the sounds express concepts like "*joy through suffering*" or "*cosmic catastrophe*", for example (Cook, 1998).

In the field of sociology theorists have also found links between music and extramusical referents, which in this case are larger social and cultural forces. Contemporary theorists have overcome the pessimistic approach of Adorno and other theorists of mass culture according to whom audiences are alienated by the structural characteristics of popular music (Adorno, 1941; Frith, 1988), in favour of a perspective where people are active in interpreting what the industry offers them, thus configuring *tribes* associated around musical styles and sets of meanings related to them (Russell, 1997; Bennet, 1999). These last theories and the findings of anthropological and ethnomusicological investigations have stressed the decisive role of tradition and cultural factors in the construction of musical meaning (cf. Becker, 2001).

2.1.1 Musical meaning as emotional meaning

Cultural, philosophical and scientific traditions have assigned diverse meanings to music, including motion, force, tension and release, personality characteristics, beauty, events, objects, religious belief and social conditions (Gabrielsson and Juslin, cited in Juslin, 2003); however, there has been a

major agreement among referentialists in that musical meaning has its basic content in the domain of human emotions.

Yet, there has still been room for controversy. Davies and Kivy (cited in Cook, 2003: 180) have argued that music can only express basic emotions or moods like happiness or sadness, but not more subtle ones like grief, pride or envy, because these 'higher' emotions require an object that music cannot supply. Contrarily, Heinslick asseverates that music can only provide an *unspecific stirring*, not specific emotions (ibid). This last position is coherent with Francès' notion of *semantic potentiality*, according to which music presents the listener with a vague psychological impression that can be interpreted -and somehow reduced- by a verbal interpretation (Francès, cited in Nattiez, 1990:126).

Theoretical explanations for musical emotional meaning also vary. In this sense, Meyer (1956:7) makes a distinction between *expressionist* and *formalist* perspectives. *Expressionist* authors have sought the source of emotional meaning in the generation of symbolic links between non-musical referents and musical sounds. For instance, Scherer and Clynes (cited in Juslin and Sloboda, 2001: 93) have situated this semiotic connection in the ability of music to suggest patterns of gestural and motor expression of emotion by the human body. Other authors like Dutta & Kanungo (ibid: 95) suggest emotional meaning is the consequence of associations between the sounds and past emotional experiences evoked in the listener by the piece.

On the contrary, *formalists* have explained emotional expression on the basis of a causal relation between the structural characteristics of the musical piece and the emotions it elicits or signifies. Within this last approach there have even been several attempts to build *lexicons*, i.e. lists of musical elements associated with particular emotions: Carpentier, Rameau, Hoffman, Lavignac (cited in Nattiez, 1990) and Cooke (cited in Cook and Dibben, 2001); but none of these associations has been confirmed by empirical evidence so far. These empirical grounded approaches in the domain of music psychology are precisely the next point of this review.

2.2 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON MUSIC AND EMOTION

2.2.1 *What is an emotion?*

Although during the last fifteen years music psychology has produced a growing body of research on the field of music and emotion, the creation of theoretical consensus has been hampered for a lack of agreement on what should be considered an “emotion”. This confusion was increased by the fact that earlier studies tended not to distinguish between the perception of emotions in music, (i.e. the appraisal of a musical event as expressing an affect) and the induction of emotions by listening to music.

A first delimitation of affective states can be done following Russell’s *circumplex model* (cited in Juslin and Sloboda, 2001), in which emotions are classified according to two basic components: *activation* and *valence*. The first refers to the level of arousal or physiological reaction of the organism, and the second to the affect appraisal made by the individual (pleasant or unpleasant).

Scherer and Zentner (2001: 63) have presented an alternative classification according to the complexity and duration of affects. According to these authors, the most basic ones are *preferences*, which are just evaluative judgements of a stimulus in terms of liking or disliking. On the second level are proper *emotions*, which are “brief episodes of synchronized responses of all organismic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an event as being of major importance” (ibid). *Moods*, in contrast, are longer states, without an apparent cause and have low intensity. Interpersonal stances, attitudes and personality traits are longer affective states that music usually cannot influence.

This last classification is based on a view of affective states as adaptative responses to the environment, in which the cognitive appraisal of the situation is the main element that triggers the emotional response. The problem with this model is its difficulty in explaining why we experience emotional reactions with music if it does not have consequences for our survival.

2.2.2 Perception and induction of musical emotions

Besides the associative explanations presented by expressionist theorists, (presented in the section 2.1.1) perhaps the most interesting trend has been the formalist tradition initiated by Leonard Meyer in 1956 with his book *Emotion and meaning in music*. According to this author, emotional reactions to music occur when the expectations aroused by the tendency of the musical stream are violated. These expectations are patterns of reactions activated automatically by the impulse of our perceptual system to perceive totalities; and can be manipulated by the composer or performer to get a reaction from their audience (Meyer, 1956).

Based on these principles, John Sloboda (1991) presented evidence of a number of physical emotional reactions (like tears and shivers down the spine) that are associated with specific musical structures. Most of these features (syncopations, enharmonic changes, appoggiaturas, harmonic and melodic sequences, acceleration or delays of cadence, sudden dynamic or textural changes and unprepared prominent events) have in common “their intimate relationship with the creation, maintenance, confirmation, or disruption of musical expectations” (Sloboda and Juslin, 2001: 91).

Nevertheless, explanations of musical emotions in terms of the intrinsic properties of the musical stimulus have problems trying to explain facts like the presence of emotional reactions even when we already know the piece and it cannot ‘surprise’ us anymore; and the different responses of people to the same structural stimulus (from no reaction to different emotional perceptions and feelings). Sloboda (2001: 93) explains this last point by proposing the concept of *proto-emotions*, which are unvalenced reactions that in order to become ‘full-blown’ emotions need to be associated with an aesthetic appraisal and a semantic content provided by an extramusical referent. (Note how this explanation coincides with Heinslick’s and Francès’ thesis of how music can only produce an ‘*unspecific stirring*’).

Gabrielsson and Lindström (2001) presented a review of studies who have investigated the relation between structural properties of the music and the

perception of emotion. They found that tempo is considered the most important factor that affects the perception of emotion; slow tempo is associated with what in terms of Russell's *circumplex model* are low activity emotions (sadness, tenderness, calm) and fast tempo with high activity ones (happiness, playfulness, anger, etc.). Other factors included in those studies are mode (with the traditional association of minor and major modes with sad and happy feelings respectively), articulation, loudness, harmony, intervals, melodic direction, pitch level, rhythm, timbre, tonality and musical form. The problem is that all this evidence also shows contradictions like the fact that one factor can express contradictory emotions (e.g. loud volume can express happiness or anger), and although these inconsistencies could be explained by the interaction of several factors, no studies have attempted to study these relationships in all their complexity.

2.2.3 Expression of musical emotion by performers

Studies on perception and induction of musical emotion have a counterpart in research on the way performers interpret and emphasize the qualities of the piece so that it can be perceived as emotionally loaded.

Persson (cited in Persson, 2001) carried an investigation on the way pianists prepare the interpretation of a piece and found that most of them have strategies to conceptualize the music in emotional terms and to get into the 'appropriate mood' to play it. Similarly, Boyd and George-Warren interviewed 75 popular musicians and found that they actively look for inspirational states of mind that can be described as "away from consciousness" (Boyd et al. cited in Persson, 2001). These findings coincide with Lindström et al. (cited in Juslin, 2003) who found most of 135 surveyed musicians perceive the ideas of 'playing with feeling' and 'communicating emotions' are central to their notion of musical expression.

Patrik Juslin has explored this phenomenon of musical expression with a systematic approach and has proposed the GERMS model, which explains the role of five dimensions that make a performance expressive and worth.

According to this model, some of these dimensions are under conscious control of the performer, like the decisions to alter his or her performance in order to emphasize or clarify the musical structure to the listener, to deviate from stylistic conventions, or to express a particular emotion. Other dimensions are less conscious and sometimes impossible to control, like anatomical constraints on bodily movements, and random deviations and errors (Juslin, 2003).

The validity of this model has been tested by producing a computer-generated performance and asking listeners to assess it. The results have been partially satisfactory, but there is still something of the 'human' factor that makes these simulated performances sound lifeless (Juslin, 2003). Precisely in the search for this factor, Juslin and several other authors have carried several studies to explore the possibility of communication of emotion between performers and listeners.

2.3 CAN MUSICAL MEANINGS BE EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATED?

Nattiez (1990:17) proposed a model of circulation of symbols in which what the producer of the message intends to present to his or her audience does not necessarily coincide with what the receiver interprets. In the case of music, this means that when the composer and/or performer 'produce' the piece they do not necessarily intend to communicate something to the receiver. However, the fruits of the production process (called *poietic* process by Nattiez) *can* leave traces in the material characteristics of the musical object, which in turn can be selectively deciphered by the listener (in a process called *esthetic*).

Although this consideration means that musical meaning is not fixed (because it depends on the perspective of whoever is interpreting the sounds), at the same time there are a number of limiting conditions that prevent an explosion of infinite, arbitrary and equally valid readings.

On the level of cognitive representation of the piece, –which represents the subjective extreme of the phenomenon–, theorists like Lerdahl and

Jackendoff (1983) have shown that our perceptual system works according to psychological organising principles that constrain the number of possible perceptual interpretations of a musical piece and make some more likely than others.

The level of social representation –the social extreme of the situation-, also presents boundaries to interpretation: traditions like stylistic conventions, musical idioms and cultural associations make a musical gesture more likely to be perceived according to what has been historically agreed on.

Finally, the features of the material trace of the musical object itself limit its interpretation simply because some readings require certain characteristics to be present in the object order to establish a semantic connection (Clarke, 2005). The marked beats of house music *afford* its interpretation as dance and party music better than the fluent rhythm of Gregorian chant, for example.

The empirical studies that have tested the possibility of communication of musical emotion have focused on the use that performers make of a number of cues (like loudness, articulation, tempo, timbre, etc.) in order to express a particular emotion (e.g. Behrens and Green, 1993; Balkwill & Thompson, 1999; Gabrielsson & Juslin, 1996; Juslin, 1997). These studies have usually had experimental designs in which the researcher asks the performer to play or improvise a piece expressing a particular emotion, and then a group of listeners assess the intended emotion against a list of options.

The results of these investigations show that a) some instruments seem more suited to express certain emotions than others; b) although there are several cues that are used by several performers to express the same emotions (e.g.: fast tempo and noisy timbre to express anger) there is room for variations attributed to the performers' personal styles; c) 'general' and contrasting emotions (like sadness and happiness) are more likely to be communicated effectively than similar and subtle emotions like tenderness and solemnness; d) listeners make use of several cues to interpret the intended emotion, and since these cues are redundant, they can read interpretations by performers that did not use the same cues in the same

fashion; and e) this communication seems to be possible even when listeners faced music from a different culture, suggesting that at least some of these cues are universal.

As said in the introduction section of this report, although these studies have clear advantages in terms of control and measurement of the factors that affect meaning communication from performer to listener, they have serious restrictions in their ecological validity. One of those restrictions has been the preference for instrumental and classical music as stimuli. That is why this review finishes with a short account of approaches on the issue of meaning in popular music.

2.3.1 Communication of meaning in popular music

The ability of music to communicate meanings has always been presupposed by most writers, critics and musicians on popular music. However, unlike studies in psychology of music, the emphasis here has been on its ability to communicate social ideas and values to large audiences, rather than discrete emotions or ideas from performers to listeners.

Most sociological attempts to discover what popular music conveys to their audiences have been based on content analysis of the songs' lyrics (McClary and Wasler, 1990) but their conclusions have been biased by the debate around the notion of "authenticity". Thus, a first tradition inspired by the already mentioned Marxist approach of Adorno (1941), has regarded popular music words as the expression of banal romantic sentiments that have the effect of subjugating their audiences to capitalist ideology. In contrast, a second tradition has concluded that the lyrics of music styles like blues, art rock, soul or singers-songwriters like Bob Dylan are 'authentic' expressions of individual, creative sensibility that reflect or recreate the author's reality (Firth, 1988).

More recent studies have been more sceptical about the extent to which people pay attention to lyrics and have therefore concentrated their analysis on the way people uses music. Denzin for example, argued that "pop

audiences only listen to the beat and the melody; the meaning of pop lies in the sense listeners make of songs for themselves” (Denzin, cited in Frith, 1988: 119).

These musical aspects of popular music have been the object of study of musicological approaches. However, their conclusions have been criticized because often the application of traditional methods of classical musical analysis ends up in the conclusion that popular music is again, of less value (McClary and Wasler, 1990). Thus, an increasing number of critics have identified a need for the developing of techniques to study musical meaning in its own terms, concentrating on dimensions like ‘timbre’, studio effects, blue notes, etc., so the sensual, sexual and political appeal of popular music can be satisfactorily explained (ibid).

In summary, these approaches to communication of meaning in popular music have reminded us is that musical meaning does not depend only (or chiefly) on the intention or characteristics imposed on the piece by the performer or composer, because multiple historical, economic, ideological and technological factors and discourses intervene. As a consequence of this, musical meaning is not fixed and unique and its communication to the audience is not really guaranteed.

3. METHOD

Since the aims of this investigation have to do more with exploring the phenomenon of musical meaning as it happens in 'real life' rather than with testing previous hypothesis, a qualitative methodology was used to gather and analyze the data.

The method implanted was based on the principles of Grounded Theory, an inductive paradigm of research that implies gathering data first and then analyzing them to build theoretical explanations and find connection with other current theories related to the phenomena studied. This method was developed within a tradition that emphasized the necessity to grasp the point of view and interaction of the actors involved in a social situation (Strauss, 1987).

In the case of this research this approach was complemented by the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to code the information provided by the participants, a technique suited for exploring in detail the participants' personal perception of the studied phenomena (Smith, Jarman and Osborn, 1999).

3.1 SUBJECTS

The participants in the study are divided into two broad categories:

♫ *Band members.* Six musicians of two bands: the singer and the pianist from a jazz band and the four members from a rock-funk band (singer, guitarist, bassist and drummer). The members of the Jazz Band have professional degrees in music, while the members of the rock-funk band are amateurs¹.

¹ Unfortunately, it was not possible to contact and interview all the members of the Jazz band, which is a quintet.

♪ *Listeners*. Fourteen participants aged between 20 and 33 years old (7 women, 7 men). None of them is a professional musician, although some of them can play a musical instrument or have received some musical tuition before. This group of participants is also subdivided according to their mother tongue: “English as Mother Tongue” (EMT= 7 participants) who are all British nationals; and “English as Foreign Language” (EFL= 7 participants) who are of different nationality and have varied levels of English proficiency².

Only one participant reported having heard two of the songs beforehand. Another one said she knew one of the songs from the jazz band, but on a different version.

3.2 PROCEDURE

The basic procedure was based on one used by Waterman (1996) and consisted in asking the participants to listen to full songs and raise their hand every time the music or the lyrics “*caused something to happen to them*”. Once the participants had finished listening to each song, they heard it again with the researcher who asked them why they raised their hand in every point. Then an additional set of questions was asked to find what they thought was the song’s “meaning” and “main emotion”. All the participants listened to the music through a set of headphones (brand reference: HD 36). This method had slight changes according to the category to which the participant belonged. Thus, while the participants in the *listeners* category listened to four songs (two of each band); the *musicians* were asked to listen only to the songs from their own band and the instructions included raising their hands not only every time they felt the music or the lyrics caused something to happen to them, but also at those moments when they perceived themselves or any other member of the ensemble were being “*particularly expressive*”. These participants were also interrogated about

² This level of proficiency was not tested using a psychometric instrument; but it was obvious from their answers during the interviews that some of these subjects were more fluent than others in the English Language.

their perception of the song's meaning and emotions, but additionally they answered questions about the band's style and its target audience.

A description of the each of the songs used in the study is given next. A copy of the interview schedules can be found in Appendix 1.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SONGS USED AS STIMULI

The following description of the songs used during the study is based upon information obtained from the principal players of each band and from aural analysis of the pieces and their lyrics. It intends to show an outline of the principal features of each song, but the reader is advised to listen to the audio examples in the CD to get a more complete picture of the stimuli. (c.f. Appendix 2).

3.3.1 Sirens call

Both songs from **Cellarhigh** are performed with the instrumentation of a traditional rock ensemble: a male vocalist, electric guitar, electric bass and drum kit. At some points in the songs the guitar and the bass introduce digital effects (e.g. distortion, delay, whammy).

3.3.1.1 Sirens call's song structure:

Time	
0:00	<i>Introduction (instrumental)</i>
0:15	<i>Verse 1</i>
0:32	<i>Bridge</i>
0:49	<i>Chorus</i>
1:05	<i>Introduction reprise</i>
1:12	<i>Verse 2</i>
1:29	<i>Bridge</i>
1:45	<i>Chorus</i>
2:01	<i>Guitar solo</i>
2:18	<i>Bridge (with acoustic guitar and falsetto)</i>
2:33	<i>Chorus</i>
2:55	<i>End</i>

“**Sirens call**” is a rock song with a melodic chorus that makes it sound closer to pop or ‘Indy’ style. Although the song is not played in a very fast speed (crotchet=120 approximately), the instrumental treatment and the rapping style in the vocals make it sound as an up-tempo song.

The lyrics talk about a person who goes out a night and gets into a disco, where he feels the attraction of the dance floor “drawing” as a call from sirens. The chorus repeats the sentence: “*I’m feeling beautiful*”, thus describing this person’s experience of excitement and happiness while being on the dance floor.

The introduction of the song consists only of an acoustic guitar playing E and Bb chords that together with a silence every 6 beats produce an effect of “tension”. The verses are sung using a fast rapping style, and are accompanied by the same harmony delivered in the foreground by the bass (played through a fuzz box effect) and the same acoustic guitar pattern as in the intro. The vocals in the bridge are melodic and accompanied by an arpeggio in the electric guitar; but the bridge is divided into two halves by a “heavy” section of two bars consisting of screams in the vocals and distorted “chaos-like” playing in the instruments marking the strong beats. The chorus is based on an ascending harmony (G, A, Bb, C) and the vocals are delivered in accentuated fashion. The song then repeats the same scheme with small variations like the introduction of background vocals. After the second chorus there is a fast guitar solo. The song continues with a reprise of the bridge, this time sung with falsetto, and then a final chorus sang in a less accentuated style.

3.3.1.2 Sirens call's lyrics

(Verse 1):

I'm on top of the world
Today is any other day so this day is followed by tonight
And there's strange blue glow from a seven-story window drawing me in like
a fly to a light
Cannot recall how I got to that door but I find myself standing outside
And as step into I don't care what I do cause a voice tells me that it's alright

(Bridge):

The sirens call of the dance floor is pulling me in
The music feels like a rain pour I'm so jumping in

(Chorus):

I'm feeling (x2) I'm feeling beautiful [4 times]

(Verse 2):

And I'm feeling great
I'm feeling fine
You know the whole room is spinning it's blowing my mind
Could it be what I lose I will find if it's true will I find it in here?
Voices are calling me oh what's the point in me fighting its hold on me clearly
I've-
Stepped into view of power that's true and it won't let me get out alive

[Bridge]

[Chorus]

[Guitar solo]

[Bridge with falsetto]

(Final chorus):

And I'm feeling beautiful [4 times]

3.3.1.3 Outline of Sirens call's harmonic structure

Intro
|| E . Bb . | E Bb . . | % (4 times) ||

Verses
|| Bass playing lick on same
harmony: E Bb (8 bars) ||

Bridge
|| G . . . | A . . . | 'Heavy bit' | 'Heavy bit' |
| G . . . | A . . . | C . . . | % ||

Chorus
|| G . A . | Bb . C . | % (4 times) ||

(Guitar solo on harmony of chorus).

3.3.2 Give me some loving

3.3.2.1 Outline of song structure:

Time	
0:00	Introduction (instrumental)
0:16	Verse 1
0:35	Refrain (“playful jazzy section”)
0:54	Lyrics: “give me some loving” + Funky bass lick
1:03	Verse 2
1:22	Refrain (“playful jazzy section”)
1:50	Melodic interlude
2:09	Heavy section
2:28	Funky guitar lick
2:37	Refrain (“playful jazzy section”)
2:56	Lyrics: “give me some loving” + Funky bass lick
3:12	End

“Give me some loving” is in general terms a funk-rock song, but it has features that defy a clear-cut definition and make it an interesting choice for the study: it combines romantic and jokey lyrics with upbeat sections, a melodic interlude and refrains that feature elements of jazz.

The lyrics of the song start picturing a romantic scene of a man talking to a woman who wakes up on his bed in the morning, probably after having sex the night before. Then, on the refrain, the words sound like a playful and ambiguous declaration of love: he says to this girl he cannot live without her, but at the same time he says she should be careful of her wish of him becoming her boyfriend (“*beau*”), because it might come true. The refrain ends with a repetition of the song’s title: “*give me some loving*”. The second verse starts with a description of the beauty of this girl, but ends with a joke: he starts saying she is so pretty he might lose his mind, but then he continues saying he might also lose control of his clothes and in fact he is going to take them all off. The lyrics in the melodic interlude are the most ‘serious’ in the song, and talk about how this girl can easily give happiness to him when the world ‘*brings him down*’.

Musically the song starts with an andante and soft rhythm in the drum kit and an acoustic guitar playing a funky rhythm. The vocals start almost whispered, but go more intense as the verse advances. After a sudden pause, the refrain starts with a playful jazz style in which the bass accompanies with a walking bass style and the guitar plays ska-style high pitched chords. The refrain ends with the vocals repeating "*give me some loving*" over a funky bass lick.

The second verse is accompanied by the instruments with a staccato funky lick played at unison by the bass and the guitar which is followed closely by the drum kit's ornaments and the vocals. As the lyrics introduce the joke ('*I might lose control of my mind... my trousers...*') the accompaniment evolves again into the jazzy refrain, except this time the final sentence "*give me some loving*" is sung with a long note that introduces the melodic interlude.

This melodic interlude is characterized by the melodic phrases in the vocals accompanied by the guitar repeating a chord through a ping-pong delay effect which produces echoes and much reverberation, and the sensation of being in a big empty space. The song then progresses to the heavy section in which the vocalist sings in a screaming style, the bass and the guitar introduce distortion effects and the kit plays more cymbals. Right after this section is over, there is a funky lick in the guitar; the song goes to the refrain again and then it finishes with a quite conventional ending.

3.3.2.2 Give me some loving's lyrics:

(Verse 1):

I wake up smiling every morning 'cause I've got you beside me
There's nothing that I'd rather be than naked with you
Watch the sunlight over your skin as it creeps through the window
If stopping time was in my power girl you know that I would

(Refrain):

'Cause you know that I can't live without you girl
And I know you want me for your beau,
So just be careful what you wish for
These things have a habit of coming of coming true
Give me some loving
Yeah, you've gotta give me some real sweet loving

(Verse 2):

Baby's got eyes so deep I'm losing my way
You flash that smile at me
And I'm struggling to find the words to say
That your body is so fine I might lose control
Of my mind my shirt my trousers and my senses
In fact fuck it I'll just take them all off

[Refrain]

Everyone knows that this world can end bringing you down (down)
But you make it alright with just one flick of your eyes (eyes)

[Refrain]

3.3.2.3 Outline of Give me some loving's harmonic structure

Intro and first verse
|| : E . C# . | B : ||

'Playful Jazzy section' (Played by the bass in "walking bass" style)
|| : E D Db C | B A G F# | E F# G A | C# D Eb E : ||

Funky verse (Guitar and bass play funky riff based on the harmony of the intro)
|| : E . C# . | B . D Eb | E . C# . | B D Eb : ||

Melodic interlude
|| : Em | C | Bm | D : ||

'Heavy' section
|| : E | G | B | D : ||

End
|| Eb E . . . ||

Intro: crotchet=98 (andante)

Jazzy bit: crotchet= 105

Melodic interlude: crotchet=102

NOTE: These chords are a schematic representation of the basic harmony of the song. In many moments the harmonic support is provided by "riffs" (motifs) on the bass or the guitar rather than by actual chords.

3.3.3 *Black Coffee*

Both songs by the Jazz Band (called 'Black Coffee' as well) are performed with the following instrumentation: a female vocalist, a piano, a tenor saxophone, and electric bass guitar and a drum kit.

3.3.3.1 Outline of song structure:

Time	
0:00	<i>Introduction (instrumental)</i>
0:10	<i>Verse 1</i>
0:42	<i>Verse 2</i>
1:17	<i>Refrain ("man is born...")</i>
1:39	<i>Verse 3</i>
2:11	<i>Sax solo</i>
3:19	<i>Bass solo</i>
3:50	<i>Refrain reprise</i>
4:12	<i>Verse 3 reprise</i>
4:58	<i>End</i>

The song "Black Coffee" was written by Paul Webster and Sonny Burke and released for the first time in 1948 with Peggy Lee's in the vocals, but probably Ella Fitzgerald's version from 1960 is the most famous. Although the band's version of the song is more similar to the original, it has different arrangements and instrumentation and slight changes in the lyrics and the melody, while keeping its blues-jazz style.

The lyrics describe a woman talking in first person about her state of boredom, loneliness, sadness and desperation while she waits for her man to come home; all she does is drink black coffee and smokes cigarettes. In the refrain she reflects about the resigned role of women in society: "*a man's born to go and loving, a woman's born to weep and fret*".

Musically speaking, the song starts with a blues-jazz style performed by the piano the bass and the kit presenting the basic harmonic progression that undergoes during most of the song (Eb-E). When the vocals move to the second part of the verse ("*Black coffee...*") the saxophone plays a first

ornament and the harmonic accompaniment moves out of the Eb-E dynamic. When the progression reaches the V7 and the vocals say “*never known a Sunday*” the music makes a small pause before resolving the cadence and the vocals completing the sentence with a portamento in the last syllable (“*in this weekday room*”). The second verse follows basically same scheme.

When the song goes to the refrain the bass starts playing in a walking style, the accompaniment gets livelier, and the melody rises to a higher register.

After the third verse (which is very similar to the other two), the saxophone solo starts, accompanied discreetly by the rest of the instruments. During the first half of the solo the phrases are short and of middle range pitch, but suddenly it does a long higher note (7th major grade: Db) and from that point on the solo consists of faster legato phrases played in a blues style. Once the saxophone solo finishes, the bass solo starts, accompanied only by the drum kit.

Finally the song presents the refrain and the third verse again which this time has a more obvious presence of the piano and saxophone licks. It finishes with the same pause before resolving the cadence at the end of the verse and playing the harmonic motif again for four bars (Eb-E).

3.3.3.2 Black Coffee lyrics:

(Verse 1):

Feeling mighty lonesome
Haven't slept a wink
I walk the floor and watch the doom
In between I drink
Black coffee
Love's a hand me down brew
Oh I've never known a Sunday
In this weekday room

(Verse 2):

Talking to the shadows
1 o'clock to 4
And lord, how slow the moments go
All I do is pour
Black coffee
Since the blues caught my eye
Oh I'm hanging out on Monday
My Sunday dreams to dry

(Refrain):

Now man was born to go a lovin'
A woman's born to weep and fret
To stay at home and tend her oven
And drown her past regrets
In coffee and cigarettes

(Verse 3):

I'm mourning all the morning
and mourning all the night
And in between it's nicotine
Not much more besides
Black coffee
Feelin' low as the ground
It's driving me crazy
Just waiting for my baby
To maybe come around

(Refrain and verse 3 repeated after solos).

3.3.3.3 Outline of Black Coffee's harmonic structure:

A

: Eb7 ^(#9) . E7 ^(#9) .	(7 bars) %	Eb7 ^(#9) . A7 ^(#11) .	Ab7
%	Eb7 ^(#9) . E7 ^(#9) .	Eb7 ^(#9) . C7 ^{alt} .	F7
Bb7sus	Eb7 ^(#9) . E7 ^(#9) .	1. %	2. : Eb7 ^(#9) . A7 ^(#11) .

B

Ab7 . Db7 .	Eb-6 . C7 ^(b9) .	F7 . Bb7 .	EbΔ
F#-7 . B7 .	EΔ . C#7 .	F#7 . B7 .	F7 . Bb7 ^{alt} .
Eb7 ^(#9) . E7 ^(#9) .	%	%	Eb7 ^(#9) . A7 ^(#11) .
Ab7	%	Eb6 . F7 .	G7 . C7 ^{alt} .
F7	Bb7sus	Eb7 ^(#9) . E7 ^(#9) .	%

Solos: 12-bar blues in Eb:

: Eb	%	%	%	
Ab7	%	Eb C7 .	
F7	Bb	Eb	Bb7	:

3.3.4 *You took advantage of me*

3.3.4.1 Outline of song structure:

Time	
0:00	<i>Slow piano introduction</i>
0:14	<i>Verse 1 (Sudden tempo change)</i>
0:22	<i>Verse 2</i>
0:31	<i>Verse 3</i>
0:40	<i>Verse 4</i>
0:49	<i>Piano solo</i>
1:25	<i>Scat singing + “You took advantage of me”</i>
2:00	<i>Pause</i>
2:03	<i>Verse 1 reprise (slow)</i>
2:36	<i>Verse 2 reprise (Accerando starts)</i>
2:51	<i>Verse 3 reprise</i>
3:01	<i>Verse 4 reprise</i>
3:09	<i>Pause</i>
3:12	<i>Last two lines of verse 4 repeated (slow)</i>
3:31	<i>End</i>

“You took advantage of me” was originally composed in 1928 by Richard Rodgers with lyrics of Lorenz Hart as part of the musical: “Present arms”. In the musical it was sang by a couple of man and woman, but once again its more famous version is Ella Fitzgerald’s from 1956. These versions have a slow introductory verse which gives context to the joking style of the piece (“*A girl’s heart must go to someone... so I loved my horse... but horses are frequently silly... So I picked you*”). The band’s version of the song does not include this introduction and has a much faster tempo.

The lyrics of this song use a funny language to describe a person accepting the fact that he or she has fallen for his or her lover’s charms and there is no point in trying to resist. However, when the refrain repeats “*so lock the doors, and call me yours, you took advantage of me*”, it is no clear if there whether this should be taken as a sign of anger or of irony.

The music starts with a short and slow piano introduction (crotchet=65 approximately) that finishes with a low note in the V7 point of the cadence. Suddenly the voice and the rest of the instruments enter with a much faster rhythm (crotchet=215 approx.). From that moment on, the song has a playful feel conveyed not only by the rhythm, but also by the fast licks of the saxophone between the vocalist's phrases.

After four verses, a piano solo starts, first with short and "jumpy" phrases and then with more chords and higher pitched phrases. This solo is followed by a scat singing section in which the singer alternates the syllables of scat style with the repetition of the sentence: "*you took advantage of me*". When this vocal solo finishes, the piano plays again the low note in the V7 point and the song suddenly returns to the tempo of the piano introduction. After the first verse reprise, the rest of the instruments return, and the song starts to gain speed again, reaching the former tempo. The saxophone plays very fast licks between the singer's lines in this section. Finally the song gets to the point of the refrain where it does a pause once more; the singer repeats the lines of the chorus again and then instruments softly resolve the cadence.

3.3.4.2 You took advantage of me lyrics:

(Verse 1):

I'm a sentimental sap, that's all
What's the use of trying not to fall?
You've made your kill, I have no will
You took advantage of me

(Verse 2):

I'm just like an apple on a bough
And you're gonna shake me down somehow
So, what's the use?
You've cooked my goose
You took advantage of me

(Verse 3):

I'm so hot and bothered that I don't know
my elbow from my ear
I suffer something awful each time you go
And much worse when you're near

(Verse 4):

So here I am with all my bridges burned
Just a babe in arms where you're concerned
So lock the doors and call me yours
You took advantage of me.

3.3.4.3 Outline of Black Coffee's harmonic structure:

Intro

|| Eb . Bb . | F . Eb . | D . C . | F . . . ||

A

|| : BbΔ . B^o . | C7 . F7 . | D7 . Db^o . | C7 . F7 . |

F7 . Bb7 . | EbΔ . Ab7^(#11) . | G7 . C7 F7 | BbΔ . Fsus . : ||

1.

2.

B

BbΔ . D7^(alt) . || E∅ . A7 . | D∅ . G7 . | C7 . F7 . |

Bb . D7^(alt) . | E∅ . A7 . | D∅ . G7 . | C7 . . . |

Fsus . . . || BbΔ . B^o | C7 . F7 . | D7 . Db^o . |

C7 . F7 . | F7 . Bb7 . | EbΔ . Ab^(#11) . | G7 . C7 F7 |

BbΔ . Fsus . ||

Soloes: A (twice) and B (once).

4. RESULTS

The results section of the report is divided into three parts:

1. A short description of the most frequent musical and lyrical events highlighted by the participants.
2. An evaluation of the extent to which the meanings the musicians elaborated about their songs coincided with the ones constructed by the listeners.
3. Description of the discourses the musicians and the listeners provided when they explained why they highlighted every event.

Although the emphasis on this section is in the description of the results, there are some points in which pertinent speculative explanations are inserted. (And in fact the classification of the data into categories constructed by the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis implies a first level of inference).

4.1 EVENTS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE PARTICIPANTS

There was a large number of events highlighted by the participants while listening to the songs (in average, they highlighted 2.94 events every 10 seconds; the song with the most highlighted moments had 84 events, the least had 48). In spite of this variability, there is a group of events in which many participants coincided; while none of them was noted by all the participants, some events motivated 75% of the participants to raise their hands.

The criterion to decide which events are estimated as 'common' was calculated based on Waterman's method (1996). Thus, an event is considered significantly common if it was highlighted by a number of participants equal or larger than 2 standard deviations over the mean number

of responses in either of the groups (musicians or listeners) for that song. [Common event: ≥ 2 S.E. of mean number responses].

Due to word-limit restrictions, the full description of every highlighted event is presented in Appendix 2 (where their track position in the accompanying audio CD is also indicated). The description presented thereupon intends not only to mention what the musicians and listeners said it was the event that called their attention when they raised their hand (which is in the ‘title’ of every event), but also to present a description of what else is “happening” in the song at the same time and during the immediately precedent seconds. This is because although the participants reported having raised their hands because of an event in some level (e.g., the vocals or the guitar) they might have been unaware of some other elements in the music that made that moment prominent (e.g. changes of texture, the resolution of a cadence, etc.) In some of these events, the description corresponds to a whole section (like “chorus” or “solo”), while in other is just a more particular point (“portamento”, “long note in sax solo”), the choice corresponds to what the participants highlighted in each case.

In this section the description of the highlighted events will be limited to a description of the musical and structural properties of every event, based on the list of features described of Sloboda (1991) as associated with physical and emotional responses to music.

4.1.1 Cellarhigh’s “Sirens Call”

0:16 [Vocals entry]: Change of texture and dynamic.

0:38 [‘Heavy bit’]: Sudden change of texture and louder dynamics.

0:49 to 1:04 [Chorus (general)]: Harmonic progression, wider range in melody, change of texture, marked rhythm.

1:07 [Intro reprise]: Sudden change of texture and dynamics.

1:34 [‘Heavy bit’]: Sudden change of texture (just like the first time).

1:45 to 2:00 [chorus with 'yeahs']: Ascending harmonic sequence on guitar and bass, descending on background vocals.

2:01 to 2:16 [guitar solo (in general)]: Change in dynamic, timbre and texture.

2:13-2:17 [Guitar solo: Octaves]: Unexpected prominent moment, sharp change of melodic range.

2:20 [Bridge reprise with melodic falsetto and acoustic guitar]: Sudden change in texture and dynamic.

4.1.2 Cellarhigh's "Give me some loving"

0:00 to 0:15 [Introduction]: Melodic appoggiaturas on second guitar, repeated syncopation in bass.

0:33 [Pause]: Unexpected prominent event.

0:56 [Funky bass lick]: Melodic sequence, change in texture.

1:42 [Melodic interlude introduction by long note in vocals]: Change in timbre and texture higher vocal pitch.

1:52 [Melodic interlude]: New harmony, melodic sequence, textural change.

2:10 [Heavy rock section, vocals 'screaming']: Changes in timbre, texture, dynamics and harmony.

2:29 [Funky guitar lick]: Melodic sequence, staccato articulation, marked rhythm.

3:06 ['Cheesy ending']: Cadence resolution after small delay. Change of texture.

4.1.3 Black Coffee's "Black Coffee"

1:11 [vocals portamento in "dreams"]: Melodic sequence, delay of cadence resolution.

1:29 [vocals portamento: “weep and fret”]: Change in melodic direction, harmonic and dynamic change.

2:13 to 3:19 [Sax solo (in general)]: Change in texture, melodic sequence.

2:44 [sax solo: long note]: Prominent unprepared event.

2:53 [sax solo: faster phrases]: Changes in dynamic and melodic direction.

3:03 [sax solo: ascendant scale]: Melodic sequence.

3:20 to 3:46 [bass solo (in general)]: Changes in dynamic and texture.

4.1.4 Black Coffee’s “You took advantage of me”

0:00 to 0:12 [Introduction]: Melodic appoggiaturas, descending harmonic sequence.

0:14 [voice entry]: Sudden changes in texture, dynamics and rhythm.

0:52 [Piano solo starts with short “jumpy” phrases]: Melodic appoggiaturas, harmonic sequence.

1:13 [Piano solo ‘builds up’]: Change in harmony and dynamics, melodic sequence.

1:25-2:00 [Scat section]: Textural change, repeated syncopation in piano.

2:38 [Accelerando]: Harmonic and melodic sequence, dynamic change.

Although this list of events chosen on statistical criteria leaves out a number of events in which some participants were quite eloquent, the presence of these almost ‘objective’ events in each song opens the door to the possibility of communication between musicians and listeners. If musicians and listeners focus on the same moments during the song, it is more likely that they construct a coincident meaning that if they just paid attention to totally different events. The next section of this report examines the extent to which this communication took place.

4.2 MEANING ASSIGNED TO EACH SONG BY MUSICIANS AND LISTENERS

4.2.1 Working definition of musical meaning

Looking at the discourses elaborated by the participants, it is necessary to elaborate an operational definition of what musical meaning is in the context of this research. Thus, musical meaning can be described as having two levels:

Global meaning. The interpretation assigned to the whole piece by the musician or the listener. It can be **narrative**, if the participant creates a “story” to explain the song’s significance (e.g.: “*it’s about this girl who’s fallen for this guy and he can do pretty much what he likes because she’s submissive*”); or **affective** if the he or she makes only a description of the song’s “feel” or predominant emotion: (e.g.: “*it’s a happy, bouncy song*”). Most participants were able to assign a narrative and an affective global meaning to the songs, sometimes within a single sentence. Other participants reported being unable to find the song’s meaning on one or both levels.

Local meaning. The interpretation a musician or a listener does of a particular event or section of the song. This meaning is not necessarily coherent with his or her global interpretation of the song (e.g.: “*that bit sounds mean and cheeky*”... “*It sounds like ‘stepping stones’ at that point*”.)

This section will focus on the global meanings or interpretations that the participants assigned to each song, comparing to what extent the ideas and emotions that the musicians intended to convey coincided with the ideas and emotions that the listeners perceived.³

³ From this point on, the terms “global meaning” and “local meaning” and the terms “global interpretation” and “local interpretation” are used indistinctively.

4.2.2 Sirens Call

The most complete explanation of the song's meaning was provided by the singer of the band, who wrote its lyrics based on a personal experience. He affirmed the song portrays the situation of someone who goes out on a weekend to have fun in bars and discos, and who cannot stop dancing and looking for other places to party, even though he knows he has things to do early the next day; the title of the song has to do with the feeling of being "pulled" by the attraction of the dance floor, just like the sirens call sailors to direct their ships into the ocean, getting astray.

This interpretation is in general terms shared with his bandmates, although they did not elaborate such a complete story. Most of them said it is just about "*having a good time*". The guitar player outstands because his initial answer to the question "what is this song about?" was given more in musical terms than in the form of a narration: "*It's an upbeat song. It has a very catchy chorus and a groove bass verse*".

In the case of the listeners, participants whose first language is English, (from this point referred to as "**EMT**": "*English as Mother Tongue*") coincided in descriptions and concepts that have in common ideas of positive, cheery feelings such as: "*happy*", "*carrying a positive message of feeling good with yourself*", "*carefree*" or "*enjoying the power of music*". When asked about what images they would expect to see in a video of the song, most of them imagined a situation of people dancing to the music of the band. Just one listener mentioned the idea of "guilt" that seems to underlie the singer's narrative.

One participant whose first language is English stands out because he was the only one who seemed to have ignored the lyrics completely, to the point of affirming this piece is a "*rebellious*" song, which has a feel of "*frustration*" through it, without being able to elaborate further. He seems to coincide with the rest of EMT participants only in the 'activation' dimension of the emotion he perceives in the song (Russell, cited in Sloboda and Juslin, 2001). In other words, the affective meaning he perceived coincides with the band's and

EMT participants' ideas only in terms of its high arousal (*rebellion* and *happiness* can be described as highly aroused states of being). The valence of the affect he described does not coincide with the other participants' ideas either: "*happiness*" and "*partying*" can be considered as positive emotions or moods, whereas "*frustration*" is clearly a negative one.

The affective interpretation built by this listener coincides in general terms with the answers provided by participants whose native language is not English (from this point referred to as "**EFL**": "*English as a Foreign Language*"). Some of them associated the song with ideas or emotions like: "*escaping*", "*expressing something that was repressed*" or "*a lot of energy that has to come out*". Although some of them did talk about the words in the chorus, it is curious that two dismissed them as insignificant; in the first case perhaps because he comes from a society with more traditional gender roles, in the second maybe because he is not familiar with the song's style:

"He says 'I'm feeling beautiful', which in itself doesn't mean anything, especially sung by a man..."

EFL participant, man

"Perhaps the words don't mean anything; it's just bullshit, to keep you high... Like that song that says 'rainy man, hallelujah: 'Hallelujah' doesn't mean anything, but it sounds good for dancing."

EFL participant, man

However, most of these participants coincided with EMT listeners in the general idea that this song is appropriate for a party or for those occasions in which you want to feel full of energy or you already feel "*electrical*" and want to reflect that state by singing and dancing along with the song.

In summary, despite some particular narrative meanings elaborated by several EFL participants, in general terms they coincided with EMT participants and the band in the high arousal character of the song and the contexts in which it could be listened to.

4.2.3 *Give me some loving*

Although there is a common idea among the members of the band that this song has a romantic or sexual content, again it is only the singer who talked about the meaning of the song in terms of a full narrative. He sees the song as an unfolding verbal and musical story of a man who wakes up with a girl in bed, both nude, and starts telling her that he loves her, but then he uses funny moments (the playful jazzy sections) to protect himself from the awkwardness of saying this kind of things openly.

The bass player and the guitarist clarified that they do not pay much attention to the lyrics of the band's songs, and explained the song meaning emphasizing its musical characteristics, although they also mentioned the song has a sexual component to it. The guitarist perceives it in the "*smooth*" intro and first verse, which he associates with Barry White's music; but for him the rest of the song is upbeat and intended to "*get the party started*", (i.e. to make people dance). The bass player also said the song is about the "*lustful side of love*", but he explained he does not intent to portray that idea in the way he plays his accompaniment because he came up with it before the song had lyrics; thus he thinks of the song more in terms of a number with contrasts between "*smooth*" (jazzy) and "*bouncy*" (funky) sections.

The drummer stands out because in both songs he seemed to elaborate his personal interpretation focusing more on the lyrics, and coincided in the idea of a romantic and sexual content in the song, but he got this idea from mishearing a sentence; he thinks the singer says: "*you want me for your room*", when in fact the lyrics are: "*you want me for your beau*" (beau = "bo" = "boyfriend"). That explains why he thinks the song is about a couple in which one person is expecting love ("*I can't live without you girl*"), whereas the other is just expecting to have sex.

Most listeners thought this is a love song too, but very few of them elaborated a narrative as complete as the one the singer has in mind. Only two EMT participants interpreted the contrasts in the music as expressing the idea that the starring character is at some moments playful and jokey and at some moments direct and serious. The interesting thing here is that one of them

thought he was being honest and direct precisely in those parts where the singer thinks he is being playful and evasive! (The jazzy refrains). That can be understood if we think this listener was paying more attention to the music than to the lyrics.

EFL participants also got the idea that this song is about a couple or about ideas like love or romance. But beyond this coincidence, the narrative and affective meanings that they assigned to the song are quite varied. For three of these participants, the song is about a guy complaining and asking someone else for love, but two of them added this person has been dumped or is about to be dumped by his girlfriend, and therefore is *angry* (jazzy sections) and *depressed* (melodic section). They coincided with some EMT participants in interpreting the melodic interlude as the section expressing *melancholic, sad or sincere* feelings.

Other participants elaborated different interpretations based on fragments of the lyrics: one of them said it was about a guy who “*can’t control his feelings for a girl*” (in the lyrics: “*I know that I can’t live without you, girl*”) and is trying to calm her down, to try to convince to “*take it easy*”. Other participant said the only thing he understood is that the singer was warning to a girl she should be careful, because he could be a bad guy (in the lyrics: “*be careful what you wish for*”). Finally another participant said the multiple changes in the song gives him the idea of “*restlessness*”, and therefore of a passionate relationship of love and hate.

In general terms, the affective meaning that EFL participants assigned to the song tended to be negatively valenced emotions or states of being like: *rage, fear of losing somebody you love, uneasiness and precaution*. Only one of them said this is a *happy* song.

In summary, it seems that the changing aspect of the song’s music and its ambiguous lyrics make it less likely that the “message” the band is trying to convey reaches their audience.

4.2.4 *Black Coffee*

Once again as can be expected, it was the singer who explained the song in terms of a narrative based on the lyrics. However, her interpretation went beyond the literal meaning of the words: she added ideas that are not really expressed in the text. She said for example the woman who talks in the song is “*being treated badly by her man*” and that she “*obviously has had a good time in her life*”. She explained this last idea by saying the song’s music has a “*sultry*” or “*sexy*” feel to it, which conflicts with the feeling of “*misery*” that is portrayed in the lyrics.

On the other hand the pianist does not think the lyrics and the music conflict, and just like most of the instrumental players in the Funk-rock band, he tended supports his ideas more in the musical aspect than in the lyrical aspect of the song. He affirmed the song talks about someone locked up in her flat, and that the way his band performs the song (with a monotonous, repetitive rhythm, and a melody which is mostly in minor mode) gives him the idea of “*depression*”, or “*late night, sleazy bars*”.

That description of the song’s music coincides clearly with most EMT participants who thought the music expressed feelings like *melancholy*, *sadness* or *boredom*, which coincided with the message in the lyrics. However, two other EMT participants perceived the song had the sultry feel that the singer mentioned. One of them reported being “*bewildered*” because she thought the music suggested images like a woman in a bar, drinking cocktails and being glamorous and sexy, instead of bored, lonely and drinking coffee at home, which is what the lyrics say. In the end she solved this conflict by concluding the song is ironic.

Two EMT participants who reported not having paid attention to the lyrics expressed the song’s meaning in affective terms only: they said it is a “*relaxed*”, “*chilled out*” or “*easy listening*” piece. In general, all EMT listeners and most EFL ones coincided in expressing the song’s meaning in terms of emotions or moods with a low activation level.

Two EFL participants stand out because of their different interpretations. One of them seemed to have based her ideas on the first two lines of the refrain (“*a man was born to go and loving, a woman’s born to weep and fret*”). She thought the song was about a comparison between man and woman, and at some point she explained the saxophone was representing the masculine role, and the singer the feminine one. However, she did get the idea that the woman in the song was *sad*. The other participant said it is very difficult to build an interpretation to this song, because it is quite “*flat*” and inexpressive. After thinking for a while, she created a metaphor of two people meeting in a piano bar, getting to know each other for the first time. This peculiarity in her interpretation cannot be attributed neither to her English proficiency nor her ignorance of the style: she said she never pays attention to lyrics even in songs in her mother language, and she mentioned this is a jazz song; in fact, she concluded she would listen to it in a relaxed moment.

In summary, despite all the differences described here, there is a minimum message that is shared by musicians and audience in this song: the idea of a low-energy piece that is suitable for listening in a relaxed moment.

4.2.5 You took advantage of me

In this song the meanings that the pianist and the singer assigned to the song coincided more clearly. They initially focused on different aspects of the song to explain its significance: the pianist in the style and feel of the music, and the singer in the lyrics and the situation of performing it, but they both noticed the conflict between lyrics and music. For the vocalist this conflict makes the song *cheeky* and *funny*, whereas for the pianist this conflict may actually be due to a difference between the time when the song was written and the mindset of contemporary audiences. None of them mentioned the origin of the song in a musical from the 1920s, or the introductory verse in the old versions, which clarifies the ironic tone of the song a great deal.

Most of the listener's interpretations of the song's meaning coincided independently of their first language, perhaps because many of them noticed the lyrics: "*you took advantage of me*" and used them as a base to construct their own narrative meanings. Even in the case of one participant who did not mention the song's title in his answer, and who reported not having paid much attention to the lyrics, there is a hint of the realisation of the song's conflict:

I think [the song] is about this girl who's fallen for this guy and he can do pretty much what he likes because she's submissive... It doesn't sound like she's upset to be feeling that way, she seems quite happy about that.

EMT participant, man

The rest of the participants incorporated the conflict in their explanation, concluding that the song was "*silly*", "*tongue-in-cheek*" or that it had a message of "*putting a brave face*" when you have been cheated on. Only two EMT participants declared themselves confused and said they did not understand the contradiction in the song.

EFL participants gave similar answers, except one participant who despite having noticed the words: "*you took advantage of me*", said this is "*very happy song*" whose meaning is:

"A girl wants to say something her boyfriend about her opinion about love or her choice of life."

EFL participant, man

The only explanation to his reply is again his general ignorance of western musical styles in which the refrain usually has a central role in the lyrics' message.

Finally one participant, who stands out for her very subjective interpretations of the four pieces, said this song was about a woman's "*freedom*":

"It's like she's getting freedom and respect, and realizing her own strength in this relationship... She takes consciousness and starts to express herself"

EFL participant, woman

In this case it is probable that she based her interpretation on the song's title and on the section when the song accelerates to tempo primo, which she interpreted with the metaphor: "*It's like start thinking, then getting excited with the idea, and then start talking about it*".

As can be seen, in general terms the ideas that the band members have about this song and the ones elaborated by the listeners coincided quite well.

The next section of this report focuses on presenting the local meanings and other answers that the participants provided when they explained why they highlighted every event, according to the categories constructed from the interpretative phenomenological analysis of the results. (Table 2 in Appendix 3 presents a summary of this section: the most frequently highlighted events and the responses they elicited in the participants).

4.3 PARTICIPANTS' REASONS TO HIGHLIGHT EVENTS IN THE SONGS

4.3.1 Musicians

One of the first things that became evident when analyzing the musicians' answers is that there is a difference between singers' and instrumentalists' discourses. The former, independently of being the authors of the lyrics or not, focused their attention on the lyrics more often, while the later usually talked about events that happen in the accompaniment. This also indicates a tendency to listen to their own parts instead of what their bandmates play.

In spite of these different approaches, the content of their discourses tended to be similar. Thus, most of the times when they raised their hands to highlight an event in the song, they did what could be called an "aesthetical appraisal" of it:⁴

⁴ The musical examples and their corresponding track number in the accompanying audio CD are indicated in square brackets.

"I love that solo. I can listen to that solo many times". **[Sirens call, track 9]**

Singer, Cellarhigh

"It's probably a self critical point about the portamento descending. It just sounds a bit exaggerated" **[Black Coffee, track 24]**

Singer, Black Coffee

At some other times, which are less frequent, they just highlighted the event in order to "notice" it, although one can infer usually the motivation to talk about it is because they liked it.

Contrary to what can be expected from musicological tradition and the results of studies on the phenomenological experience of performers (e.g. Persson, 2001), the moments in which the musicians simply "noticed" the events or talked about them in aesthetical terms are far more common than those moments in which they affirmed the events symbolize or refer to ideas, emotions or moods. It is not surprising that this kind of associations between music and ideas or emotions were made more often by singers, who have at hand the lyrics' narrative to assign referents to the sounds:

*I was being submissive [sings and raises shoulders] "so what's the use?" I have that higher voice, a bit pathetic **[You took advantage of me, track 34]***

Singer, Black Coffee

Although less often, instrumentalists also identified symbolic events, in which music has a feeling 'within' or expresses some emotion or idea. Nevertheless, this kind of symbolic connection was not always made spontaneously by the musicians; in the case of instrumentalists, they usually talked about a musical event in descriptive or aesthetical terms, and only after being prompted by a question from the researcher did they make the connection:

What do you think is the relationship between the name of the song and the arrangements you did for it?

*[After thinking for a while] It feels like late night jazz... It's talking about depressed... That kind of monotonous, repetitive rhythm [sings it] the obstinato in the rhythm expresses that. **[Black Coffee, track 23]***

Pianist, Black Coffee

Sometimes they thought other bandmate was expressing some idea or feeling, but when the musician who played that part was interviewed, he did not think the same, or just did not make a comment about that particular event:

[the singer's] note kind of waves a bit, it's not perfect, it's like he's struggling to hold the note (...) you can almost feel the emotion (...) it's almost like an explosion.

What do you think it's the emotion there?

*[After thinking for a while] I don't know, maybe someone who is pissed off, maybe because his party plan didn't go quite well. **[Give me some loving, track 20]***

Guitarist, Cellarhigh

Lyricaly it's meant to be an affirmation of what (I) just said. The fact that it goes rocky there it's meant to be more serious (...) This is more like serious rocky.

Do you think one person could confuse that for expressing anger at that point?

*I think if you just listen to that bit, yes. But if you listen to the whole song, you know it's not angry, 'cause the whole song is about telling this girl that you love her. **[Give me some loving, track 20]***

Singer, Cellarhigh

Besides those moments highlighted in aesthetical or symbolic terms, there were as many other instances when the musicians (including singers) highlighted events stressing their musical qualities, that is, in terms of its relation with the rest of the song, its function or dynamics, not as representatives of some external idea or affect:

*I'm trying to kick it up a little (...) I've always thought that we had to make that final verse a little more "up", and drop it down when it goes to the refrain. **[Black Coffee, track 31]***

Pianist, Black Coffee

*I think it's a really good change, it completely changes the vibe of the song and [the singer's] style of singing changes as well, I don't actually know what he's singing there... I think it takes you by surprise and takes the song up another level. **[Give me some loving, track 19]***

Bass player, Cellarhigh

This emphasis they make in the dynamics when talking about these events makes them likely to be confused with instances of symbolic events. Not only because the musicians used words like: “energetic”, “climax”, “up”, “higher”, “bigger”, “build up”, “kick up”, etc.; but because sometimes they affirmed the event was “communicative”, or “expressive”, even though they did not mention the content of that communication or expression:

He’s building it up, he’s playing more chords now, he’s filling in the gaps, before he was more spacious, so I don’t know what effect that has on the words or the melody, but musically I think it’s communicative quite a lot, I think. [You took advantage of me, track 38]

Singer, Black Coffee

But if the moments in which the musicians talked about music expressing emotions were not the most, the moments in which they mentioned the music evoked feelings or personal memories were even rarer. The only memories they associated with the events they highlighted were moments from the recording session; except in the case of the singers, who sometimes mentioned the feeling they get when they perform the songs live. Only once one of the musicians mentioned getting a bodily sensation from the music: the bass player from the Funk-rock band says the ‘scream’ in the vocals that introduces the heavy section in “Give me some loving” always “sends shivers down his spine” [Give me some loving, track 20].

4.3.2 Listeners

Although as seen in section 4.2, few participants reported having problems trying to “guess” what the songs’ meaning was, this does not imply that every time they raised their hands to highlight an event they assigned a local meaning to it. Rather what was observed in their answers was that most of the times, just like the musicians, listeners talked about the events in terms of descriptions or aesthetical appraisals, without considering them as symbols or expressions of something else.

These non-symbolic moments, independently of being appraised aesthetically or not by the listener, can be classified broadly as follows: events that happen in the lyrics, events that happen in the music, or events in which the listeners made a link between the text and the music.

Events in the first category were not very common and were highlighted mostly by EFL participants. This is probably due to the fact that for EMT listeners the comprehension of the text was taken for granted, whereas EFL participants usually had an attitude of actively trying to “catch” a few words or a sentence, and sometimes they looked genuinely excited when they reported they had “caught” a word or a whole sentence.

“I caught the word ‘naked’, so I started thinking that it was ordinary lyrics. I thought his voice was good, but I didn’t like the words”. [Give me some loving, track 14]

EFL participant, woman.

However, not only EFL listeners used the lyrics in this fragmented way, sometimes, despite their understanding of the language, some EMT participants focused on just one word or portion of a sentence to evoke personal memories or to create mental images that did not necessarily coincide with the meaning of the text, (this is, without including those moments when they misheard what the singers actually said):

“I thought the lyric was quite visual, I pictured a bridge, although obviously that’s not exactly what was she was meaning”. [You took advantage of me, track 36]

EMT participant, woman.

Events that occurred in the musical level were highlighted in the same proportion by EMT and EFL listeners. Sometimes the participants just noticed them without adding anything else, but other times they showed an implicit understanding of the musical structure of the songs, commenting on dimensions like dynamics, timbre, texture, or the ‘function’ of the event:

“It’s the build up again, all the instruments coming back together in a sort of a crescendo in the song”. [Black Coffee, track 29]

EMT participant, man

When listeners highlighted events making a link between music and lyrics, there was usually a first level of symbolism implied in their reasoning. When they commented the way music and lyrics complemented each other to convey the same message, or the way music emphasized or contradicted the ideas in the text, we can deduce an implicit understanding of music as expressing or symbolizing some affect or idea. This kind of events were again more common among EMT participants; when EFL made this kind of connections between lyrics and music their interpretations tended to be more subjective, since as said before, they usually ‘caught’ fragments of the text, rather than full sentences:

I thought when he said: “be careful what you wish for”, it sounded a bit threatening... I think he was first serious, and then playful, it was like coming back to a serious message. [Give me some loving, track 16]

EMT participant, woman

“Careful!” he asks you to be careful, and they use the rhythm to remind you, the drum is more frequent... it’s like an emergency, you feel yes, you have to do something: “Be careful”. [Give me some loving, track 16]

EFL participant, woman

As noted above, those events in which the listeners explicitly considered music expressed or symbolized some idea or affect were less common, and as in the case of the musicians, not always spontaneous, but prompted by questions from the researcher. However, unlike musicians, listeners tended to use more explicit emotional words and adjectives to describe what the music “expresses”, (rather than more abstract words like “energetic” or “powerful” which were more common among musicians).

These interpretations of music as expressive of an affect were made by EMT and EFL participants in the same proportion. The difference, just as seen when they talked about the global meanings of the pieces, was that when EFL participants talked about music as symbolizing an emotion those emotions were sometimes quite different from what other listeners perceived.

A possible first explanation for this is that EMT participants probably have a better knowledge of the musical idioms of the genres to which the songs belong; but it should not be ruled out that their better understanding of the words might have also provided them with a semantic context to attribute meanings to the music, even though most of the times they did not highlight lyrical events.

In contrast and just as in the case of global meanings, interpretations of music as expressive of non-emotional concepts or feelings were much more common among EFL participants, and again, characterized by their subjective character:

“It goes quite fast and then suddenly it’s like step by step, like stepping stones” [Give me some loving, track 21]

EFL participant, woman

As can be seen in this example, most of the times EFL listeners considered an event expressed a non-affective concept, they were actually creating metaphors or similes to describe the musical structure of the song, (changes in dynamic, texture, pitch, articulation etc.), probably to compensate the lack of semantic referents that lyrics and cultural conventions provided to EMT participants⁵.

But besides these moments in which participants were able to associate a concept or emotion with the musical stimulus, there were other moments in which (just like the musicians), they mentioned the event was “*expressive*”, but could not say *of what*; or they considered the event was striking but it had merely a musical function like “*calling the listener’s attention*”:

“It sounds like it’s gone quite heavy you know it has that sort of grinding rhythm guitar in the background (...) He’s singing quite powerfully at that moment too.”

Do you think they are expressing an emotion at that point?

⁵ The presence of this cultural gap between NES listeners and (at least some) EFL listeners is confirmed by the fact that NES listeners tended to be more accurate when asked what genre the songs belonged to, and if they reminded them of any other song, artist or band.

"It feels like a lot of energy... I couldn't say a single emotion... No".
[Give me some loving, track 20]

EMT participant, man.

On the other hand, events in which participants of both groups reported feeling emotions in "themselves" rather than in the music were comparatively scarce: listeners reported particular events made them "*happy*", "*sad*" or "*angry*" for just an instant; and this did not necessarily coincide with the message or vibe of the song at that moment (for example, one participant said the word "*baby*" made her angry because of personal memories, but the sentence in the song was actually talking about resignation: "*waiting for my baby to maybe come around*").

Just as few were those moments in which the participants said they could relate to the message or emotion in the songs or when it was obvious from their answers that were feeling 'identified'. Bodily sensations like shivers and tingles induced by music were even rarer, and were only reported by EMT listeners. (See table 2 in Appendix 3 for a summary of the most frequently highlighted events associated with emotions and bodily sensations).

4.3.2.1 Listening styles

Besides the differences in the listeners' responses according to their first language described above, the analysis of their answers also revealed another distinction based on the number of times they highlighted events while listening to the song. One group of participants could be described as having a "global" or "holistic" approach to listening, since they raised their hands very few times and when they did they tended to highlight sections of the music (the whole verse, the solo, etc.), instead of more specific elements. This approach was more common among men and EFL participants. The second group could be called "analytical", since participants in this group highlighted many events, sometimes with a distance of a few seconds between.

The existence of these two approaches to listening can be attributed to differences in cognitive styles in the processing of information (c.f. Kearsley, 2005). Nevertheless, the fact that holistic listeners tended to be EFL participants and analytical listeners tended to be EMT could also be another consequence of more familiarity with the musical genres of the pieces and their language in the case of native English speakers. In other words, the more they understood the style of the songs and their lyrics, the more details they were able to perceive and highlight.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that there does not seem to be a clear link between these listening styles and the proportion of events perceived as symbolic and emotional. Some participants highlighted few events, but considered most of them as expressive of affects, for example.

5. DISCUSSION

The discussion of the results will be divided into four parts which aim to answer the research questions posed in the Introduction. The first one examines the implications of the structural characteristics of the most prominent events highlighted by the participants. The second and third parts intend to provide speculative explanations on how musicians elaborate and present their music as a 'message' to their audience, and how listeners reconstruct their interpretation based on that message. The final section summarizes this process presenting a model of communication of meaning in popular music based on the theoretical premises presented in the Literature Review section.

5.1 WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS?

The first thing that stands out by examining the list of highlighted events presented in section 4.1 is that although most of them correspond to moments when the songs 'change', it is not really clear to what extent these changes are really surprising or unexpected –which is the basic thesis behind Meyer's explanation of emotion perception and induction in music (Meyer, 1956)-. Some participants explicitly reported knowing that the song was going into an instrumental section or that it was going to end, for example, yet they highlighted those events. This suggests that some events can become prominent for other reasons that do not depend on conscious expressive decisions of the musicians, like their structural importance in the scheme of the song (e.g. the chorus) or their ability to afford semantic interpretations (see sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2).

With the notable exceptions of three participants who reported feeling shivers down the spine induced by a couple of events in which the singer from Cellarhigh changed the timbre of his voice and sung long notes in “*Give me some loving*” [track 20 in Audio CD], and a participant who felt tingles in the back when the bass did a small ornament in the introduction of “*Sirens call*” [track 2 in audio CD]; the results (which can be seen summarized in Table 2 in Appendix 3) also show how, contrarily to Meyer’s and Sloboda’s conclusions (1956, 2001, respectively), perceiving an event as prominent was not always associated with appraising it as expressive of an emotion or with the induction of physical and emotional responses in the participants.

Likewise, and as will be explained below in section 5.3, even in those cases when the highlighted events were regarded as emotionally expressive by the participants, this did not automatically lead them to elaborate their global interpretations on the information provided by these prominent symbolic events. This kind of results cannot be explained from the point of view of the theories of Meyer and Sloboda because their thesis deal with local emotional meanings; they have not intended to show how several local interpretations (or several events that elicited emotional responses) relate to each other to configure a final global emotional appraisal of a musical piece.

An additional conclusion that can be drawn from the list of most frequently highlighted events is the importance of changes in texture and timbre in the two rock songs (in the jazz songs the role of harmonic changes was more important). Events like the introduction effects on the electric guitar (distortion, echoes), studio effects (reverberation, vinyl disc sound), differences of timbre in the voice and changes of rhythmic accompaniment in the drum kit and the bass seem to be some of the principal ways by which this music call its listeners attention. This coincides with the claims of McClary and Walser (1990) who have noticed how the traditional emphasis of musicological analysis on structural features like harmony and counterpoint is not well suited for the study of popular music.

5.2 HOW DO MUSICIANS BUILD AND COMMUNICATE MUSICAL MEANING?

If we revise the evidence shown in section 4.3.1 it seems surprising that the musicians who participated in this study manage to present a unitary ‘message’ or at least its illusion, when they clearly do not always have the same experience or ideas about what the song ‘means’. However, it is possible to hypothesize an explanation to this situation.

Singers tend to build their performance and ideas about the song’s meaning in close relation to the lyrics, even though in the case of Cellarhigh (the funk-rock band), both songs had music before they had words. It is clear from their answers that they see their role as performers who give life to the narrative of the lyrics with their melody, but at the same time there are moments in which the message in the lyrics inspires their arrangements. That role as narrators usually involves a process of identification with the story, which is obvious in the case of Cellarhigh’s vocalist, but is also present in the case of the singer from Black Coffee, who even though is not the author of the lyrics, sees herself sometimes as an actress and sometimes as herself being the starring character of the story. This close relation with the words of the song is also probably responsible for the fact that singers’ local meanings of particular events are so coherent with the global meaning they assign to the pieces.

Instrumentalists on the other hand, tend to construct the meaning they assign to music based on the “*vibe*” or “*feel*” of the song; although they sometimes did use fragments of the lyrics to talk about the songs’ global meaning, or (in the case of Black Coffee’s pianist), to make arrangements that reflect what the words say at that moment⁶. This looser relation to the lyrics explain why they tend to regard the music as symbolizing feelings or ideas less often than vocalists, and to assign local meanings to particular events that are not coherent with the ideas the singers have in mind.

But how is it that musicians manage to sound “expressive” when in fact as seen in section 4.3.1, they do not think they their music is expressing

⁶ He only mentions this once during the interview. It seems this is not something he usually does.

anything at all most of the time?⁷ Even when they talked about their own solos, which is a moment when instrumentalists are farther away from the semantic yoke of lyrics (they are not accompanying a melody at those moments), they again tended to talk more about “energy”, “power” “building up the song” or “taking the song to its climax” rather than of specific emotions or ideas. And when they did talk of emotions, it was not clear *what emotion* they are talking about:

I tried to kick it up to make emphasis in the top emotional point at the 10th bar of the 12-bar blues, the moment where the dominant comes in. It kind of drops and stops and goes back to the tonic. It always strike me as the point of more emotion in a solo, and in the piece as a whole, it builds up to that point. [Black coffee, Track 29]

Pianist, Black Coffee

As can be seen from this example, he was not really talking about an emotion in particular; he was not even talking about the song’s emotion, he was just affirming the moment where the 12-bar blues harmonic cycle goes to the dominant is the most “exciting” moment in (any) song that has that structure.

In these instances when the musicians talked about an event being “communicative”, “expressive”, “energetic”, “powerful”, etc. without specifying further, we could change those words for a more abstract term like “moving”, to express the fact that they do provoke a reaction in the listener, but they should not be necessarily regarded as events charged with semantic content. This coincides with the thesis of Heinslick (cited in Cook, 2003) according to which music can only produce an “unspecific stirring” rather than emotions.

The use of these *moving* moments can be intentional and theoretically informed as in the case of the last example, or more implicit and intuitive as in the case of the musicians from the Funk-rock band (who found it more difficult to answer questions about the song’s harmony, for example). However, in some of their spontaneous comments, one can see that their objective of making their songs ‘interesting’ by adding details and

⁷ I refer to the more frequent moments during the interviews in which they highlighted events but they did not regard them as symbols of an affect or an idea.

arrangements reflects the ideas of Meyer (1956) about how musicians often manipulate their compositions and interpretations in order to provoke a reaction in their audience.

Theoretically informed or not, what these musicians achieve is to produce moving musical moments that as Sloboda (2001) has proposed with his concept of *proto-emotions*, almost 'ask' for a verbal referent to be assigned to them so they can be interpreted as meaningful and expressive of emotions and ideas. The first referent that fills these "energetic" moments with semantic sense is of course the 'unifying power' that the lyrics have.

But we have seen that not all the members of the bands pay much attention to the lyrics, so that illusion of a unique meaning should be probably sought in the fact that despite their different perceptions of particular events, and the song's changes and at times 'contradictory messages', the members of these ensembles do share a common idea of what the song's '*vibe*' or '*feel*' is, and the moments when it will probably 'used' by its listeners. In more general terms, they also share a common vision of the band's style, the kind of arrangements that are typical of that genre, the kind of audiences they want to reach and their main musical influences. All of these factors make it more likely that the final product has a minimal internal musical coherence which may also be perceived as a semantic unit.

The second element responsible for this "illusion" of the band communicating a unitary message with the song (in the context of this research), is of course the listener, who believes or not in that illusion and builds his or her own interpretation upon it.

5.2 HOW DO LISTENERS RE-CONSTRUCT MUSICAL MEANING?

Although the explanations that the listeners provided about why they raised their hands while listening to the songs provided a great deal of information about the way they experienced the music and how they made sense of it, this should not be taken as an indication that their global interpretations of the songs' meanings are the result of a simple addition or combination in a

single narrative of what they thought or felt when they highlighted those events. There is evidence that indicates that there was a parallel processing of the information provided by the song that was either unconscious (i.e. the participant was not aware of that cognitive process) or did not incite the listener to perceive many events as prominent. Yet, much information gathered by the listeners in this fashion was in many occasions a definitive element of their interpretations; and likewise, many ideas expressed when they built local meanings of highlighted events were not included in their global interpretations of the pieces.

In the case of the musical dimension of the songs, this parallel processing of the information can be demonstrated taking the example of those occasions when the listeners highlighted an event *because* the voice of the singer called their attention, but an analysis of the event also showed that the song was in a crucial structural moment (like the delay of the resolution of a cadence: track 25). In the lyrical dimension, the most clear example are those EMT participants who reported not having paid attention to the lyrics or who did not highlight any events because of their lyrical content, but at the moment of expressing their global interpretation of the song used information contained in the song's words.

If the construction a global interpretation of the music does not necessarily depend on the presence of prominent events (which is Meyer's thesis, 1956); then what is the main condition for this to happen? The answer I propose – mirroring the scheme proposed in the case of the musicians-, is the presence of a strong and coherent association of the musical stimulus (either highlighted or not) with a symbolic referent that transforms the “*unspecific stirring*” that Heinslick proposes (cited in Cook, 2003) into music with meaning.

As explained in the case of the singers, this symbolic referent is provided most of the time by the lyrics. The words of the song tend to take this central role not only because they tell a narration and they are conveyed by the perceptual appeal of the human voice, but because they are embedded in

the melody, which stands out in the structure of any song (the instruments are there to *accompany* that melody)⁸.

Thus, the use that listeners made of the lyrics as symbolic referents can be used to produce several scenarios of construction of meaning:

The first possibility (and the less likely) is that the listener actually does not pay any attention to the lyrics or simply does not understand any of the words of the song. In this case his or her interpretation will be probably based on an association of the “vibe” of the song with a cultural convention (e.g. slow jazz music = wine bar music), or with personal memories⁹. Consequently, the global meaning elaborated by this person will probably be expressed in vague “vibe” terms (e.g. “*it seems like a chilled out song*”) and will not necessarily coincide with the ideas the musicians have about the song’s meaning.

When those cultural or personal referents are absent or the listener cannot invoke any other symbolic association, (and this did not happen only to EFL participants), then the individual will declare him or herself unable to interpret the song’s meaning.

The third scenario takes place when (even in the presence of cultural referents), the listener only ‘catches’ or misunderstands a fragment of the lyrics, or when he or she grasps a whole sentence which is not in the chorus of the song. This person’s interpretation will tend to be quite idiosyncratic or remotely coincident with the band members’ global meanings. (E.g. a participant commenting on the meaning of the song *Give me some loving*: “*it’s a song about wanting... that thing about “be careful what you wish for, you might actually get it”*”).

The final scenario occurs when the semantic referent used by the listener is provided by the lyrics of the chorus. This possibility is the most probable since the refrain and its lyrics are repeated several times, and they usually

⁸ Indeed, most participants imagined the singer as the starring character of the narration in the lyrics, or the main character in its video.

⁹ However, as shown in section 4.3.2, even in those cases when the songs evoked personal memories, they were not usually the principal referent used by the listeners to build their global interpretations.

have a musically structural important place in the song (it has a different texture, louder sound level, clear melodic and harmonic sequences, etc.). In this case, the global interpretation build by the listener will tend to be very similar to the band members’.

The frequent presence of strong semantic referents that the listener regards as coherent with the music vibe has also the effect of eliminating the contradictions produced by local meanings. For example, a listener who understood the words of the chorus and felt they coincide with the song’s overall vibe said ‘*Black Coffee*’ was “a sad song” about “*waiting for someone*”, even though she perceived some of the saxophone lines were “*cheery*”.

Precisely that perception of the semantic link between referent and music as coherent or sensible indicates that despite the crucial importance of the lyrics in the construction of global meanings, the listeners take in consideration the information provided by the music’s vibe (explicitly or not). A clear example of this is the song ‘*You took advantage of me*’, which most of the participants interpreted as ironic, contradictory or absurd because the lyrics suggest a negative message, whereas the music suggests a happy one. (Or better, the music and its cultural connotation as “happy music”).

Finally, an important clarification is that the same listener can find him or herself in any of the scenarios of meaning construction described above, depending probably on factors like his or her familiarity with one song’s style or vocabulary, or the level of attention with which he or she listens to the piece. And second, these scenarios are valid for all the participants independently of their listening style (global or analytical), because as said in section 4.3.2.1, highlighting more events does not imply perceiving many of them as symbolic.

5.4 A MODEL OF MUSICAL COMMUNICATION

5.4.1 *Does music mean anything?*

The first core premise that inspired the present research was the questioning of the possibility that music carries inherent meanings; and even though this is basically a philosophical query, –as Meyer has shown in his critique to absolutists and expressionists (1956: 6)-; its answer is the epistemological foundation that has guided the current empirical and theoretical work within the domain of psychology of music.

The evidence gathered in this study suggests three possible positions in this debate. The first one could be called a *radical absolutist* position, in which the answer would be “*music has no meaning by itself*”. According to this perspective, the fact that most of the time the participants did not perceive the musical stimuli as symbolic should be interpreted as an indication that Heinslick (cited in Cook, 2003) and Francès (cited in Nattiez, 1990:126) were right when they affirmed music can only provide *moving* moments, or in their words, *unspecific stirrings* or *vague psychological impressions* that only acquire significance when they are attached to a semantic referent.

The contrary perspective would be of course that music does have a meaning that has its content in the expression of basic emotions (Kivy, cited in Cook, 2003). The problem with this *expressive* position is that it cannot explain satisfactorily why some highlighted events received contradictory or no interpretations at all.

A third, *moderately expressive* perspective would maintain that music does not actually have an inherent meaning, but it can suggest “gestural and other expressions of emotions by the human body” (Clynes, Scherer, cited in Sloboda, 2001). I believe this perspective explains better the results if we assume those “gestural expressions” are manifested psychologically not as identifiable emotions, but as the indication of the *activation* dimension of an affect. These *proto-emotions* (Sloboda, 2001) could either induce interpretations which may be contradictory within the limits of what that

arousal direction *affords*¹⁰ or can simply not elicit an interpretation, if the individual does not assign a symbolic referent to them. –This approach could also help to explain the inconsistent results of studies on expression that have only focused on one dimension of the musical stimuli (c.f. Gabrielsson and Lindström, 2001)-.

5.4.2 Can musical meaning be communicated?

The second basic premise that underlies the present research is of course the question of to what extent it is possible for musicians to communicate meanings to their audience. I believe a satisfactory answer can be provided by the semiological theory proposed by Nattiez (1990).

The diagram on page 71 represents a schematic summary of the process of construction and reconstruction of musical meaning as it has been described in sections 5.2 and 5.3 and based on Nattiez’s semantic model.

On the left side of the diagram the *poietic process* shows how even though singers and instrumentalists construct the meaning on different grounds, they achieve to produce the illusion of presenting a unique message by agreeing in general semantic referents like the vibe of the song and the band’s style. That illusion, which constitutes the musical object, corresponds to what Nattiez calls the *material trace*. The right side of the diagram represents the *esthetic process* and the four possible scenarios in which the listeners can construct their global interpretations of the songs’ meaning¹¹.

As can be seen in the diagram, the large arrows that reach the material trace do not point in the same direction; they do not represent the optimistic idea that meaning flows from right to left, from musician to listener. They both point to the material object because as demonstrated above, not all the

¹⁰ For example, the song “Sirens call” was interpreted as expressive of high arousal emotions like *happiness* or *rebellion*, but never of low activated ones like *relaxation* or *boredom*.

¹¹ For the sake of simplicity, the diagram does not include the possibility of several semantic referents competing to provide a more sensible interpretation to the musical stimulus.

elements in the stream of sounds and words that constitute the song and reconstruct their own interpretations upon them.

Now, if to this consideration we add the following evidence:

- a) The musicians did not always have the explicit intention of expressing any idea or emotion,
- b) They sometimes felt a prominent moment was expressive but could not agree or even identify *what* ideas or emotions were being expressed by the event;
- c) The listeners did not feel that the music was expressing any ideas or emotions most of the time. (Unless we consider their aesthetic appraisal of the events is a basic kind of emotion, following the taxonomy of Scherer and Zentner ,2001); and
- d) The four scenarios of construction of meaning by listeners can result in quite varied and idiosyncratic interpretations;

Then we should probably conclude that the answer to the question about the possibility of musical communication is negative. However, if we adopt a more flexible approach and consider that:

- e) In general terms most listeners coincided on their global interpretations,
- f) When they did not coincide they at least agreed on the activation dimension (arousal) of the emotions they perceived in the music; and
- g) There are a number of features in the songs that afford some interpretations better than others (Clarke, 2005);

Then we could conclude that musical communication is possible, but it is not guaranteed; it depends mainly on the coincidence on the semantic referents that musicians and listeners use to build their interpretations (and this is of course, more likely when they share the same language and culture).

This idea of conditional communication when sometimes there is not a communicative intention by the musician is of course paradoxical. But we could regard this either as a natural condition of the symbolic functioning of social meanings in general, or attribute that communication to unconscious

emotional process like the ones postulated by psychoanalysis (which of course is harder to prove empirically).

Now, **how does this process happen in *real life* situations?** Although this research was designed in order to obtain more ecological validity than most other empirical work on this phenomenon, it is obvious that what the procedure demanded of the participants made the situation somehow artificial. However, from what the listeners said spontaneously about their attitudes when they listen to music in everyday contexts, a few hypotheses can be elaborated.

It is likely that in 'real life' situations the level of attention that individuals pay to the multiple features of a song will probably depend on many factors like their current mood, the social context where they are, their aesthetical appraisal of the music, and the importance that some features have in some musical styles (e.g. instrumental sections are very important in jazz music, whereas in folk music the lyrics are crucial).

A smaller level of attention to the song's characteristics and the semantic importance of the context will thus increase the possibility that the listener make use of other symbolic referents to build a personal interpretation of the song. In the case of popular music, these referents abound in mass media, and provide information like: the look and biography of the band members, the reviews of popular music critics and dj's, the kind of situations it is appropriate to listen to this music, the kind of people who likes this music, their dress codes and values, etc.

This profusion of referents can then have a double effect. Let's take for example the case of a multimedia product like music videos. While they can tell a large number of people that one song carries a message of rebellion and that it has the aesthetic of punk music; at the same time the disjointed images of the video can prevail over the narrative of the lyrics of the song¹²,

¹² It is quite common in popular music that the images of the videos do not correspond to the narrative or the lyrics, and do not present an alternative narration themselves.

and incite personal associations that will result in the construction of very subjective meanings and uses for the song by individual spectators.

If additionally, the listener makes a connection between some of those referents and meaningful emotional and personal features, then it is probable that he or she will feel emotionally attached or “identified” with the song and its message, even though that message is actually more the listener’s reading than the musician’s intention.

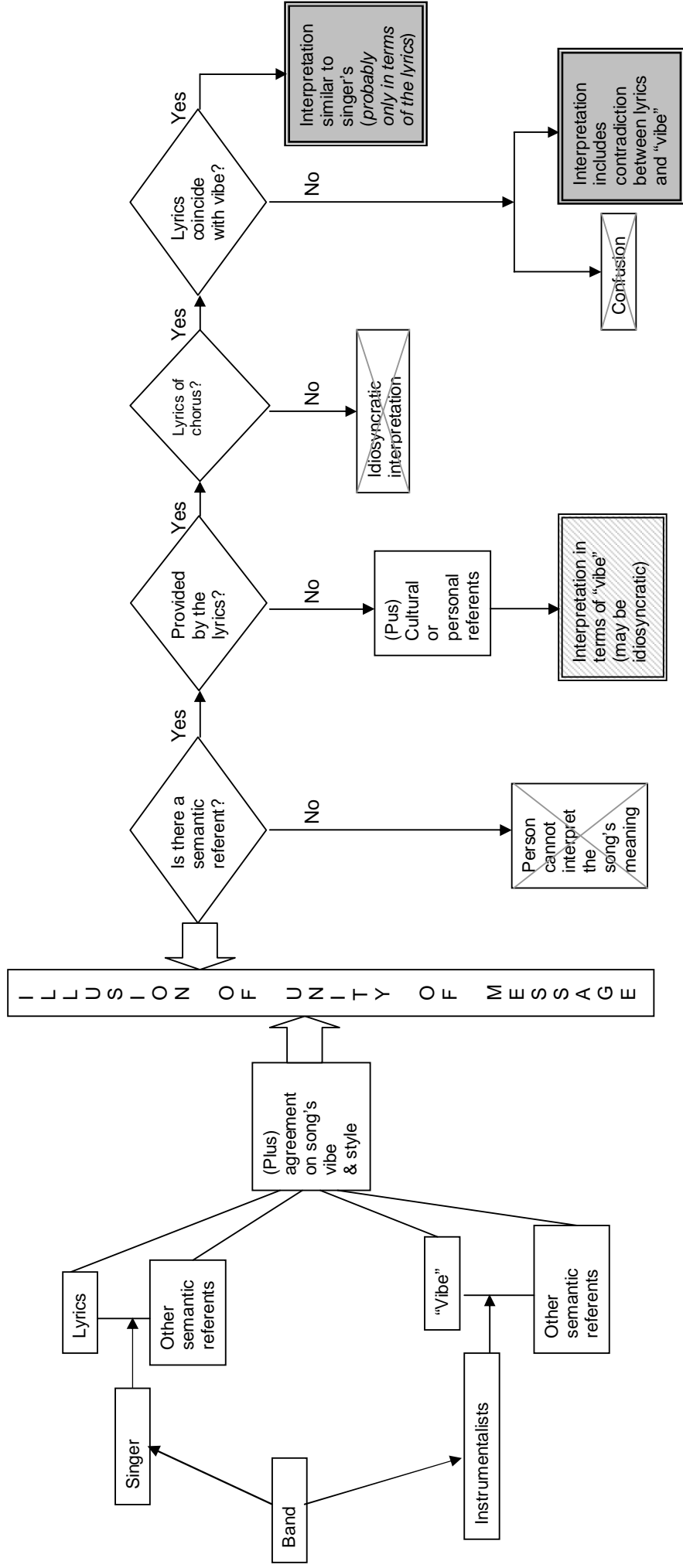
As can be seen, the concept of *conditional* communication described above and its application on these everyday circumstances, help to explain how rock, pop and jazz music have become so popular even among people from so different cultures and languages. However from my point of view, (and returning once again to sociology), this should not be read as an indication that popular music alienates the masses, because on the contrary, this kind of music and the multiple discourses around it provide listeners with material to construct intimate meanings and personal uses to the music (c.f. De Nora, 2001).

Diagram 1: Model of communication of musical meaning in popular music

Musicians

Listeners

.....Poietic process.....Material trace.....Esthetic process.....



6. CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative and phenomenological approach of this research can make it the target of positivist criticism on how it allegedly represents a return to times when the problems of musical experience were studied based on introspective, less than scientific methods. However, I believe it can be argued that the method implemented here was valid and advantageous.

While it is true that this study faces validity issues due to the small number of participants, the extent to which the bands and songs used here represent the universe of rock and jazz music, the fact that EFL participants were not completely ignorant of the English language, and the limited power of self report on informing unconscious cognitive and emotional processes; these issues should not be taken as a sign that the approach implemented here was not appropriate.

On the contrary, I believe one of the main contributions of this exploratory study lies on its methodology. The use of open questions and an intentionally vague instruction provided a better insight into the phenomenon of communication of musical meaning as it happens in everyday situations than the results of most experimental studies. It has been shown here that even though people's answers are varied, common trends can be found without having to recur to presenting the participants with a limited choice of answers. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the interview schedule).

A very telling example that shows how limited answers can lead to deceptive conclusions is the study of Watt and Ash (1998), which concluded that music "can express male/female-ness, and good/evil-ness and happy/sad-ness and so on". This study used the conventional technique of asking participants to appraise musical extracts against a list of adjectives and found that people chose some adjectives more than others and therefore inferred that instrumental music can "act as a representation of the attributes of a person"

(ibid: 49). From the point of view of the findings and the theoretical perspective of the present study, Watt et al.'s results are in fact a consequence the invitation of the experimental situation to attach semantic referents to the musical stimuli (within the limits of which what every stimulus affords), but this does not mean that people listen to music as *female* or *evil* in ordinary circumstances.

The same criticism is valid for studies on expression. The fact that an expert musician can interpret or improvise a piece “sadly” on request does not necessarily imply that in normal circumstances musicians consciously regard their performances in terms of expressing specific emotions. This assumption seems to be more a consequence of the traditional view of musicology on how composers and performers intend to communicate emotions, than of evidence gathered from real-life situations. In fact, just as shown here even though musicians (either professional or amateur) can say that one event is ‘*expressive*’ or *communicative*, on many occasions they cannot name the emotional content of that expression. –Persson’s findings (2001) can thus be read as the effect that such traditions have on the perception that classical music performers have of their own work-.

It is therefore strange that even though theorists like Patrik Juslin have acknowledged that musicians may in fact not intend to express emotions *consciously* or *always* (Juslin, 1997: 414; 2003: 282), and that listeners’ experience includes many moments in which they do not perceive music as semantically loaded (Waterman, 1996); these considerations have not led to empirical and theoretical work in order to explain *what* circumstances make more probable that musicians and listeners experience music as expressing ideas or emotions. I believe it is probable that questioning the assumption that music is a process of communication of emotions from musicians to listeners; and including that questioning in empirical design, can help to solve some of the contradictions and problems found in experimental research. (For an extended argument on this point, see Cook, 1994).

Obviously, I am not saying that experimental approaches are not valid. In multivariate phenomena like musical communication the use of experimental

control may be the only way to know the relative influence of individual factors like musical structures and performers' skills, what I am saying is that sometimes that approach can make us lose the perspective of the need for providing ecological valid results.

A theoretical endeavour which effectively combined the power of experimental methods with an open and critic perspective could then help us understand for example why unlike us, music lovers, some people do not experience music as emotionally meaningful, never buy music CDs, go to concerts or listen to the music radio stations (which was the case of two of the participants of the study). The point is, studying the exception can give clues on understanding the norm. But in order to see the exception, one has to listen to people's subjectivity. That, I think is one of the main contributions of this study.

Finally, I would like to conclude this dissertation by briefly presenting some topics and alternatives for further studies that could benefit from the model of musical communication implemented here and the adoption of a critical but rigorous methodology:

- ♪ First and most obviously, how does the model of musical communication implemented here apply to instrumental music? If in popular music the lyrics provide the most important semantic background to construct interpretations, where is that background in music without words?
- ♪ How would the results of this study change if the singers replaced the lyrics with word-like but meaningless sounds like scat singing?
- ♪ How can the model of communication used here be improved in order to study the process of negotiation of meanings when the members of a popular music band arrange or co-compose a song?
- ♪ How can the model and the research design be improved in order to study more complex situations like multimedia stimuli in which music is only one among several semantic referents?

- ♪ What effect does listening to a song several times have on constructing its meaning?
- ♪ What is the relation between liking the musical piece and adopting a more analytical listening style? Can people like a piece of music even if they process it with a global approach?
- ♪ How are intimate meanings created? How would the results change if we asked the participants to listen to their favourite song instead of an unknown one? Would they provide more explicit local emotional interpretations? Or would the process of attaching emotionally to music be very implicit and unconscious?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

General instruction:

For listeners: “Raise your hand when the music causes something to happen to you”.

For members of the band: “Raise your hand when the music causes something to happen to you, or when you feel you or any of your bandmates are being expressive”

After asking them to explain why they raised their hand every time they did:

- ♪ What do you think this song is about?
- ♪ What is the main emotion or idea it expresses?
- ♪ If this song had a video, what images would it have?
- ♪ On what occasions would you listen to this song?
- ♪ Does this song remind of any other artist or song?
- ♪ On what style would you classify this song?

Additional questions for the members of the band:

- ♪ What does the name of the band mean?
- ♪ What image would you put in the cover of a CD from the band?
- ♪ If you were being interviewed by a music journalist and he/she asked you to describe the “sound” or “style” of your band, what would your answer be?
- ♪ Who do you think are the people most likely to enjoy your music?
- ♪ In what occasions or contexts do you think it is more likely that people will listen to your music?

APPENDIX 2

TABLE 1 DESCRIPTION OF AUDIO EXAMPLES IN CD

Note: The tracks marked with an asterisk (*) are not part of the group of most highlighted events, but are included in the Audio CD because they were used as examples in the ‘Results’ and ‘Discussion’ sections.

Track Number	Description
1.	SONG 1: “SIRENS CALL” (BY CELLARHIGH)
2. *	0:08 [Bass ornament].
3.	0:16 [Vocals entry]: The vocals enter loudly singing fast phrases in rap-style. The bass starts to provide the accompaniment using a funky riff played through a fuzz box, while the guitar continues doing the same pattern as in the intro (E-Bb) which is followed by the drum kit. The first sentence of the lyrics is: <i>“I’m on top of the world”</i> .
4.	0:38 [‘Heavy bit’]: The guitar and the bass switch to a heavy distorted sound that is repeated for 4 measures and does not correspond to any specific chord. The drum kit uses the cymbals almost randomly and the voice “screams” high notes with background vocals as well.
5.	0:49 to 1:04 [Chorus (general)]: The chorus has an ascending harmonic progression (G, A, Bb, C) that is marked clearly in every step by the melody (<i>“I’m feeling”</i> repeated three times) and the instruments. The guitar has a fuzz effect on. When the harmony gets to C, the vocals complete the sentence: <i>“beautiful”</i> .
6.	1:07 [Intro reprise]: Right after the chorus finishes with a cymbal and the voice in a scream like fashion, the song suddenly goes back to the same acoustic guitar theme of the introduction.
7.	1:34 [‘Heavy bit’]: It sounds very similar to the first time.
8.	1:45 to 2:00 [chorus with ‘yeahs’]: The only difference with the first chorus is the presence of background vocals doing a descendent melody singing: “yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah”. The chorus finishes with a scream from the lead voice.
9.	2:01 to 2:16 [guitar solo (in general)]: The accompaniment continues with the same texture and harmony as in the chorus. The guitar starts doing a distorted guitar solo, (accompanied by the sound of a second guitar playing the same way as in the chorus).
10.	2:13-2:17 [Guitar solo: Octaves]: The guitar finishes its solo with a series of “squeaking” notes produced by the Whammy pedal effect that generates a sound that is exactly one octave higher than the one played in the instrument.

11.	2:20 [Bridge reprise with melodic falsetto and acoustic guitar]: Right after the solo finishes returns to just an acoustic guitar accompaniment while the vocals do the first half of the bridge in a soft falsetto voice.
12.	SONG 2: “GIVE ME SOME LOVING” (BY CELLARHIGH)
13.	0:00 to 0:15 [Introduction]: One bar of just the drum kit playing quietly in an andante tempo. Then an acoustic guitar joins and plays a funky riff and harmonics while another one does subtle ornaments in the background.
14. *	0:23 [Lyrics: “naked”].
15.	0:33 [Pause]: This pause comes right after the vocals finish the verse with the sentence: <i>“If stop the time was in my hands girl you know that I would”</i> . The snare drum signals an unexpected silence that lasts one bar.
16. *	0:46 [Lyrics: “just be careful what you wish for”].
17.	0:56 [Funky bass lick]: The ‘playful jazzy section’ finishes with a roll in the snare drum and the bass does a funky lick during 4 bars while the vocalist sing twice the words that give the song its title (<i>“give me some loving”</i>).
18.	1:42 [Melodic interlude introduction by long note in vocals]: The playful jazzy section finishes with a long note in the vocals delivered with vibrato: <i>“give me some loving”</i> twice. The accompaniment consists of a single note in the bass (the same note two octaves lower) and the guitar doing discreet chords that coincide with the harmony of the following section. The drum kit also plays a more discreet accompaniment.
19.	1:52 [Melodic interlude]: The vocals sing melodic phrases while the guitar repeats two high pitched notes (B, E) that sound with much reverberation and echoes. While the drum kit is still playing in a rather discreet way, the bass provides the harmony in a funky style. The lyrics in this section say: <i>“everyone knows that this world can end bringing you down (down)... But you make it better with only one flick of your eyes (your eyes)”</i> .
20.	2:10 [Heavy rock section, vocals ‘screaming’]: The vocalist does two long and high pitched phrases that sound as if he were screaming or singing with difficulty. Meanwhile the guitar and the bass are quite distorted and the kit has the hi-hats open.
21.	2:29-2:35 [Funky guitar lick]: All the instruments disappear except the guitar, which does a staccato funky lick similar to the one that accompanies the second verse of the song. The last note of this lick is accompanied by a strike in the kit and then a one bar silence follows.
22.	3:06 [‘Cheesy ending’]: Right after the bass lick finishes, the guitar emphasizes the end of the song with a “semitone cadence” from Eb to E played in a clean sound, the bass slides up an octave to E and the kit hits the cymbals. The song ends with a typical final hit of all the instruments in the tonic.
23.	SONG 3: “BLACK COFFEE” (BY BLACK COFFEE)
24.	1:11 [vocals portamento in “dreams”]: The vocals do a portamento in the word <i>“dreams”</i> after the small silence that delays the resolution of the cadence. The lyrics go: <i>“I’m hanging on Monday my Sunday dreams to dry”</i> .

25.	1:29 [vocals portamento: “weep and fret”]: It happens in part B of the harmonic structure, which is made evident by the change in the bass accompaniment that assumes a walking style. The voice portamento occurs as the harmony resolves from V7 to tonic in the progression: F7, Bb7, EbΔ. The lyrics in this point make a comparison between sexes: “ <i>man’s born to go and loving, woman’s born to weep and fret</i> ”.
26.	2:13 to 3:19 [Sax solo (in general)]: It starts with slow and short phrases played within a mid-range register. After an unexpected long note the solo becomes faster and more fluid while the bass and the piano play a more traditional blues accompaniment.
27.	2:44 [sax solo: long note]: It appears in the V7 step of the progression right before finishing the first cycle of 12-bar blues harmony. (The note in the saxophone is also the seventh major grade of the scale: Db).
28.	2:53 [sax solo: faster phrases]: It consists of several fast chromatic ascending phrases.
29.	3:03 to 3:12 [sax solo: ascendant scale]: It’s an ascendant chromatic phrase made of slightly slower notes than those used in the immediately precedent phrases. It finishes while the accompaniment gets to the dominant of the dominant (F7), just before closing the 12-bar blues harmony and the solo.
30.	3:20 to 3:46 [bass solo (in general)]: The bass solo is not quite melodic and it has a limited register of little more than an octave. It follows closely the harmonic structure of the 12-bar blues and is accompanied only by the drum kit which only plays the snare drum discreetly.
31. *	4:10 to 4:20 [Third verse reprise].
32.	SONG 4: “YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME” (BY BLACK COFFEE)
33.	0:00 to 0:12 [Introduction]: It’s played only by the piano in a very slow tempo $\text{crochet}=65$ (approximately) and with low volume. The supporting harmony is descending and it ends with a low F note (V grade of the scale).
34. *	0:28 [Vocals: “what’s the use?”].
35.	0:14 [voice entry]: The vocals enter in a much louder volume than the intro and marking a very acute change of tempo ($\text{crochet}=215$) emphasized by the piano and the bass which play louder when the vocals say the words “ <i>sap</i> ” and “ <i>all</i> ” (The whole sentence is: “ <i>I’m a sentimental sap, that’s all</i> ”).
36. *	0:42 [lyrics: “So here I am with all my bridges burned”].
37.	0:52 [Piano solo starts with short “jumpy” phrases]: Right after the singer says again: “ <i>you took advantage of me</i> ”, the piano starts the solo with short and ‘playful’ phrases.
38.	1:13 [Piano solo ‘builds up’]: This moment coincides with the end of the first part of section B of the harmony and the start of the second part, where there is a cadence from F _{sus} to BbΔ. This resolution is emphasized by a series of louder chords in the left hand. The solo continues with more fluent and high pitched phrases accompanied by louder chords.

39.	1:25-2:00 [Scat section]: After the piano has prepared her introduction by finishing the solo with low chords, the vocalist starts singing in scat style. Every three phrases in this style she sings the sentence: " <i>you took advantage of me</i> ".
40.	2:38 [Accelerando]: Right after a dramatic stop in the low F note in the piano (the same as in the introduction), the song makes a pause and reprises the first verses, first with the piano playing in slow tempo and then gradually gaining speed as the bass and the kit join again. After a couple of vocal phrases the saxophone starts responding with fast licks again.

APPENDIX 3

**TABLE 2 COMMON HIGHLIGHTED EVENTS, MUSICAL FEATURES
AND PARTICIPANTS RESPONSES**

The following tables present the events more frequently highlighted by the participants in each song. The numbers in the column titled *Musical features* correspond to the list of music-structural events associated with physical and emotional responses presented by Sloboda (1991): Harmony descending cycle of fifths to tonic.

1. Harmonic descending cycle of fifths to tonic.
2. Melodic appoggiaturas.
3. Harmonic or melodic sequences.
4. Enharmonic changes.
5. Harmonic or melodic acceleration to cadence.
6. Delay of final cadence.
7. New or unprepared harmony.
8. Sudden dynamic or textural change.
9. Repeated syncopation.
10. Prominent event earlier than prepared for.

The Columns titled *Musicians*, *EMT* (English as Mother Tongue participants), and *EFL* (English as Foreign Language participants), show the symbolic associations that the participants made of every event (it does not include aesthetical judgements). –If the box is empty it means no participant talk about the event in symbolic terms–.

SIRENS CALL	Musical features	Musicians	EMT	EFL
0:16 [Vocals entry]	8	Big, energetic. Sense of arrival. Song kicking in.		
0:38 ['Heavy bit']	8, 10	Crazy, random, shock	Tense, threatening.	
0:49 [Chorus (general)]	3, 8	Call for attention. Explosion.	Cheerful. Happy, party.	Conversation, encouragement. Exciting mood.
1:07 [Intro reprise]	7, 8	Breathing moment.	Tension. Chilled out. Call of attention	Quiet, change of feeling.
1:34 ['Heavy bit']	8, 10	Crazy.	Discordant.	Chaotic. Encouragement.
1:45 to 2:00 [Chorus with "yeahs"]	3, 8	Different from first chorus. The message of the song comes across here.	Mellow. Building up to something. Jimi Hendrix's music.	Vortex of the song.
2:01 to 2:16 [guitar solo (in general)]	8	Rockier feel.	Sinister. Good fun. Raw energy. Rage, frustration.	Head banging. Let my pressure out. Rage, anger.
2:13-2:17 [Guitar solo: Octaves]	10	Climax of solo.		
2:20 [Bridge reprise with melodic falsetto and acoustic guitar]	3, 8	Really happy. Contrast.	Rob Thomas' music. Eerie, Building up.	

GIVE ME SOME LOVING	Musical features	Musicians	EMT	EFL
0:00 to 0:15 [Introduction]	2, 9,	Relaxed. "Get ready". Mysterious, Smooth, sexy, Barry White's music	Spanish guitar music. Sparkly. Mellow, relaxed, relaxed with funkiness.	"Get ready, I'm gonna tell you something". Relaxed.
0:33 [Pause]	10	Surprising. Kicks off the song. Emphasizes message in lyrics.	Ready to jump back in. Intriguing.	Stop breathing.
0:56 [Funky bass lick]	3, 8	Smooth. Cheeky.		
1:42 [Melodic interlude introduction by long note in vocals]	3, 7, 8	Serious. Honesty.	(Induces chills down the spine). Dramatic.	Request for more time or space. Call of attention. Instability.
1:52 [Melodic interlude]	3, 7, 8	Heartfelt, serious. Surprising.	Feeling down, water running down. Sad, melancholic. Depressing. Relaxed.	Depression, desperation, moaning. "Let's remember". Musical goal of the song. Honesty.
2:10 [Heavy rock section, vocals 'screaming']	8	Heavily serious. (Induces shivers down the spine). Anger. Highest peak in the song.	Rob Thomas' music. Heartfelt. Happy. Highest level in the song. Kinky.	Complain, letting pressure out. Moaning.
2:29 [Funky guitar lick]	8, 10		Back in control, funky. Playful. Bouncy.	
3:06 ["Cheesy ending"]	6, 8	Tender. Cheesy.	Hawaiian music.	

BLACK COFFEE	Musical features	Musicians	EMT	EFL
1:11 [vocals portamento in "dreams"]	3, 6		Sexy, but contradictory.	Sensual, deep.
1:29 [vocals portamento: "weep and fret"]	3, 7, 8		Bad feminine attitude.	
2:13 to 3:19 [Sax solo (in general)]	3, 8		Sensual, romantic.	
2:44 [sax solo: long note]	10	Powerful.	Leading to something.	"Pay attention to me".
2:53 [sax solo: faster phrases]	3, 8	Building up.		"Pay attention to me!"
3:03 [sax solo: ascendant scale]	3		Feeling better.	
3:20 to 3:46 [bass solo (in general)]	8		Lower mood.	(Induces boredom).
YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME	Musical features	Musicians	EMT	EFL
0:00 to 0:12 [Introduction]	2, 3	Suspense. Cliché.	Sad. Smooth, calmed.	Sad. Soft. Melancholic.
0:14 [voice entry]	8	Punchier	Charleston music. Energetic. Cheery. Surprising.	Dancing. More energy. Start running.
0:52 [Piano solo starts with short "jumpy" phrases]	2, 3, 8	Cheeky.	Cheesy.	
1:13 [Piano solo 'builds up']	3, 8	Communicative. Happy and bouncy.	More dramatic.	Chaotic.
1:25-2:00 [Scat section]	8, 9	Being annoyed.	Serious.	Something not-sad. Funny.
2:38 [Accelerando]	3, 8	Getting angry again.	Happier. Building up the song.	Request to do something in a hurry. Pretending to be fine. Getting excited with an idea.

