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Editorial

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Growing interest in the link between music and identity during the past two decades has led to significant understanding of the ways in which music plays a role in our lives. Its role in development, health and well-being, education, social integration, and musical participation (to name just a few) have been discussed in numerous articles and in notable volumes such as *Musical Identities* by MacDonald et al. (2002), the *Handbook of Musical Identities* by MacDonald et al. (2017), and the *Routledge International Handbook of Music Psychology in Education and the Community* by Creech et al. (2020). The international profile of contributing researchers to these and other volumes emphasizes the global relevance of the topic.

After two decades of research on the reciprocal relationship between music, identity, and lived experience, in this Special Issue, we turn our attention to the ways in which we can, and the reasons we should, apply our knowledge in a range of complementary and global contexts. The authors examine the methods used to explore this diverse and complex subject from multiple perspectives, drawing on the work of international scholars to provoke rich and globally relevant debate.

The first five articles address the ways in which current knowledge and insights can be applied in order to improve instructional processes in different educational levels, for example, or to support moments of transition to, within, and from professional life. The final article considers the articles as a whole and draws on this meta-view to suggest how identity in music might be reconceptualized.

The first and third articles work together to introduce the ways in which a newly validated Musical Identity Measure (MIM) might be used to support students to understand their motivation and career thinking. The first article, by Burland, Bennett, and López-Íñiguez, serves as an introduction, positioning some of the main theories, methods, and approaches that have characterized the field to date and introducing the validation of MIM.

MIM was developed to explore musical identity as a variable across multiple types of musicians in order to offer insights into how understanding musical identity might promote self-awareness, enhance independence and initiative, and support career decision-making. The extent to which MIM is able to fulfill these ambitions forms the basis of the third article, in which López-Íñiguez and colleagues frame their work within social-cognitive career theory (SCCT) to support their view that career identities are socially constructed and related to psychological capital and the influence of proximal and distal factors. Following completion of MIM and some reflective questions, lexicometry analysis highlighted the strong musical

calling and emotional attachment that influenced participants' thinking about their futures in music. For these performance students, MIM provided a valuable source of reflection by bringing their musical identities out of the liminal space and enabling them to recognize sources of positive and negative experience as well as perceived strengths and weaknesses. A novel aspect of this article is its discussion of the potential risks associated with a strong identification with music.

Angel-Alvarado and colleagues discuss the elements that support or inhibit the sociomusical identities of music teachers in Chile. Adopting a multiple-case study approach with music teachers across the four geographic regions of Chile, the authors show how sociomusical identities are supported when there is positive alignment between music educators' professional backgrounds, pedagogic knowledge, teaching experiences, and educational environments. Their data highlight the potentially inhibiting impact of broader institutional contexts, in this case related to the reputation and operation of the profession, and its resistance to change and progress. The article gives an important reminder about the importance of understanding and contextualizing the distinct characteristics and challenges of individuals within their specific music education contexts.

The second article in this collection proposes a new framework for understanding musical identities—Music Identities in Action (MIIA). MacDonald and Saarikallio highlight the dynamic, embodied, and situated nature of musical identities, discussing the “inextricable link” between these aspects of identity (p. 729) to everyday life. The authors embrace the concept of mess (Law, 2004), reflecting the psychological and cultural complexity of life, and emphasizing the complex and multifaceted nature of musical identities. Their metamodern approach calls on us to “celebrate the multidisciplinary dynamism that is emblematic of identities in action” (p. 739) and to broaden our conceptions of musical identities.

Awareness of the risks of identity threat is a theme developed in more detail by Breakwell and Jaspal in their article on the ways in which musicians coped with identity threat during the pandemic. The authors discuss three case studies (of a male voice choir, well-known songwriters, and a composer and theater impresario) through the lens of identity process theory, considering the impact of different coping strategies and identity resilience on the consequences of identity threat. The article provides important insights into the variety of coping strategies that musicians and others in the creative industries might deploy when faced with identity threat.

Finally, Beech responds to the collection of articles by reflecting on the state of excessive and longitudinal liminality encountered by musicians. He argues that increased vulnerability is at the intersection of personal and situational liminality. The mitigation of vulnerability requires tools and strategies that can militate against the anxieties caused by vulnerability, ultimately resulting in stasis. Beech proposes a reconceptualization of vulnerability as a source for learning: that is, a form of situated learning that operates within a community of practice, enabling “a socially supported form of resilience which can enable agency” (p. 799).

In addressing its aims, this Special Issue considers identities beyond the musical. Many of these, such as learner identity and sociomusical identity, have received little attention to date in music studies. This is despite their relevance to the development and equitable outcomes of individuals and to understanding the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on identity and coping among musicians. Individually and collectively, the articles synthesize extant research, identify critical gaps in knowledge, and enable us to gather and juxtapose the different

ways in which the interplay of music and identity is being studied. We hope that they provide a further foundation for the important work that is yet to come.

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