"I was playing and I just felt that… this is me."

Examining the role of positive emotions as motivators for professional musicians

Camilla Helen Heiervang

A thesis for the professional program at the Department of Psychology

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Spring 2019

Summary

Title of the thesis: *"I was playing and I just felt that… this is me".* Examining the role of positive emotions as motivators for professional musicians.

Name of supervisors: Beate Seibt (main supervisor) and Hanne Weie Oddli (co-supervisor)

Name of author: Camilla Helen Heiervang

Background: While the relationship between music and emotions has been widely studied, little is known about the role of positive emotions as motivating factors for professional musicians. Specifically, not much is known about the role of the emotion called kama muta (Sanskrit for *moved by love)* as a motivator for aspiring musicians.

Objectives: The object of the present thesis was to examine the role of positive emotions as motivators for musicians at different stages in their life. In addition, the thesis aimed to provide a phenomenological understanding of interest, joy (in relation to flow) and kama muta (being moved) in response to music.

Method: Ten high-level professional musicians were recruited via selective sampling. In semi-structured in-depth interviews they shared their experience of starting to play an instrument, and of becoming a professional musician. The interviews explored emotional responses to music and the participant's relationship to music. The interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis. The analysis was informed by a phenomenological-hermeneutic approach to knowledge.

Findings: Five main categories, constituted by eleven subcategories, were identified in the analysis. The main categories were (1) *The interest awakens: "It was a sort of acute fanaticism",* (2) *Feeling connected through music: "It just feels like I belong",* (3) *"You can't fight it": Making sense of kama muta experiences,* (4) *"You just feel so lonely": loneliness and ambivalence*, and (5) *Reaffirmation: music as a remedy.*

Main conclusions: The findings suggest that positive emotions constitute a central part of the musician's motivation to pursue music. Both interest, flow and kama muta (being moved) served to reinforce the musicians' commitment to music. Loneliness and ambivalence were also part of the musicians' lives, but in a different way than the positive emotions: while the positive emotions were usually direct responses to music, the negative emotions occurred as a result of difficulties with social connection, or from feeling *different.* Experiences of being moved by music provided a sense of connection that was psychologically important and valuable to the musicians.

Acknowledgements

Developing a research project from start to finish has instilled in me a great respect for the field of social research, and for the various problems researchers face as a project unfolds and develops. Many are those who deserve a grateful mention. I am very grateful to the Norwegian Research Council for the grants that I have received to work on the thesis. These grants have been instrumental in helping me dedicate the amount of time and resources to the thesis that it deserved. A big *thank you* goes to my two supervisors, Beate Seibt and Hanne Weie Oddli. Thank you for shining your light on this material and guiding me into the unknown. Alan Fiske also deserves a special *thank you* for initiating the project, and for helpful ideas and suggestions both at the start and at the end of the project. Lastly, I want to thank the people close to me for cheering me on and encouraging me throughout the process.

Table of contents

Summary 3

Acknowledgements 5

Introduction 8

- **What do we know about the relationship between music and emotions?** 9
- **What do we know about musicians' relationship to emotions elicited by music?** 10

Theoretical framework 11

- **First, what is music?** 11
- **The role of emotions in science and psychology** 12
- **Self Determination Theory as a framework for the pursuit of music** 13
- **Interest: a positive emotional construct associated with intrinsic motivation** 15
- **Do experiences of flow inspire striving for musical competence?** 16
- **The emotion of kama muta provides a sense of connection and relatedness** 17
- **The present study** 19

Method 20

- **Context for the study** 20
- **A qualitative approach** 21
- **Procedure** 21
  - Sample composition and sample size 21
  - In-depth interviews 22
  - The transcription process 23
- **The qualitative analysis** 24
  - Thematic analysis 24
  - Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis 25
- **Transparency and reflexivity** 26
  - Epistemology in the present thesis 26
  - The role of theory and theoretical concepts in the present analysis 27
- **Research quality** 28
  - Validity 29
  - Reliability 29
  - Generalisability 29
- **Ethical perspectives** 30
  - Informed consent 30
  - Confidentiality and potential stress 31

Researcher reflexivity **31**
What counts as a finding? **32**
Results **33**
The interest awakens: "It was a sort of acute fanaticism" **33**
"I just knew this was my thing" 33
Context matters: "I know that I've learned to love music" 36
"A perfectly balanced freedom": flow experiences 37
Feeling connected through music: "It just feels like I belong" **39**
"Like you sort of touched eternity": connection to something greater 39
"Swimming in the same water": through music I feel connected to others 40
"I'll never fall out of love with music": music as a relationship 42
"You can't fight it": making sense of kama muta **43**
"It breaks all your defenses": the moving quality of music 43
Crying while playing: a musical faux-pas? 44
"It's a private feeling": the aftermath of being moved 45
"You just feel so lonely": Loneliness and ambivalence **46**
"I can't have sex with the score": loneliness and the longing for intimacy 46
"The practicing is such a tyranny": ambivalence 48
Reaffirmation: music as a remedy **49**
Discussion **51**
Summary of findings **51**
Interest is associated with intrinsic motivation and plays a part in identity development **51**
Do flow experiences affirm competence through metacognition? **53**
Is kama muta theory relevant for explaining why music moves us? **53**
Kama muta can co-occur with negative emotions **55**
Understanding intrinsic motivation: interest as talent, and talent as *difference* **56**
A comforting melody: feeling connected to others through music **58**
Limitations and recommendations **60**
Conclusion **62**
References **64**
Appendices **70**
APPENDIX A: Interview guides **70**
APPENDIX B: KAMMUS 1.0 questionnaire (Zickfeld et al. *(a)*, 2019) **74**
APPENDIX C: Informed consent forms in English and Norwegian **78**

Introduction

Ah, music. A magic beyond all that we do here!

Dumbledore in Harry Potter (J. K. Rowling)

"Believe me, you'll understand. The music's very powerful". The words are spoken by Edward, as he introduces his new girlfriend, Vivian, to opera for the first time. Vivian is dressed for the occasion in a stunning red dress, white long gloves and a gold necklace. The scene is from the 1990's hit romantic comedy *Pretty Woman*, a classic *Cinderella* tale. At this moment in the story, the rich man has taken Vivian to the opera, to test whether she has the emotional sensitivity required to enjoy the music's depth – the true mark of a princess, right? Later, as the last chords of Verdi's *La Traviata* turn to silence, we see Vivian in tears, and with relief conclude that the emotional expressivity of Verdi's searing melodic lines has triumphed once again.

The scene illustrates the value attributed to art's ability to move or touch audiences. From the time of Greek drama, the ability to move the audience been regarded as one of the most unique qualities of art (*e.g.,* Wiles, 2000). Although the problem of how music induces emotions has inspired a vast array of research, the role of such emotions as motivators is still little understood. In particular, the experience of musically induced emotion in musicians has been little investigated, and not much is known about the role emotions elicited by music serve in the development of interest and motivation in performing musicians. There are various ways to approach the riddle of how music induces emotion in its listeners, and the role of such emotions for psychological well-being. One could study the emotions music evokes, like the happy tears evoked in Vivian. One could study what features of the music evokes the greatest emotional intensity, such as the aching melancholy of the last aria, the splendid high notes of the lead singer, or the muted harmonies in the strings at the beginning of the opera. Or, one could investigate how musicians relate to the emotional qualities in music, as they have invested perhaps more than anyone else in this. What motivated the singer who plays *Violetta* (the main character) to train for years so that her voice could travel with ease through the vast emotional landscape of Verdi's arias? The present thesis explores the role of positive emotions as motivators for musicians at different stages in their professional life.

What do we know about the relationship between music and emotions?

The relationship between music and emotions is interesting at a broader philosophical and psychological level, as music is known to be especially evocative of emotional responses (Vist, 2009; Sloboda, 1991; Bicknell, 2007; Scherer & Zentner, 2001). Why is it that when melodic lines, harmonic progressions and rhythmic changes combine in particular ways, music's power seems to be invincible? The conundrum of musically induced emotion has been studied across multiple disciplines. Many researchers have tried to disentangle the relationship between music and emotions at a musicological or psychological level, or through the lens of evolutionary psychology (*e.g.*, Grewe et al., 2007; Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008; Sloboda; Levinson, 1982; Higgins, 2012; Bicknell, 2007). The question of whether music evokes real emotion has divided the field between 'cognitivists', who argue that music represents or expresses emotions, but does not elicit emotions, and 'emotivists' who argue that the emotional responses elicited by music are, in fact, real emotions (Scherer & Zentner, 2001, p. 361). However, most of the research in music psychology shares the view of the emotivists, and regard emotions elicited by music as real emotions, and not as mere mirror images of emotions (for more on this, see Levinson, 1982).

Researchers have investigated both the function and consequences of the association between music and emotion, memory and culture. Juslin and Laukka (2003) investigated the relationship between vocal expression of emotion and musical expression of emotions. Their findings suggest that music is emotionally impactful in part because it bears close resemblance to vocal expression of emotions. Furthermore, memory seem to enhance the emotional force of music. Some researchers suggest that music is processed in the lower brain regions, such as the hippocampus, and that it therefore is linked to episodic memory and emotions at a deep level in the brain (Scherer & Zentner, 2001, p. 369). This could potentially explain the speed and intensity of emotional responses to music. Music has an important cultural and communal function, and is often part of social events and rituals such as weddings, funerals and celebrations, which may also contribute to music being associated with strong memories. Eerola et al. (2017) suggest that it is not one factor alone, but the interaction between biology, complex social processes and cultural references that makes music capable of inducing strong positive emotions. Furthermore, the qualities of the listener have been investigated. Scherer and Zentner (2001) argue that "listener features are based on the individual and sociocultural identity of the listener and on the symbolic coding convention prevalent in a particular culture or subculture" (p. 364). Some studies suggest that variations in sensitivity to musical expressivity can be linked to empathy and prosocial behaviour (*e.g.*,

Scherer & Zentner, 2001; Fukui & Toyoshima, 2014) and thus suggest that music's evolutionary function was related to community and social life.

What do we know about musicians' relationship to emotions elicited by music?

Psychosocial and well-being measures in musicians have been of interest to researchers, in addition to neurological markers in expert musicians. Various neurological differences have been found between musicians and non-musicians (*e.g.*, Zioga, Luft & Bhattacharya, 2016). Bianchi et al. (2017) have found increased neuroplasticity in multiple brain regions in musicians. Furthermore, Park et al. (2014) found a strong link between musical training and "altered processing of 'negative' emotions", both at a neural level, and behaviorally (p. 120). Music has been linked to wellbeing in community settings, in everyday settings, and in educational settings (Acenso, Williamon & Perkins, 2017). Some evidence also suggests that performing music can generate well-being (Lamont, 2012). However, the well-being of musicians has received little attention, and Acenso et al. (2017) argue that we know too little about "what it means to live 'psychologically well' as a professional musician" (p. 66). Persson (1996) reported that many music students suffer from emotional and psychological stress due to a standardized and product-oriented way of teaching in higher music education. He suggests that status is linked to association with teachers who are great performers themselves, and that music students "may tolerate poor treatment [from their teachers or from conductors] due to their desire to be associated with a famous figure". Park et al. (1996) found that while orchestra musicians have a high level of internal motivation, they score lower than federal prison guards on both general satisfaction and growth opportunities. Orchestra musicians have described working climate marked by high emotional demands, low social support and low influence. Yet they maintain a high level of commitment to their work (e.g., Holst, Paarup & Baelum, 2012).

Some research has been dedicated to well-being in musicians. This includes research on contextual factors, life transitions, and the role of passion in the development towards expert musicianship. In a longitudinal study of 20 musicians (with a starting study of 257 childhood musicians), Moore, Burland and Davidson (2003) investigated the social contexts of childhood musicians and childhood musicians who later became professional. They found that having teachers who were sufficiently pushy, as well as mothers at home in their early years were better predictors of later success as musicians than simply the willingness to practice at an early age. This suggests that for expert musicians, structured practice at an early age does not, in fact, make perfect, unless the willingness to practice is coupled with the right

kind of attention from teachers and parents. Furthermore, the resolution of certain transitional periods are crucial for musical development. Certain stages, like from childhood to adolescence, or from music student to professional career, are known to be difficult transition periods for many musicians. Creech et al. (2008) investigated how musicians transition from one phase in musical development to the next. They found that when life transitions are positively resolved, these assist in the development of the musicians' artistic personality. In contrast, inadequately resolved transitions hindered such development. Furthermore, the role of passion as a motivator has been investigated. Bonneville-Roussy, Lavigne and Vallerand (2011) investigated the role of passion in the attainment of expert levels in a sample of 202 classical musicians, and the relationship between passion and well-being in these expert musicians. They distinguished between harmonious and obsessive passion, and found that while passion of both kinds of passion were present in 99 % of the sample, only harmonious passion was associated with well-being. Obsessive passion showed a relationship to music that was characterized by negative social comparison, a fear of falling behind, guilt, and fear of failure. However, beyond harmonious passion, they did not explore the role of other positive emotions often described by musicians, such as flow or being moved by the music. The present study examines the role of positive emotions in the biographical life stories of ten professional musicians.

Theoretical framework

First, what is music?

Evolutionary biologists and psychologists are still at a loss when trying to explain how music developed, and philosophers argue about what music really *is.* According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2017), Platonists view music as abstract objects and idealists view it as mental entities. Kathleen Higgins has stated that music, fundamentally, is an experience (Higgins, 2007, in Nielsen, 2019). Higgins' statement is in line with the renewed interest of investigating music not just as a philosophical problem, but at a more subjective and phenomenological level (*e.g.,* Høffding, 2019). Descriptions of music vary widely, from the famous guitarist Robert Fripp's claim that "music is the wine that fills the cup of silence", to Stephen Pinker's description of music as "auditory cheesecake". Fripp's metaphor of music as wine points to the sophistication of music as a symbol of culture and tradition, and furthermore suggests that, music, like wine, can be used both for celebration and comfort. Pinker's description, on the other hand, points to the hedonistic satisfaction associated with

music, as he likens it to an indulgence, something that's not rational or reasonable, yet all the more delicious for that. Pinker has suggested that because researchers cannot seem to figure out a sufficiently plausible explanation for the evolution of music, it can be seen as an evolutionary "spandrel", that is, a happy by-product of other evolutionary processes. According to Higgins (2012), "the term 'music' is also variously understood, sometimes construed so broadly as to refer to any kind of organized sound (as Edgar Varèse [1967] alleged), environmental sound (whether organized or not) (Cage, 1961), or the abstract idea of moving tonal patterns (Kivy, 1983)". Merriam-Webster's dictionary (undated) defines music as "(a) the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity," and "(b) vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody, or harmony." Although they may not give sufficient answers to the philosophical problem of what music *is* in its deepest nature, both of the latter definitions serve to describe what the term *music* denotes in the current study.

The role of emotions in science and psychology

Research into the nature and qualities of emotions have interested psychologists for a long time. For instance, William James and Sigmund Freud wrote about the dynamics of emotions more than a hundred years ago. As the field has grown over the past decades, several models and definitions of emotions have been presented. Scherer and Zentner (2001) define emotions as relatively brief episodes of synchronized response of all or most organismic subsystems in response to the evaluation of an external or internal event as being of major significance (angry, sad, joyful, fearful, ashamed, proud, elated, desperate). This definition is both specific and general enough for the objective of the current thesis. In the current study, emotions are described and understood at "face level", that is, when someone uses the words for various emotions to describe their internal states, I assume that this was indeed the emotional state they experienced, without decoding the experience further.

While most of the empirical research within the emotion field for a long time was focused on negative emotions, the important functions of positive emotions have gained attention over the past decades. Positive emotions have increasingly been recognized as important factors in psychological well-being, and take up a central place within the field of positive psychology (*e. g.,* Fredrickson, 2003), which sees as the aim of psychology not just to avoid illness, but to attain well-being. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) summarized it in the following way:

> The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experiences: well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present). At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits; the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. (p. 5)

In her broaden-and-build model of positive emotions, Fredrickson (*e.g.,* 1998) argues that positive emotions not only provide positive feedback in the moment, but in fact increase life satisfaction in the long term (Fredrickson 1998, 2003; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002). In this model, positive emotions are described as different than negative emotions in that they broaden the person's "thought-action". This leads to positive exploration and increased psychological competence, as well as increased emotional satisfaction (Fredrickson 1998, 2003). This way, positive emotions are not just a goal in themselves, but lead to self-development, increased skill levels, and enhanced life satisfaction.

Self Determination Theory as a framework for the pursuit of music

Motivation theorists have explored what makes an activity motivating in itself (*i.e.*, autotelic). In autotelic activities, a person experiences a sense of volition and enjoyment in the activities he or she engages in, rather than working from a sense of obligation or to avoid negative consequences or punishment. The humanist tradition in psychology emphasizes human agency, positive emotions, and self-actualization as important drivers for humans, in contrast to the drive theories of motivation of psychoanalysis and the reinforcement theories of behaviourism. Deci and Ryan have challenged the popular notion of "total motivation", and argue instead that there are different kinds of motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2012). In the *Self Determination Theory,* they distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, also known as internal and external motivation. SDT postulates that when it comes to predicting behavioral outcomes, the *type* of motivation is more relevant than the *amount* or intensity of the motivation. Hundreds of studies have shown that autonomous (i.e. intrinsic) motivation is related to greater psychological wellness, more effective performance, and increased and more efficient learning (for an overview, see Deci & Ryan, 2012, p. 89-90). The theory is relevant to the current study because of its comprehensive view of human motivation across a wide range of activities and across extended periods of time, and thus makes a good framework for understanding the motivation of expert musicians.

According to Deci and Ryan, intrinsic motivation can be described as a motivation that *comes from within*. It occurs when the activity is satisfying in its own right, while extrinsic motivation is oriented towards achieving a result or reward that comes *after* the activity, and is 'external' to the activity itself. Compared to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation provides greater enjoyment, well-being, and positive drive towards goal-achievement. Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is associated with the fulfillment of one or more of the three basic psychological needs that are essential to a healthy psychological development. These fundamental needs are *competence*, *relatedness,* and *autonomy*. This gives a framework for understanding how motivation is linked to well-being, in that inner-driven motivation is associated with psychological needs, whereas externally or contextually-based motivation is associated with less enjoyment and greater levels of stress (Deci & Ryan, 2012). We could infer from this that intrinsic motivation is associated with a higher prevalence of positive emotions, and that intrinsically-motivated activities are anchored in the self, and are associated with the person's sense of self. Deci and Ryan posit that all of the basic needs are to some extent about the relation between the individual and his or her social context. According to Deci and Ryan (2012), the need for competence consists of the fact that "people need to feel competent in negotiating their external and internal environments", and that they seek to develop their abilities within their given circumstances (p. 87). A need for relatedness implies that people need to feel connected and related to others, both through personal relationships and as members of one or more groups. Lastly, people "need to feel autonomy or self-determination with respect to their own behaviours and lives" (Deci & Ryan, 2012, p. 87).

The SDT constitutes part of the theoretical framework for this study. It is therefore in place to describe how I understand the connection between the basic psychological needs described by Deci and Ryan, and the emotional constructs of interest, flow and kama muta. I posit that the development of skills and competence involves *interest* in the topic. *Flow experiences* are associated with the positive emotional state of joy, or what Tomkins (1962) called "enjoyment-joy" as the flow experience itself is immensely enjoyable (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 4). Flow is also linked to mastery, because flow occurs at the balance between the right amount of challenge for the right level of mastery. Furthermore, mastery is associated with the psychological need for competence, as posited in SDT. For musicians, musical mastery would result in a domain-specific satisfaction of a basic psychological need, which may be generalized to a broader sense of *competence* and satisfaction in life. Furthermore, *relatedness* can be experienced by feeling connected to

others through music, and is associated with kama muta (Sanskrit for *moved by love*), the positive emotion that English speakers may label *being moved* (Fiske, Schubert & Seibt, 2017). The nature of the emotional constructs interest, flow/joy and kama muta are described in greater detail below. In summary, the emotion of *interest* is important for any performers at expert levels, because of its essential role in learning and developing competence and mastery. Furthermore, *flow experiences* are important in relation to their function in providing positive reinforcement in association with the emotional state of *joy*. Lastly, the emotion of *being moved* by music is intrinsically rewarding in that it provides a sense of connection which is linked to the psychological need for relatedness.

Interest: a positive emotional construct associated with intrinsic motivation

Deci and Ryan state that "interest is sometimes used interchangeably with curiosity, intrigue, excitement, or wonder, and shares conceptual space with challenge and intrinsic motivation" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, in Amundrud, 2009, p. 11). Interest is generally viewed as an important factor in learning, attention, goal setting and goal achievement (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Interest can be understood as a "cognitive and affective motivational variable that both develops and can be supported to develop" (Renninger & Su, 2012, p. 167). In the person-object theory of interest, interest is "conceptualised as a relational concept: an interest represents or describes a more or less enduring specific relationship between a persona and an object in his or her life-space" (Lebensraum; cf. Lewin, 1936 in Krapp, 2007). Person-object theory suggests that a person

> will develop a closer relationship only to a few objects (or object areas) for a longer period of time. Under certain conditions such a relationship will become a longer lasting personal interest. Contrary to many other motivational constructs, interest is always directed at certain contents or objects. Content-specificity is, thus, a main criterion of this concept. (Krapp, 2007, p. 8)

In the broaden-and-build model for positive emotions, Fredrickson (1998, 2001) suggests that positive emotions like interest motivate people to seek out new experiences and learn new skills, so as to broaden their experiential and skills repertoire. Furthermore, Tomkins (1962) suggested that curiosity is part of the basic emotion interest-excitement, and that the positive emotion of interest-excitement is different from the positive emotion of enjoyment-joy. In the current study, descriptions of discovery and excitement are seen as aspects of the emotional construct of interest. Hidi and Renninger (2006) argue that the environment plays a crucial

role in the initial development of interest. They suggest that the contextual factors can help support an emerging interest until it is well-founded in the individual, but that it cannot be sustained contextual support alone; the interest develops as an interaction between the person and contextual stimuli (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). An interest that was instigated by the environment can be developed into a personal interest through personal involvement when the person experiences the relevant tasks as meaningful. Continuous behavioral involvement, expanding knowledge and attributing value to the relevant activity are essential factors in the development and sustenance of the interest. An interest can be considered well-developed individual when it becomes more positively salient than other activities (Renninger & Su, 2012). Based on Hidi and Renninger's model, one would expect that behavioral involvement with music, increased knowledge of music (as well as improvement of ability), and continuous awareness of one's enjoyment of music (giving it value) are factors that contribute to sustaining the interest in music.

Do experiences of flow inspire striving for musical competence?

Flow is a phenomenological state that can occur when a person is deeply engaged in an activity (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Although flow is described as a *feeling* in everyday conversation, it is not recognized as an emotion. However, it can be understood as a positive construct that is associated with positive emotional states. Experiences of flow are common in high-level performers in a wide range of fields, from chess players to athletes, surgeons, and musicians (*e.g.,* Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Flow experiences are intrinsically rewarding, and thus motivate the person to continue the activity (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Furthermore, flow states seem to be rewarding and meaningful in that they serve to confirm a level of mastery. Flow is characterized by the following nine dimensions: *(1)* challenge-skill balance, *(2)* action-awareness merging, *(3)* clear goals (including performance preparation and awareness), *(4)* unambiguous feedback, *(5)* concentration on the task, *(6)* sense of control, *(7)* loss of self-consciousness, *(8)* time transformation and *(9)* autotelic experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, in Fritz & Avsec, 2007; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Flow is frequently reported during music performance (*e.g.,* Custoduro, 2003).

Flow is an enjoyable experience that occurs when the person extends his or her skills through engaging with and mastering a challenging task (*e.g.,* Fritz & Avsec, 2007). Thus, to experience this type of enjoyment, one must have invested considerable effort and attention, which sets it apart from more simple pleasures. Looking back at an experience of flow, we

tend to be grateful and happy (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 32). Furthermore, flow has been linked to well-being, and functions as a predictor of both positive and negative affect in musicians. In a sample of 84 music students Fritz and Avsec (2007) found that “clear goals, challenge-skill balance, concentration on the task, and autotelic experience are important predictors of positive affect, explaining 36 % of its variance”. Furthermore, they found that a lack of challenge-skill balance could explain 26 % of the variance in negative emotions, and concluded that “experiencing flow is more related to emotional than cognitive aspects of subjective well-being, which is not surprising, since flow is an extremely emotional experience” (p. 5). Flow has been linked to positive affect and relates to the intrinsic need for mastery or competence. Flow serves both to confirm and reward a high level of ability, and motivates further development of skill and mastery through positive engagement.

The emotion of kama muta provides a sense of connection and relatedness

Being moved is one of the most frequently reported emotional responses to music. However, this emotion has not received much scientific attention compared to other emotions, and there is some debate as to whether it is a universal and basic emotion, or a more complex and secondary emotion. Seibt, Schubert, Zickfeld & Fiske (2017) argue that descriptions of being moved, touched or stirred, or having a heartwarming experience are expressions of the same underlying emotion. Fiske, Schubert & Seibt (2017) have labelled this emotion kama muta (Sanskrit for ‘moved by love’) in order to avoid unwanted connotations from vernacular terms across languages, and have demonstrated that kama muta is a universal emotion (Zickfield et al., 2019). The emotion is characterized by physiological signs of being moved such as a combination of tears, chills, goosebumps, or warmth in the chest (*e.g*., Seibt et al., 2017). However, there is some discussion on what causes it, and what kinds of behavioural or social intentions it elicits (Zickfeld, Schubert, Seibt & Fiske, 2019).

Cova & Deonna (2014) assume that persons get moved by positive core values emerging from negative ones, or similarly, when positive core values arise despite unfavourable circumstances (Strick & Van Soolingen, 2017). Menninghaus et al. (2015) consider being moved as a mixed emotion, which has sadly moving and happily moving components. Significant relationship events and aesthetic experiences evoke being moved according to their model (Wassiliwizky, Koelsch, Wagner, Jacobsen & Menninghaus., 2017). Konečni (2005) puts forward that music can be moving when "a significant personal associative context exists" (p. 33) and when it has certain structural features. Outside music, he lists forgiveness, sacrifice and generosity as elicitors of being moved.

In kama muta theory, Fiske et al. (2017) argue that kama muta is caused by a sudden intensification of communal sharing relationship (CS), a relationship of social equivalence such as *love* or belonging. The CS relationship is one of the four fundamental social relationships described by Fiske in relational models theory (1992). Fiske (1992) suggests that "people in the same equivalence class are socially equivalent for the particular purpose or issue at hand" (p. 691), and that such relationship are common in close kinship, loving and friendly relationships, and for members of the same group. Kama muta theory posits that kama muta leads first and foremost to increased devotion and commitment to the same relationship that evoked it. This points to the emotion of kama muta's potential evolutionary function, that is, to serve as a social glue that enables stronger and more committed social and communal relationships.

But does this hold for music? If so, what would be the communal relationship that gets intensified when listening to music? Kama muta is a response to an intensification of relationships of various kinds when they are experienced as communal, e.g. to humans, animals, God or the universe, as well as to groups such as one's family, ethnic group or humanity as a whole (see Fiske, in press; Fiske et al., 2019; Steinnes et al., 2019). Fiske et al. (in prep.) have proposed that experiences of being moved by music are caused by an intensification of social communion or connectedness. For musicians, this connection can for instance be to the audience, the composer, other musicians, or to the music itself. Some music philosophers have argued that it is possible to feel connected to a perceived or imagined "persona" in the music (Bicknell, 2007; Levinson, 1982). This provides the listener or musician with a sense of connection to the music itself. Such connections are sometimes described to be both trusting and intimate, and providing a sense of emotional comfort. Furthermore, feelings of social connectedness as a response to music are frequently reported (*e.g.,* Tarr & Bronwyn; Gabrielsson & Wik, 2003). This suggests that social connection is often enhanced during musical experiences.

Feeling connected to others is regarded as central to psychological well-being. The need for connection and belonging is also affirmed in Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory. Baumeister, Leary and Steinberg (1995) proposed that the need to belong is a basic human need, and that humans are strongly motivated to achieve and maintain a sense of belonging. They argued that human beings have a need "to form and maintain strong, stable interpersonal relationships" (p. 497). Being socially ostracized or excluded has been linked to distress and low self-esteem (van Beest & Williams, 2006). Thus, feeling disconnected from others often elicits loneliness and has been connected to health problems (*e.g.*, Leary, 1990).

The need to belong can explain why people are motivated to develop and hold on to strong, stable and intimate social relationships, and seek to maintain the relationships they have developed so far.

The present study

The present study examines how positive emotions serve as a motivator on the path towards, and in the unfolding of, a professional career in music. In addition, the thesis aims to provide a phenomenological understanding of the of interest, flow (joy), and being moved (kama muta) in response to music. Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory provides a framework for understanding the phenomenon of motivation. The three basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy provide a frame for understanding the positive, self-embedded motivation called *intrinsic* motivation. The positive emotional constructs of interest, flow (eliciting joy), and kama muta function as sensitizing concepts for understanding how strong emotional responses to music may enhance intrinsic motivation on the path towards becoming a professional classical musician. A better understanding of how music elicits such emotions and their role in motivation could potentially reveal something more generally about how music induces emotion, and the value of musically induced emotions for a sense of connection, competence, and autonomy. There is little research on positive emotions as mediating variables for intrinsic motivation in the pursuit of music. To address this gap, the present study adopts an exploratory approach in order to achieve rich and cohesive insights into the topic at hand. To achieve this, I conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with ten high-level professional musicians. I further analyzed these interviews using thematic analysis. In the following chapter, the methodological process will be outlined in greater detail.

Aims

The purpose of the present study is to examine in what ways positive emotions function as motivators for expert musicians in the development and maintenance of their professional career. Through qualitative interviews with ten professional classical musicians, the thesis aims to gain new insight into how emotions motivate engagement with music in a life-span perspective. The research question is: in what ways do positive emotions serve as a motivator on the path towards and in the unfolding of a professional career for classical musicians? In

particular, the thesis aims to provide a phenomenological understanding of the emotional responses of interest, joy, and kama muta (being moved) in response to music.

Two additional aims are attached to the research question. *Firstly*, the thesis investigates how positive emotions are associated with intrinsic motivation. My understanding is that positive emotions are linked to the self-determination needs both separately, and in concert. A special emphasis is put on music's role in fulfilling the need for relatedness through emotions that enhance a sense of connection. Through in-depth interviews, I seek to better understand this mechanism, and the relationship between motivation and emotion. *Secondly*, I want to examine whether kama muta theory is a relevant framework for understanding how music elicits a sense of being moved (*i.e.*, kama muta). Specifically, I seek to illuminate whether being moved by music typically is associated with a sense of connectedness or a sense of being in a relationship. I also want to explore these experiences in terms of their elicitors, how they are experienced, and how the musicians dealt with these experiences.

Method

Context for the study

The present study is part of a research project at the Kama Muta Research Lab at the Department of Psychology, University of Oslo. It is part of a series of qualitative psychological studies and ethnographic fieldwork on the role of kama muta in motivating volunteering and professional career choice. A prior study has investigated kama muta experiences among volunteers in animal shelters (Steinnes, 2017), and another study is currently investigating kama muta experiences among midwives in a clinic in California. The goal is to understand, based on the perspective of those engaged in the activity, how positive emotions, and in particular kama muta, may draw people towards a certain activity, reinforce their continuous engagement in the activity, and help in times of crises and difficulties. Another goal is to understand whether persons in various professions actively seek out such emotional experiences, or whether they simply happen to experience them.

A qualitative approach

Before deciding on a qualitative research design, I conducted two test-interviews with professional musicians where I asked about their experiences of kama muta in relation to music, and motivational factors more generally in relation to their career choice. These interviews were based on the KAMMUS 1.0 questionnaire (see appendix *b*). However, I found that I had to nudge the interviewees along by giving them additional information about the items and I had to verbally clarify how the items related to their experiences as musicians. It seemed to me that although they had strong emotional responses to music, including kama muta experiences, these phenomena were difficult to describe with words as they had not previously verbalized these experiences to any meaningful extent. Based on these test-interviews, it seemed unlikely that a survey study using a questionnaire based on KAMMUS 1.0 would produce the kind of data I needed. I therefore decided on a qualitative approach. Furthermore, during later stages of the research process, I decided to broaden the research question in order to encompass positive emotions in the musicians' life stories more broadly, because the interview material provided information about a wider range of topics and experiences than first expected. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of how musicians experience and make meaning of their emotional responses to music, as well as a more open exploration of the various ways emotions serve as motivators, and play a role in the lives of musicians. Originally, the research question was specifically about the role of *kama muta* as a motivator for performing musicians, but during the research process this question was broadened in order to also include other positive emotions.

Procedure

Sample composition and sample size

The sample of the present study consisted of ten high-level classical musicians. The participants were selected by a combination of convenience and purposive sampling (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014), and by use of the "snowballing method" (Goodman, 1961; Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Six of the participants were recruited through convenience sampling at a classical music festival, while the remaining four were recruited via the "snowballing method", in which new potential candidates were suggested by the initial participants. The purposive sampling aimed at selecting participants who were willing to discuss the topics proposed, and who were knowledgeable about music and the life of professional musicians (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014). The sample has "life style homogeneity"

in that all of the participants share a similar life story: they all started to play an instrument as a child, and later became a high-level professional musician as an adult.

The selection criteria were as follows: >18 years of age, full-time classical performers, high level of musical expertise as judged by a well-esteemed career. In total, fourteen musicians were interviewed. From these four participants were excluded, leaving a total sample size of ten participants. Two of the interviewees were excluded because they were still at school, because although they were accomplished musicians they had not yet become full-time professional musicians, and therefore differed from the rest of the sample. There was no upper age limit. Two more interviewees were excluded because the interviews did not yield data that were relevant according to the research question, and instead covered mainly dynamics of the music industry and career advancement, and did not yield sufficient information about the emotional experiences of the interviewees. This occurred because the interviewer was too lenient and chose to follow the lead of the interviewees, rather than stay closer to the interview guide.

The final sample consists of three women and seven men with age ranging from 27 to 67 (*MEAN*= 40.9, *SD*=12.7). Their instruments are the piano (4), violin (1), viola (2), obo (1), cello (1) and harpsichord (1). Three of the participants are Norwegian, one is American and the rest are from various European countries. The interviews were conducted face-to-face over a period of eleven months, from June 30th 2016 to May 18th 2017, and were taped on an audio recorder.

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviewing is a popular method for collecting qualitative data, (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003, p. 138) and can be used across a broad selection of topics and problems. Kvale (2007) describes the semi-structured interview as a *professional conversation* where the interviewer decides the purpose and structure of the conversation. There is an emphasis on the active role of both the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale, 2007, p. 7). Legard, Keegan & Ward (2003) stress that the “material is generated by the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee” (p. 141), pointing to the relational quality of knowledge construction in qualitative interviews.

The interview setting

The interviews were held in different locations. Choice of location was based on convenience and availability at the time of the interview. Three of the participants in the study were interviewed in a practice room at disposal, two were interviewed in cafés, three were interviewed outdoors and two participants were interviewed at the home of the researcher. One requirement was that the locations were informal, and convenient to the interviewee in terms of location. The home of the interviewer was chosen because of a desire from the participants as well as the researcher for there to be less ambient sound and more privacy than in a café. In the analysis, the interview location seems to have had no impact on the information obtained in each interview in terms of specificity, privacy or with regards to the interviewees trust in the interviewer.

The interview guide

In a semi-structured in-depth interview, the conversation should be only partially structured (Kvale, 2007, p. 11). This means that there should be a limited number of pre-planned questions so that there is plenty of time for probes and follow-up questions. Follow-up questions help the researcher gain a deeper understanding of pertinent topics, and probes help the conversation flow more freely. In a one hour interview, there should be only about 8-10 planned questions in order to "ensure that there is consistent information across participants and ample opportunity for extensive probing" (Hill et al., 2005, p. 199). Too many scripted questions can lead to a "thin" and broad interview, rather than an "in-depth" interview (Hill et al., 2005). For the specific interview guide, please see appendix *a*.

The transcription process

Criteria for transcription of data

The data was collected from face-to-face interviews which were recorded and later transcribed. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 80 minutes in duration. Various talking speeds, the time available for the interview and the verbal richness (ability to put personal experiences into words) of the participant affected the length of the interview. The transcription was completed as soon as possible, and no later than within four weeks of each interview. The timing of the transcription was important, as I wanted to make sure that I would be able to remember gestures or special occurrences that happened during the interviews. A basic audio recorder was used to record the interviews. The transcription

program “Transcribe” (available on the website *transcribe.wreally.com*) was used for the transcription process. A great level of attention was given to the accuracy of the transcription, in order to avoid inconsistencies. Inconsistencies in the transcription process can lead to potential biases in the data material. As there was only one person involved in the transcription process, no formal protocol for transcription was written. However, some decisions about the format were made at the beginning of the transcription process. Verbal information as well as any gestures that added to the verbal information were noted with great attention to detail. Changes in voice or changes in mood were *not* noted. However, pauses, filler words (like “uhm”, “mhm” and “eh”), and laughter were noted consistently throughout the material. Pauses were noted as “…”.

Language

Seven of the participants in the final sample were interviewed in English, and three were interviewed in Norwegian. All the interviews were coded only in their original language. During the analytic process, I worked with the data in their original language, although English is used in the presentation of the results. I translated the Norwegian quotations into English at the last stage of the analysis so that the excerpts were retained in the participants' own words for as long as possible. In the translations, I made an effort to maintain the intended meanings of the participants in the English quotations. The Norwegian respondents were given the following pseudonyms: *Johan, Simon,* and *Herman.* Thus, their quotations have been translated into English.

The qualitative analysis

Thematic analysis

The method for analyzing the data used in the present study is thematic analysis, which entails a search for themes or “repeated patterns of meaning” across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). It is a way of organizing, interpreting, and making sense of qualitative data, and is one of the most widely used methods for coding qualitative data, especially within psychology (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis has only recently been recognized as a distinctive method, although it has been in use as a method for analysis for several decades (Braun & Clarke 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2013).

In their paper from 2006, Braun and Clarke outlined six essential steps in the analytic process. First, the researcher needs to familiarize herself with the data. Second, the researcher generates initial codes that sum up or comprise the essential pieces of information in the data.

Third, the researcher searches for themes across the codes, and, fourth, reviews the themes for consistency and completeness. Fifth, the researcher defines and names the themes, before producing the report as the sixth and final step of the analysis.

One of the strengths of thematic analysis is its flexibility. The method enables analysis within various theoretical frameworks, methods of data collection, sample sizes and research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 180). In this, it differs somewhat from other methods for qualitative analysis that are more closely linked to particular theoretical or epistemological positions, such as discourse analysis and conversation analysis. However, despite its flexibility and popularity, it is important to note that thematic analysis also has some drawbacks when compared to other methods for analysis. For instance, unlike discourse analysis or content analysis, thematic analysis "cannot make claims about the effects of language use" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 180), as the analysis does not occur at that level of specificity. In addition, some depth and nuance in the individual accounts can get lost in the cross-analysis between participants. Braun and Clarke (2006) write that "unlike narrative or other biographical approaches, [in thematic analysis] you are unable to retain a sense of continuity and contradiction through any one individual account" (p. 97). Furthermore, a general criticism of the method is that in the absence of clear guidelines, the adaptability and flexibility of the method leave the researcher with a sense that "anything goes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This can only be remedied by ensuring transparency in the way the analysis is carried out from start to end, by making sure that the analytic stages are described in sufficient detail, and assuring that the analytic contribution of the researcher is accounted for.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Qualitative research aims to understand the experiences and meaning-making of individuals in their personal lives. According to Smith (2004), Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is particularly suited to explore how people give meaning to their personal experiences. Adding a phenomenological interpretative analytic approach to the thematic analysis provides a more in-depth and "from within" view of the participants' accounts of their experiences. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2013), phenomenology is described as "the study of "phenomena" (…) as they appear in our experience". IPA draws on the philosophical tradition of Husserl and Heidegger, especially in its aim to describe and understand the *experienc*e of a phenomenon, rather than achieve an objective ontological understanding of that phenomenon. IPA is helpful for understanding complex or new

problems (Smith & Osborn, 2007). This makes it a suitable approach for the problem studied in the current thesis of how positive emotions motivate musicians, and how strong emotional responses are experienced and given meaning in a sample of professional musicians.

Transparency and reflexivity

Reflexivity in qualitative analysis means that the researcher continuously scrutinizes how his or her own standpoints potentially influence the research. Because of the small sample sizes, judgments about the reliability of the findings are made easier the more information the reader is provided with about the contextual factors that informed the study (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Seale (1999, in Lewis & Ritchie, 2003) argues that reflexivity is necessary in order to achieve a sense of reliability. This way the reader has enough information to imaginatively 'replicate' the study in samples with characteristics similar to the original sample (p. 271). Thus, in order to allow the reader to assess the quality of the study and the knowledge it has produced, the researcher should inform the reader about her understanding of knowledge production and how this understanding has shaped the study (Kvale, 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Epistemology in the present thesis

Thematic analysis can both mirror reality at the level it is described or seek to go deeper, beyond the surface of the descriptions to discover more latent or unspoken insights. The chosen level of analysis usually reflects the researcher's position on the epistemological map. Braun & Clarke (2006) argue that "thematic analysis (...) is compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms within psychology". The present study examines both the outer and the inner world of professional musicians, and seeks both to *describe* their experiences, as well as *understand* them. While the analysis of the present study was primarily based in an essentialist approach where data are understood and interpreted "at face level", there is also an understanding that the information gathered and the resulting data is a result of the interaction between the researcher and the participants. This acknowledges a certain level of constructivism in the final understanding of the participants' experiences as they appear in the results section.

Epistemologically, the current study is in the hermeneutical tradition, in which understanding and interpreting the text in order identify meaning is central (Kvale, 2007). Rennie (2000) points out that the person having the experience is closer to the meaning of the

experience than any other person, but that the “other”, that is, the interviewer, can be helpful in articulating that experience (Taylor, 1989 in Rennie, 2000). However, in this transmission of understanding, the knowledge is now influenced also by *the other*’s values, beliefs and past experiences (Rennie, 2000). In the hermeneutic circle, these preconceptions, the interpreter’s values, and the material meet over and over again during the process of analysis, and are at each stage challenged and shaped by the other, so that insights formed at the first stage of analysis influence the analysis at the second stage of analysis, et cetera. Rennie (2000) writes:

> The understanding of the whole of the text influences the understanding of a part of it, and the understanding of each part in turn influences the understanding of the whole. This circling of part to whole and back again results in progressive understanding that, in principle, is non-ending, although, hopefully, it reaches a kind of stability. (p. 484)

The tension between relativity and understanding is a core problem of the hermeneutical position, and one that readers should keep in mind. The researcher tries to give attention to both sides of this spectrum by reflecting on the foreknowledge, assumptions and values he or she brings to the study, both by stating any interests or positions that could potentially bias the knowledge production, and by stating which epistemological tradition he places himself in.

The role of theory and theoretical concepts in the present analysis

According to Blumer (1954), the use of unsatisfactory definitions and insufficient operationalisation of the empirical phenomena of interest in psychological research had led to a lack of homogeneity in the understanding of social and psychological phenomena. To address this, Blumer (1954) suggests that empirical studies should see theoretical concepts not as templates that wait to be “filled” with empirical evidence, but rather as “sensitizing concepts” that point of the direction for new scientific, empirical investigation. A sensitizing concept “gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances” (Blumer, 1954, p. 7). Blumer further argues that the distinctiveness and ever-present non-regularity of phenomena in the natural world “explains why our concepts [in social theory] are sensitizing and not definitive” (1954, p. 7). In the current thesis, several psychological theories and constructs serve as such sensitizing concepts. Most importantly, the study is informed and shaped by kama muta theory, as posited by Fiske, Schubert and Seibt (2017). Furthermore, Deci and Ryan’s self determination theory of motivation, Fredrickson’s broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions and Csikszentmihalyi’s flow

theory have influenced the analysis. So too, have the concepts of belonging and connection (*e.g.*, Baumeister, Leary & Steinberg, 1995), as well as the concept of music as a persona (Bicknell, 2007; Levinson, 1982). In addition, new concepts and theories have been added in the discussion of the findings in order to better connect theory to empirical findings. These concepts and theories have served as lenses through which the data has been explored and investigated, both one after the other, and together.

Research quality

Because of the constructivist and interpretive nature of qualitative methods, some people question the validity and reliability of this approach. In addition, small sample sizes raise concerns about the generalizability of potential findings (McLeod, 2013). Some critics have claimed that qualitative methods are "airy-fairy", and that the great variety of approaches that make up qualitative methods make it difficult to evaluate the studies' scientific rigor, validity, and reliability (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This criticism could either be rejected with the argument that quantitative and qualitative methods belong to different epistemological traditions and therefore should not be judged by the same criteria, or it can be welcomed as a useful criticism of the potential flaws and drawbacks of the qualitative paradigm. Some researchers have attempted to address the lack of clear criteria for judging qualitative research by developing standardized guidelines for evaluation of qualitative research. Such guidelines accept the premises of constructivist or postmodern epistemological positions, but nonetheless simultaneously demand scientific rigour. Henwood & Pidgeon (1992) outlined seven criteria for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. They were listed as *the importance of fit, integration of theory, reflexivity, documentation, sensitivity to negotiated realities, and transferability.* These criteria together demanded that the researcher openly discusse his or her bias, describe the analytic method in sufficient detail, and maintain the subjective view of the participants in relation to theory. A few years later Elliott et al. (1999) suggested another set of guidelines for evaluating research. These were *owning one's perspective, situating the sample, grounding in examples, providing credibility checks, coherence, accomplishing general versus specific research tasks,* and *resonating with readers* (Elliott, 1999; Willig, 2008). Both sets of criteria stress the importance of corroborating the findings with the actual data through quotations and illustrative examples, addressing the generalisability of the findings, being transparent about the qualities of the chosen sample and about the integration of theory and findings. In other words, good practice requires sensitivity to the theoretical positions and contextual factors that influenced the study, and to how these factors can both

enhance and limit the study's generalisability (Willig, 2008). Because the criteria for what constitutes good qualitative research are in some ways different from those in quantitative research, a brief clarification of the central concepts for judging the trustworthiness and generalisabilty of the findings follows below.

Validity

The aim for judging the validity of a scientific investigation is to conclude whether the study was pertinent to the question that it was meant to answer, and whether the findings in the study can be trusted. In qualitative research, validity can be understood as a measure of the "trustworthiness" of the data. Elliott et al. (1999) suggested that by situating the sample this trustworthiness is enhanced. This is accomplished when "authors describe the research participants and their life circumstances to aid the reader in judging the range of persons and situations to which the findings might be relevant" (p. 221). In addition, coherence in the presentation of the findings enables the reader to understand both the framework of the findings, while also seeing the nuances in the data set. This is accomplished by providing examples and quotations that illustrate the findings, so that the findings are closely linked with the interview data from start to end (Elliott et al., 1999).

Reliability

In quantitative research, good reliability usually means that the findings can be trusted in that they can be replicated, and therefore generalised to a wider population, or even different populations. However, this is less straight-forward with the more phenomenological and idiosyncratic data of qualitative studies. Seale (1999, in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) argues that reflexivity, rather than replicability, should be used as a criterion for reliability in qualitative research. According to him, "good practice in relation to reliability and replication can be achieved through an aspect of reflexivity, that is 'showing the audience of research studies as much as is possible of the procedures that have led to a particular set of conclusions' 1999:158)" (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003, p. 271). Thus reliability in qualitative research depends on reflexivity, that is transparency about the characteristics of the sample, the context of the study, and the positions of the researcher.

Generalisability

There are many different understandings of what constitutes generalisability in qualitative research, and the term is usually understood as a more multifaceted concept in qualitative

research than in quantitative research. Maxwell and Chmiel (2015) state that in qualitative research, observations “are generalized in that they are used to create heuristics for other studies” (p. 546). Thus, while findings in qualitative research cannot automatically be generalised to the «parent population», or to other populations, because of the limitations that characterize small-scale sample studies, they serve to generate hypotheses that can inform and inspire further research. In addition, the concept of «face generalisability» suggests that findings in qualitative research can be generalised to other populations in so far as such generalisations are believable and make sense to the reader, and goes on to be tested in due time (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2015).

Building on Hammersleys’s description of empirical and theoretical generalisation (1992) Ritchie and Lewis define three types of generalisability that are pertinent to qualitative research. These are representational generalisation, inferential generalisation, and theoretical generalisation (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Representational generalisation occurs when the findings in the sample can be generalised to the population from which the sample was selected. Inferential generalisation resembles what Elliott et al. called ‘transferability’ (1999), and occurs when the findings are transferred from the studied sample to other samples or populations. This occurs either when the findings are sufficiently abstract to be transferrable to other populations and situations, or when the problem studied can be found across different populations. Theoretical generalisation varies in kind from the other two types of generalisation. In theoretical generalisation findings are seen to constitute a theory that can be tested on other samples from all kinds of populations. Thus, theoretical generalisability occurs whenever “theoretical propositions, principles or statements from the findings of a study” are applied more generally (Ritchie & Lewis, p 264). In summary, findings in qualitative research can be generalised to other populations, when these findings are pertinent, credible and valid to the problem they address, so long as this generalisation of new knowledge is transparent and sensible.

Ethical perspectives

Informed consent

The study was approved by the Department of Psychology’s Research Ethics Committee. Because the study was not health- or risk-related, it was not deemed necessary to apply for an approval for the study from a regional committee for medical and health research ethics (REK). At the beginning of the interview participants were given a written description of the

study, which they read and discussed with the interviewer before beginning the interview. The participants were informed about (a) the format of the study, (b) who had designed and would carry out the study, (c) who were responsible for the study, (d) the voluntariness of participation, their right to withdraw from the project at any stage without explanation, and (e) the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses. Furthermore, the participants were informed that only the person conducting the interview would be permitted to listen to the recording of the interview afterwards, and that all the recordings would be deleted as soon as the study was complete. The participants were not informed about the details of the problem formulation or the main purpose of the study, because we did not want to prime their responses before the interview started. Instead, they were told that it was a study about motivation and music in general.

Confidentiality and potential stress

Pseudonyms were given to the participants during the transcription process. Other names and places have been changed or denoted as "***". Three of the participants said during the interviews that they felt comfortable about sharing personal or private information because of this anonymity. It seems likely that some of the participants spoke more openly about personal experiences, thoughts and emotions because of this confidentiality. Although the interviews touched upon vulnerable topics and memories of feeling "different" or like an "outsider", all of the participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to talk about their experiences and share their reflections about life as a musician. In the words of one of the participants: "It's nice to talk about these things. Nice, and difficult, right. Difficult to know what it really is".

Researcher reflexivity

I am a 31-year-old sixth-year student in the profession-oriented degree program in psychology at the Department of Psychology at the University of Oslo. I hold a bachelor degree in performing arts from Barratt Due Institute of Music. I played the violin from age 6 to age 24, but changed paths after finishing my music degree. I currently work part-time as an arts and culture journalist in the newspaper *Aftenposten*. During my years as a music students I saw many talented children and adolescents develop into professional musicians, sometimes happily, sometimes in a more forced manner. I know from my own and others' experience that classical music is a genre that can only be mastered through persistent effort and

dedication, and this has likely influenced my understanding of the development of the musicians in the current study.

In the present study, it was important for me to establish a good rapport with the participants at the start of the interviews. Rapport exists when the participant feels connected to and trusting of the interviewer, and when there is a mutual understanding of the purpose of the interview (Braun & Clarke, 2013). To best enable this, the interviews took place face to face, so that I could directly observe potential non-verbal cues from the interviewee, and so that I would come across as transparent in the interview situation. Kvale (2007) stresses that the researcher should relinquish his or her presuppositions of the interviewee or the topic that is explored. I therefore made an effort to remain open and explorative during the interviews, as well as later when interpreting the data.

What counts as a finding?

Even though qualitative research is concerned with making sense of complex and insufficiently understood phenomena, it is useful to quantify the findings to a certain extent. Variation, contrast, and pluralism of experience are valuable and sought after in qualitative research. However, quantification can aid the researcher in the weighting of the findings, as a tool to achieve the right weighting of the most important themes and findings. A balanced weighting of the findings is important in order to as clearly as possible reflect the participants' experienced reality (Hill et al., 2005). In the current study, the categories "all", "most", and "some" answer to quantitative categories. ***All*** means nine or ten participants, allowing for one outlier. This is described as a *general* finding. ***Most*** means more than half of the sample, but less than all, and corresponds to six to eight participants. This is described as a *typical* finding. ***Some*** signifies a finding that was found in two to five participants. Findings in these categories are also often described by using the pseudonyms for the candidates. Findings that were unique to just one participant have been excluded as a thematic category. However, accounts from one participant that highlighted important nuances or contrasted a finding have been included in the presentation of the thematic category. This is in line with IPA, which has influenced the thematic analysis. For more on this, see previous sections on qualitative thematic analysis and IPA.

The next section presents the results from the thematic and phenomenological analysis. Quotations from the participants have been used to illustrate the various themes. Quotations are also a tool to make sure that the analysis reflects the original data derived from the interviews all the way through the research process, from data gathering to presentation.

This way, we can trust that the themes are derived from, and anchored, in the real-life experiences of the participants.

Results

The thematic analysis resulted in five main themes and eleven subthemes. Together, the themes describe the musicians' accounts of how they started their musical journeys and the emotions music elicits in them. Furthermore, the findings describe the psychological impact of these emotional responses to music. The main themes were (1) *The interest awakens: "It was a sort of acute fanaticism",* (2) *Feeling connected through music: "It just feels like I belong",* (3) *"You can't fight it": Making sense of kama muta experiences,* (4) *"You just feel so lonely": loneliness and ambivalence*, and (5) *Reaffirmation: music as a remedy.*

A word on the transcription: In the following quotations "…" signifies a pause, while "(…)" signifies that some words, a sentence or a few sentences have been left out of the quotation for simplicity.

The interest awakens: "It was a sort of acute fanaticism"

The first theme presents various aspects of the participants' experiences of getting into music as a child. Three subthemes stand out in the participants' accounts of how they got into music. First, a certainty that music was "their thing" and the development of an intense interest for music that seemed to have a somewhat obsessive quality. Second, a view on musicality as innate. Third, the experience of flow as a result of mastery.

"I just knew this was my thing"

A typical finding was that the musicians knew that this was their life's path from a very early age. Of the ten participants, eight described knowing that this was what they wanted to be and do very early in life. For most of the participants there seems to have been an almost immediate sense of "falling in love" with music right from the first time they heard or touched the instrument. In the accounts of how they first became interested in music, many of them described a sense of destiny or "knowing", as described in the quotations from Sophie and Albert below:

> I think I jumped onto a piano, picked out a tune with one finger without any mistakes, and said "I want

> to be a pianist". So I had very basic lessons. My hands were so small I actually played the black notes with my fists, like this, and made noises. But I was starting, I was doing something. I really knew that's what I wanted to do. And I had some rather boring, bad education in *** – normal school education. And I was bored, I wanted to get done already, to training to be a pianist. (Sophie)

> I started with the oboe, and I quickly said to my teacher that I'm gonna be an oboe player. And he was impressed, but he said 'Ok, if you want so then I will be a bit more tough with you', and then that's how I started. (Albert)

The participants seem to have identified with the role of musician very early on, as we see in the quotations below:

> For me, it was really like… playing the fiddle, and especially [playing] together, that was perhaps the closest I ever got to *direct self-expression*. It was my channel. (Johan)

> [We] went and got one of those cheap cassettes, [in] 1990, I think – with Mozart, that d-minor concerto. And [I] listened to it over and over again. So that was… it was pre-destined, I think. It was just a matter of turning the switch. (Herman)

Some of the participants described a sense of destiny as they tried to describe their connection to music. It seems like this recognition of the deep connection they had to music was kind of intuitive in nature, and not something that was imposed on them by others. Music gave them a sense of who they were, and their musical interest became something that set them apart from their environment.

> I remember listening to Beethoven fourth symphony for the first time, and the transition between the introduction and the main section, where you get these repeated dominant-septime chords – I remember thinking that that was just the most incredible thing I'd heard. And I played it to my mom, and mom just sort of stood there and said 'Yeah? What's that?...' So I was kind of aware at that time that music didn't speak to *everyone*, in the same way. But it was fine, that didn't bother me, I was just happy to know that it was my thing. (James)

> Someone like my mother she doesn't really understand music. And... I can never imagine what it's like to be in the brain of that person. How could they not understand that something is *so* important? But you have to pity these people. They haven't had the experiences that we've had. And that sucks for them, not for us. (Michael)

Some of the participants described how music became a way to express themselves, in a way

they couldn't do otherwise. For some of the participants their special sensitivity to music seemed to be something they realized in the form of an 'inner knowing' rather than an insight that they had achieved through thinking or reasoning. For them, a sense of finding their role was important, as when Simon described why he wanted to keep playing the piano:

> I remember it very clearly – having a sense of harmony in that space around me by the piano or the grand piano. From quite early on… from about seven, eight, nine years old. Those moments when I was playing and just felt that… *this is me*.

Even without parents or family members who cared about music, James still found his path in life through nourishing on his own his deep sense of connection to music. As an adult, he wonders whether his commitment to music increased because it was something that gave him a sense of autonomy and that enabled him to become more self-reliant. Because his parents were not interested in music, it became his task to seek out this other "world" that he cared about so deeply:

> I just knew that I wanted to spend time with music and this was something that was important. ... And perhaps, maybe it was because there was no music around. Mom and dad were not musicians, there was no classical music in the house. Perhaps I felt I had to go out and get it. I had to discover that and to create it, for myself.

A variant finding shows that some of the participants as adults still remember detailed musical progressions from their early musical experiences. This can be seen as an expression both of their strong interest for music, and unique ability to understand, remember and find meaning in music:

> Then I was really small, maybe three years old or something. But, yeah... I mean, I always had this ear for music. And then my first memories of music that I actually remember, I think it might be Rossini, the opening of La Gazza Ladra, and Peter and the Wolf, those things. And yeah, so my first memories of music I think is Rossini and Prokofiev. (Albert)

Music quickly became more important for many of the participants than other things in their lives, and some left the normal education system before they started high school in order to study music on a full time basis. Many described feeling compelled to engage with music incessantly – either through recordings, live concerts, or by playing their instrument. The participants used words like "fanaticism" or "obsession" to describe the intensity of their

interest:

> I spent one whole summer trying to learn to play 'Are you sleeping' with one finger. And then my mother said that… the teacher she had had, in the sixties and seventies – that she was still teaching, she was more than 70 years old by then… 'Shouldn't we give her a call and then you can take piano lessons?' (…) And it was just immediate like that, really [snaps fingers]. It was a sort of *acute fanaticism*. (Herman)

A natural ability to play coupled with an intense desire to engage with music created a cycle of increasing engagement as their technical and musical abilities developed and they reached new levels of mastery.

Context matters: "I know that I've learned to love music"

Even though interest was a central factor at the start of their musical journey, all of the participants mentioned various contextual factors that enabled their first encounter with music**.** For some the path towards a life in music started with coincidental encounters, (e.g., through a friend of their parents), while others grew up in a musical household. Peter and Herman described how hearing other people play kicked off their interests in music:

> I know I started the cello because my parents had a friend who had a neighbour who was a double bass player. And they took me at age 3 or something around there, and I saw this guy playing the double bass and I was just obsessed with it. So that clearly must have unlocked something in me, or... that wanted to do that. (Peter)

> My mother played [the piano], for pleasure. A bit of classical, "Sommernatt ved fjorden", a little Beatles… things like that. That was probably the most important reason, I just stood there and watched her and thought it just looked incredibly cool. And my grandfather, my mom's father, was really interested in music (…) and he came over on a Monday in the Easter break to watch *Amadeus*, and then… no, but… I think it was just point of no return, really. (Herman)

For most of the participants, their musical interest was not a given, and seemed to be an expression of musical talent. In the interviews, most of the participants expressed a view of musicality and love for music as somehow innate. However, Anna and Christiane, who both came from a family of professional musicians seemed to think that interest in music is not necessarily innate. Instead, they suggest that musical ability and interest can be learned. According to them, even emotional experiences of music can be learned by mimicking others

who have a deep relationship with music:

> I know that I've learned to love music, not that you... It's not something you can learn, on the one hand but... from my parents, the way they feel music, or the way they experience music if they would listen to it, I knew of course that I was very influenced by that. Or that it was a big example to me that they could feel like that about music. So, of course then you're already growing up in an environment where it's normal to let music touch you. And... yeah, so that shaped me, I think, a lot. (Anna)

> I grew up in a family of a lot of musicians and I always took it a bit for granted, that I was doing music. And I wanted to be good at it, but like the loving it, and listening to it, was just something I did. So I never really *felt*. And it was actually only late, when I met someone at a festival and we were together, and it was someone that loved music so much, that each time when I listened to music with him I shared his love for it so much that I sort of realized how huge it was. (Christiane)

However, coming from a background of professional musicians had led them to feel less certain than the other participants about their choice to become musicians. In contrast to the other participants, they described how they sometimes struggle with the choices they have made, or more precisely, feel as if they never made:

> Because of coming from a musical family, I don't feel that I ever made a very conscious choice 'ok, this is what I want to do, this is what I'm going to do'. It was very clear that I love music and that I love in a, you know, extreme way. But then... Yeah then, when I talk to some people that come from non-musical backgrounds – they really make a *choice*. They *want* to play that instrument or *want*... And so I can never say that I made that. So that makes my relationship to what I do sometimes a bit funny. (Anna)

> I've had moments of wondering. (…) I've been wondering if it was the right way to live, actually, to do that. (Christiane)

They worried about the fact that being a musician involved focusing on themselves a lot, and that this could make them more self-absorbed than they wanted to be. However, both Anna and Christiane indicated that with time their ability to care about music has become a characteristic that they like about themselves. Anna said it like this: "More and more I do value that in myself, I can see that that is valuable – to love music".

"A perfectly balanced freedom": flow experiences

The participants' reports of how their interest was awakened – their acute fanaticism – was

also expressed through descriptions of mastery of their instruments, and a sense of flow. The participants characterized musical flow experiences as (1) a sense of effortless effort, (2) the absence of fear and worries, (3) diminished self-consciousness or self-talk, (4) absorption in and merging with the task, (5) increased ability or mastery, as well as (6) time transformation. However, the musicians described flow as an elusive state that could not be achieved through aiming for it directly. It is something that one must allow to happen, by letting go of control and getting absorbed in the music. Although the participants did not describe flow as something they were specifically aiming for, this was an important experience for them, and served as a confirmation that they are doing something they were *meant* to do. The experience of time transformation, characteristic of flow, was important to Herman as he described the enjoyable aspects of playing concerts:

> I mean, sort of… that cliché about… you know, sometimes time passes quickly, and other times it passes slowly, or it feels that way. But on stage it just goes by so incredibly slowly. I mean – 25 minutes with a Mozart concerto feels like a whole day. But it's wonderful. There's *so much* going on. (…) It's really nice… I don't quite know how to put it. It's actually not complicated at all. I think it's the sense of doing something that is *extremely* meaningful, and to kind of be able to do it well, too.

Peter described flow as a sense of being in control, but without trying to control anything: "You feel completely free, almost like floating or something". Christiane described a recent flow experience in the following in the way:

> That feeling was a mix of the most intense concentration that I've ever experienced, and like... Your brain just focuses so much that you don't think of time, of time happening anymore. You're just completely in the present moment and... Yeah, you're not aware anymore, I think. You're just so focused on what is happening, and you have to be, that you're not aware of anything else that's surrounding and... And that's pretty amazing cause that's from that that it brings the… this thing of, yeah, unawareness of anything else I find it so extremely fulfilling that right after playing I just feel more empty than I've ever felt before.

Anna, who did not have a sense of flow very often, stated that she regrets not being able to experience flow as easily as certain other musicians when she explained her experience of flow:

> Real, real flow... it happens extremely rarely. I would be so jealous of people who say that that happens to them every time.

In addition to flow, the participants described feeling connected and moved in response to

music. These topics are explored in the next two main themes: *feeling connected through music* and *responses to kama muta*.

Feeling connected through music: "It just feels like I belong"

A general finding is that the emotional power of music was associated with a sense of connection. This could be a sense of connection with music itself, a connection to other people through music, or a connection to something greater – for instance love, eternity, or God. Music served as an emotional comfort and gave the participants a sense of *belonging* – both to a social group in the concert setting, but also in the more existential sense of the word. This main theme has three sub-themes: connection to something greater, connection to other people, and music as a relationship.

"Like you sort of touched eternity": connection to something greater

Many of the participants described a sense of being connected to something greater than themselves in some of their musical experiences. In response to questions about their greatest musical experiences or questions about being moved by music, many of them described experiences that seemed to have a transcendental, spiritual, or religious aspect to them. For some of the participants there seemed to be a certain degree of overlap between flow experiences and the experience of connection to "something greater" in that both experiences were characterized by a shift in the experience of time and in their sense of self. In the following quotation, Michael used the metaphor of *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry to describe how music can make him feel when something "happens":

> I feel like the biggest, and yet the smallest, person in the universe. (…) You feel like you're standing on that planet and you realize that it's round and you can see everything! But then you realize that you're extremely, extremely small. It's a great feeling. (…) I mean, it's a feeling that makes life worth living.

While none of the musicians stated that they are religious and some explicitly stated that were in fact not religious, some of them used religious metaphors or pointed to "God" when they tried to describe their greatest musical moments.

> When people ask me if I'm religious, I always say "I don't know". But when I listen to the Bach cantatas… then I am, for sure. (Herman)

Sophie described how a sense of connection to something greater than herself left her with a

sense of supreme fulfillment. Herman, too, described a sense of connecting to something larger than himself, and likened it to witnessing a miracle:

> Sometimes you can come off the platform... and you say to yourself – ok, I could die now. If I die now it's fine, it's fine by me. Because you feel that... I hardly dare say it.... you feel like you sort of touched eternity, you know. (Sophie)

> It's a sense of witnessing a miracle, or something that's in a way… perfect… something that's perfectly formed. Like it contains… a small snippet that lasts five minutes can contain all the layers of the universe, sort of. (…) And this thing with… that much-talked-about *connection.* (Herman)

A sense of connection through music to something greater seemed to provide a high level of meaning for the participants. Although religious metaphors were used, it could also be a connection to more universal terms such as "love". The impact of such experiences seemed to be at once both transient and lasting. Often, such experiences faded against everyday chores such as washing the dishes. Music, then, became a way to get back to that sense of greater meaning.

"Swimming in the same water": through music I feel connected to others

A typical finding is that the participants also experienced music as a way to *connect to other people*. This could be a connection to the audience, to other musicians or to the composer. Some of the participants described feeling connected when they shared a special and unique musical moment with the audience. Michael described the experience of being in a group of people who experience the same thing at the same time as "magical":

> That's a good question – what is the best musical moment? Probably the moment when I know that we're all in the same place emotionally. But it's like a passing thing. The audience's emotions are passing by me in one escalator and I'm passing by in another one. And if we ever meet and look at each other... You know if you really see someone and you look in their eyes and those two escalators passing, that's that magical moment.

The metaphor of the escalators points to the transient nature of such moments, where people who have separate lives and move in separate directions are able to stop for one short moment in time and recognize that they share the emotional experience with each other. Emphasizing the emotional aspect of musical communication, Sophie described how the emotions music evoke in her make her feel a connection to others who shares this world of emotions with her.

Through the emotions in music, both the composer and the audience become “others” with whom she shares a common humanity:

> But, basically, it is emotion, shared. I am unlocking... that’s my only job, to unlock the door on... I cannot say the emotion of the composer, this is too much of an arrogance, but just... a world of emotion. Because the composer although a genius was also a human being like us, had money worries, love worries, health worries, whatever. So we’re all, composer, performer and audience, hopefully swimming in the same water. (Sophie)

> It feels like there’s a deep connection to the soul of the composer. Or to the epoch, or… well, actually, yes, to the composer. And to the piece, of course. (Herman)

Because of the connection it enables with others, many of the participants thought of music as a “language”. Sophie spoke of how members of the audience have sometimes approached her after a performance and described the emotional messages in the music. Often, their descriptions have matched her expressive intentions perfectly:

> Although I’ve banged on about music being so powerful precisely because it’s without words... for me it becomes powerful when you have the impression that you are actually voicing something, and furthermore the audience is picking exactly that up. It’s very strange, very bizarre. And I don’t think it’s complete fantasy. It comes back to what I said earlier about how sometimes people come backstage, and say back to you, in words, the very things that you were trying to say in music. It’s completely bizarre. (Sophie)

The metaphor of music as a language is a typical finding, and was used both explicitly and implicitly to describe how it is possible to communicate through music. Anna described the psychological and emotional value of music as being able to hear an expression of emotions that you were unaware that you even could feel:

> So there’s these emotions and feelings you don’t even know you really have. Or you don’t use them on a daily basis. Cause there’s no space for them, almost. And so the music... the great composers, they find the way of catching that somehow, of the... and putting it into sound. (Anna)

All in all, connection to other people seem to be an important factor in explaining why the participants wanted to engage with music. However this could vary from a direct connection through experiencing the same music at the same time, to a more abstract connection of being able to communicate through music about something deeply meaningful.

"I'll never fall out of love with music": music as a relationship

A typical finding is that the participants to some extent imagined the music as a "persona" (Bicknell, 2007, 2009; Levinson, 1982). That is, most of the participants described a sense of being in a relationship with music. To varying degrees, the music provided emotional support similar to what one could expect from an intimate or trusted partner. They described their relationship with music as having a reciprocal pattern where they were able to both give and receive. However, this relationship was free from some of the more complex dynamics that are often found in human relationships. Some experienced the music as a living "entity", and felt a sense of responsibility, care, and tenderness towards this entity. The relationship with music could serve as a substitute for other social or intimate relationships, and provided emotional comfort. The extent to which this relationship resembled an actual relationship varied across the participants, as these examples show:

> Yes, always. Never fall out of love with music. I *am* in a relationship with music (I: And what's that like?) Well, relationships are not always perfect. Relationships are difficult. Sometimes you need your space, sometimes you don't wanna see that person. I'm going on holiday this summer, and for two weeks I will not have any music. (…) Yeah, it is a relationship, with all of the good and bad aspects of what a relationship means. (Michael)

> I think music articulates aspects of personal relationships, things from your experience that you can identify with very clearly. (James)

For some, their connection with music took the form of an idealized "super-relationship" in which they could truly be themselves and get a sense of connection that they could always rely on, as portrayed by Sophie:

> Well of course it has a purity about it. And the feedback it gives you is itself. And it doesn't have any issues, or any baggage, or any... It grounds you again, it gets you in touch again... So it's a darn good relationship to have, I have to say. Much less complex than quite a few other ones. Uhm... yeah, the connection is just very.... If you go back to music when you're in trouble... a great work, a great piece of music... It is so complete in itself, and... what it demands of you is so complete, of the brain and of the heart and of the fingers... and getting all those three to function together. I mean, it's the best therapy there is, frankly – and the cheapest. [laughs]

It is not totally clear to what extent the participants *actually* saw their relationship to music as

equal to other intimate relationships, or to what degree it was an expression of the common cultural idea of the artist being committed to his art above all else, sometimes at the cost of other relationships. But perhaps the relationship metaphor was simply their clearest way of capturing the communal sharing relationship with the music itself.

"You can't fight it": making sense of kama muta

All of the participants described strong emotional responses to music that can be understood as being "moved", or as kama muta experiences. That is, they either stated that they felt touched or moved by the music, or they described that the music elicited a combination of goosebumps, tears, lightness, or warmth in their chest. (The *frequency* of such sensations was not reported in a consistent manner). Like flow experiences, kama muta experiences seemed to "just happen". Though most of the kama muta experiences happened while listening to music, some had also experienced kama muta while playing. The participants described that when they had experienced kama muta with music, this felt like a "private" emotion and was generally not something they wanted to talk about or share with others. This theme is divided into the following sub-themes: the moving quality of music, kama muta while playing, and the aftermath of kama muta.

"It breaks all your defenses": the moving quality of music

All of the participants described kama muta experiences in relation to music. The participants emphasized that experiences of kama muta cannot be aimed for directly. However, they had several tentative explanations for why music could have such a strong impact, and what factors facilitated or hindered emotional responses. Emotional responses to music were often described as "irrational" and to some degree as uncontrollable:

> It's really not rational, I think it's just... I mean, it has the power to just break all your defenses and just touch you. Yeah. Sometimes you just listen to music and you just cry cause it just comes like that and you have no... you can't fight it. (Albert)

> Well, I've gotten to be a bit of a weeper… everything makes me cry, really [laughs]. Everything from children's songs to Mahler symphonies. It's kind of… you can't really make listen to a Mahler symphony in a concert hall without me crying by the end of it. (Simon)

Simon described that music touches him more and more as he gets older: and sometimes just

thinking about a piece will make him cry. Christiane reflected on the intimacy she experiences with her inner self as she experiences strong positive emotions with music. She stated that nothing is as intimate at sound:

> Maybe because it's the most interior thing. Maybe because it just speaks to your internal... because it's not visual, or at least... So... if you are in the museum you have the whole experience of the rooms, the painting you look at... and music, you can close your eyes and feel it. And it's maybe the most intimate experience. And that's why it moves us so much. Cause you can't really share it. Or you can sort of share it, but you take it as a completely... internal process.

Thus, this sense of intimacy seemed to be connected to the moving quality of musical experiences. In addition, it seemed that certain personal circumstances coupled with a willingness to listen attentively to the music would make the music's emotional power stronger. Albert has found that his personal life circumstances can affect his level of openness to the emotional power of music:

> When she sang this Verdi aria all of a sudden I was crying. The first two minutes I was like flooding, so much, and then two hours later I was still kind of empty... not empty, but moved, like... So, sometimes... maybe it has to be a special moment, also. I think the same song with the same singer, I think if I just fell in love or something like that, it wouldn't touch me like that, I think.

In line with this, Michael suggested that music moves us because it makes us think about events and situations that we regret in our personal life:

> It has a way of making us think of regrets and... Why do small children, why are they not moved by music in the same way? At least emotionally? At least in my experience... because... they don't have a life full of regrets. And mistakes. The longer you live, inevitably you have regrets. (…) I mean, there were moments in that Lully *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* which were sooo wonderful, that were joyful, and they still make me think of regrets, I don't know why.

Difficult or challenging circumstances seem to heighten the sensitivity to music, as these circumstances seem to bring out the comforting quality of musical experiences. This will be explored further in the next main theme.

Crying while playing: a musical faux-pas?

The kama muta experiences described by the participants usually occurred while listening to

music. However, some of the participants described having had kama muta experiences when they were playing. It seems that while some of the participants had been moved when playing, this was to some extent seen as breaking the “coutume” among musicians. There seemed to be a concern that being too emotionally involved in the music while playing might make the playing worse, even though it would make the experience of the music stronger. They explained that they thought the audience, not the musician, should be the ones who are moved by the music. Thus, the participants tried to stay somewhat more emotionally detached when they were performing.

> You’re just thinking of enough things, technically and whatever you need to think of to be able to deliver it, to keep you one side of being [emotionally] destroyed by it. (James)

> It was one of the few moments when I’ve been on the verge of crying from my own playing – and that’s never a good sign [laughs]. It’s kind of pathetic [laughs]. But then again, you could say that it was really more because of the music than because of my performance. (…) I don’t think it helps… with the communication that you’re just all out there… but I guess, too… in a way it’s kind of nice that one can be brought to tears from one’s own playing. (Simon)

> It really shouldn’t happen, because then you’re close to being a psychiatric case, you know, sitting there, crying from your own playing, right. (Herman)

Herman explained that although crying provided him with an emotional release, he saw it as something that kind of took the focus away from the music. In general, the participants reported less moving experiences while playing, and emphasized experiences of listening in their reports of being moved by music.

“It’s a private feeling”: the aftermath of being moved

Although the participants expressed a sense of connection to others through music, a typical finding was that kama muta experiences was something that they wanted to cherish on their own, rather than trying to share them with others. When asked whether they felt like sharing the experience in the aftermath of being moved by music most of the participants said that they wanted to keep it to themselves and not talk about it with others. These are some of the answers given:

> No, I don’t, actually. I want to just keep it for myself [laughs]. Like a small child! (Herman)

> No, I'd like to be alone. Actually, that's funny, that's a good question. No, I'd like to be alone. Because, in words I can never explain to people what that makes me feel. And so I can only play. If I'm very inspired after going to a concert I come home and I practice. Or I just play. That's what's wonderful about music. (Michael)

> Probably cherish more on my own. Yeah. Depends on who you're with. If you're with very close people... But generally it's something you do on your own, yeah. It's a private emotion. (Anna)

Simon explained that even though he wanted to share his experiences with others, he is rarely able to:

> On a deeply personal level… uhm… it can often… for me this is a bit of a sore spot… I mean, if one has had one of those *enormously* impactful experiences – you can't expect others to have that, too… because you were *open* to that experience, in that moment.

He suggested that a certain level of familiarity with the music seemed to increase its emotional power, and that this can explain why the same musical experience impactful for some, but not for others. This explanation seemed to be a way to reconcile himself with the fact that not everyone shares his experience of the music. However, in this sample, his experience was not typical, and most of the participants seemed content to cherish experience of being moved on their own.

"You just feel so lonely": Loneliness and ambivalence

While strong positive emotional responses to music led the participants on their paths to music, they also described loneliness and ambivalence as part of their life. A certain level of sacrifice was associated with reaching their musical goals, and for some, their commitment to music has made other relationships difficult. This theme has three sub-themes. The first subtheme is about loneliness and alienation. The second subtheme describes various difficulties they have encountered, including disappointments or feeling ambivalent towards their career path.

"I can't have sex with the score": loneliness and the longing for intimacy

A typical finding was that although the participants find that music provides a sense of meaning and is a world where they find greater emotional and relational depth, they still experience loneliness in their lives. Life as performing musicians requires constant travelling, and constant practicing. Thus, the participants' life style was deeply entangled with their

music making. For some, this has created obstacles for any personal relationships they might be involved with, as most of their time is bound up in playing and preparing for performances, often in other cities or other countries. For Peter and Christiane, the nomadic life style has at times left them feeling ambivalent towards the deep relationships they develop with others through music, since such relationships tend to dissolve once the concert or festival is over, as described by Peter:

> And then, the second it's finished, the second we're in the car, leaving, it's like it never happened. And that's quite unsettling. On just a quite basic human level, I think it's... but that's... so it kind of doesn't ever feel real, but that feeling of not being real is also the reality. And we know that we'll have another, other equally intense and powerful and moving experience such as these festivals... at other festivals, you know there'll be another time, but in a different place and with different people.

Thus, music seems to enable a deep sense of connection at one level, but make lasting relationships difficult at another level. After concerts Michael listens to music before going to bed, to stave off the loneliness:

> I probably want intimacy. That's what I want after a concert, I want someone to be next to me, and feel loved, and that sort of thing... Of course, music is so abstract, my relationship with the audience is so abstract, I mean... exposing myself, when I'm at my best exposing myself is very intimate, but then they all go home! And I can't have sex with the score, can I? So it's like, I'd like someone to hold me, I want to be in bed with someone, or to... I mean, the life of a musician is so lonely, if you're a soloist. I think it's very rare for people to have partners or to have husbands or wives or whatever at home. So, yeah, I think I want real love afterwards – which I don't have.

In the midst of loneliness Michael seeks comfort from the only source he knows he can rely on for emotional support: music. This creates a cycle where the music is both the cause for alienation, and its remedy. Simon described how his sensitivity to music and the meaning and value that he perceives in music is so unique and so heightened that he rarely meets anyone who can really understand it:

> It can definitely be nice to sit close to each other and listen and feel that you kind of go on the same journey, but still… still, I've often felt that… it's the classic case where you've heard something truly sublime and extraordinary, and then you put on the record and play it someone, and then "can't you hear how incredible this is", and then… no, they don't have the same experience as me… I mean, that's harrowing. You just feel so… so incredibly lonely.

By not being able to share the enjoyment and depth that music gives, he is left alone in his difference, like an outsider. His deviation from normalcy becomes alienating and gives him a deep sense of loneliness which he can't find a way to overcome.

"The practicing is such a tyranny": ambivalence

Some of the musicians described a certain level of ambivalence towards their career choice. Some felt ambivalent towards the music industry, and described a gap between the big number of non-musical tasks they have to do as performing musicians and their real desire, which is to play music. Others spoke about the regret of having sacrificed a "normal" life for music. Sophie described the anguish and regret she felt about the fact that she wasn't free to go out in her garden on a sunny day because of the "black beast" – the piano – that awaited her as she entered the living room in the morning. There was no other option for her but to surrender to the instrument once again:

> And also with the fact that the practicing is such a tyranny. Such a tyranny. I'm somebody who needs to practise a lot, and always have done. Sometimes when I come down in the morning and see that black beast in the corner I want to kick it not stroke it. Because it dominates my life.

The constant pressure to stay focused on music has meant that she has sacrificed what she calls a "normal life" to become a performing pianist:

> It's a very rich life, but it's also a very dysfunctional one – one cannot have any sort of a normal life, really, because the need to work and to keep in touch with the music both for reasons of memory and for reasons of keeping in touch with what matters is sort of pretty constant. Well, for me it is necessary to stay in that field the whole time. So, when there's a concert tour, you really think about nothing else.

Some described that they struggled with the pressure to perform at a certain technical standard:

> There's *music,* and there's the *music profession.* And you know, I haven't had a bad time with the music profession, I've been very lucky with that, but still I think we all feel pressured by it. And expectations, which of course we build up in our own minds more than anything else. (James)

> Well, it's very vulnerable. You take risks, make mistakes. We hate making mistakes because as musicians we require external validation. Making a mistake, the first thing we think is 'are they gonna think that I'm incompetent?' (Michael)

Herman has found that life on tour is not quite as glamorous and enjoyable as he imagined when he was younger. He has found that many people only want to know what he will do next, and do not really care about the music, and so he feels out of place:

> The things I imagined when I was little… entering the stage, lots of people in the audience, right… that was… what I didn't know at that time, is that that's surrounded by this strong sense of boredom, which comes before entering the stage… Of course there's no way that I would know that when I was 10-11 years old… So that's kind of put a bit… a bit of a damper on it. I mean, there's still lots of golden moments, of course – but mainly when you are in places that are down to earth and where the music itself is still the central thing, and not everything that surrounds it… Where there's none of that "so, next week Sól Gabetta will play here", if you know what I mean – that kind of small talk, right.

Herman cures his boredom by going into a kind of "music bubble" before a performance, and plays obsessively until it's time for the concert. Then, when the time for the concert comes, the enjoyment of that moment trumps everything else and makes it all worthwhile. Some wondered whether music has any meaningful impact on the world around them. Peter complained that "it's a kind of quite protected impact on an audience. It's not like you're going to a refugee camp and helping people in that way". Because of the ephemeral nature of music is ephemeral, they described that they felt like it the value they brought through performance was momentary. Christiane described it like this:

> There's something really weird with what we do, it's like very... it evaporates. Like we spend our whole life doing it and, I mean, except CDs and stuff, it's not like we're composers. We're just... we do... what we do is like 'in the moment'. As soon as you play the note it's gone. And that – I love it, but sometimes if I try to think of it in a rational way it gives me little bit of vertigo.

The sense that music is incredibly important for her, yet may have a limited impact on the world, has made her question whether the path is really the right one.

Reaffirmation: music as a remedy

All of the participants who described ambivalence solved it by reaffirming a sense of meaning. Thus, by turning to music with their ambivalence and doubt, music served as an answer to their questions, and provided them with a sense of vocation. Many described how music had been a way to deal with life from a very young age, and that it gave them something that they couldn't find anywhere else. The following quotations show three distinct stories of the existential and personal value music had for these three participants.

> When I was a child I was really really shy. I have always been that. I didn't dare to ask for the toilet, I preferred to pee on me. It happened many times, until quite late actually. I was a nice little boy that never talked [laughs]. Always dreaming. (…) So with music, I think it's a way for me to express many things because I don't talk much. (Albert)

> I remember when I was at school, and found it quite hard. I felt like... quite like an outsider, because not so many people were doing it and it was sort of the thing I was doing and I loved doing it but no-one really got it, so I... And they bullied me a little bit, you know, cause you go off and practice instead of go and see your friends. So that was quite tough and at that time I, particularly, was listening to loads of music at home. … I didn't hate school, but then the music was there. So I began to realize how... what a positive thing that was, for me. (Peter)

> I don't know what it is to belong, I mean I never belonged to my own community. I mean, I am, you know, I'm an *** (immigrant nationality) who grew up in the United States, I'm a harpsichordist, I'm gay, you know, I don't fit in anywhere! And I don't feel very comfortable in the gay community. And I disagree with fitting in to heteronormative societies' expectations. So you know my point, I guess, is that I don't feel like I fit in anywhere. Part of it is probably self-imposed. But music doesn't judge. (Michael)

For some of the participants, perhaps the greatest value music gave them was a permission to be themselves, and to express themselves in a way that felt true. Michael described it in the following way:

> I do it not because of the image of being a musician – I do it because it's probably the only way that I cope with my life, is by being a musician. Being a musician is my anti-depressant, it's my sort of calming-down medicine, it's my... It's my relief. But it also gives me something to live for, it... to live... to look forward to, in life. So being a musician is emotionally very important for me.

Building on this, Johan concluded that for him, music is the only thing that really has any real meaning:

> [It gives me] an intense sense of meaning. And I guess that's an interesting thing about music, that it is… completely meaningless, and thereby the only thing that's meaningful in any real sense. Once you're beyond mere survival, then it's about… the next level. And music *really* is that next level.

All of the participants emphasized that what music gave them was greater than what it had cost them. After talking about the positive emotions music elicited in them, all of the

participants firmly stated the value and reaffirmed the meaning music provided them with, despite challenges, loneliness and ambivalence.

In the next section, the findings will be discussed in greater detail in relation to the theoretical framework and previous findings.

Discussion

Summary of findings

The aim of the present study was to examine in what ways positive emotions function as motivators for expert musicians in the development and maintenance of their professional career. The analysis provided an understanding of the role of emotions in the participants' discovery of music in childhood, as well as the role emotions play in their musical career more generally. A strong interest in music led the musicians to an early commitment to music as a career and life path, as reflected in the category *"I just knew this was my thing".* This strong and all-consuming interest played an important role in the early stages of learning to play an instrument. Furthermore, music elicited strong emotional responses in the musicians. The emotional intensity was viewed as an essential part of what makes music valuable and enjoyable. This was described in the categories *"A perfectly balanced freedom": flow experienes, and "You can't fight it": being moved by music.* In particular, the musicians described how music made the feel *connected.* Feeling moved by music (kama muta) seemed to enhance a sense of connection, both to other people and to something greater than oneself. The experience of being moved was often accompanied by tears, goosebumps, chills, and sometimes sensations in the chest. For some, this sense of connection was set against a background of feeling disconnected and lonely. Some of the musicians described that in times of difficulties, or when they felt alienated and alone, they turned to music to feel better, as described in the category *Reaffirmation: music as a remedy.* Experiences of flow, kama muta and connection served as confirmation of the musicians' life choices, and provided a sense of meaning. This inspired further engagement with the path they have chosen.

Interest is associated with intrinsic motivation and plays a part in identity development

Three positive emotions stood out in the findings as motivators for engagement with music: interest, joy in relation to flow, and kama muta. In the current study, *interest* played a major role as a motivator for the participants when they first started to play. It was experienced as a

positive and life-affirming emotion, and induced a strong will to pursue music. In general, interest seems to be intimately connected to intrinsic motivation as described by Deci and Ryan (2012). The expression of interest was uncomplicated in the first few years of learning to play and provided a high level of certainty about their choices. This early interest seemed to serve as a kind of *leitmotif,* a signaling message, that staked out their life course, and to which they could always return in times of doubts and difficulties. Furthermore, interest was associated with the development of an identity as a musician at an early age. In general, the strong interest was somewhat surprising to the participants' surroundings when they were children, and in some cases, it set them apart from their parents, siblings and friends. In the person-object theory of interest, Krapp (2007) suggests that interest is a central factor in the development of a child's personal identity and sense of self. Furthermore, he argues that by becoming *interested* in certain objects in their environment, children regulate their development of a coherent sense of self. This way, "the individual has great influence on his or her own development from earliest childhood onwards" (Krapp, 2007, p. 15). Thus, in the case of musicians, this early dyadic relationship with their object of interest, music, forms the basis for further engagement with music. This in turn leads to a well-developed sense of self that in some ways depends on their role as musicians. In this way, one could suggest that interest plays a role in shaping the participants identity, and that this identity in turn is shaped and regulated by their further interest in music. The connection between interest and identity formation suggested by Krapp could explain why for most of the participants, interest was accompanied by a sense of self-expression, and of being on the right path in life.

However, for the two participants who had grown up in a family of professional musicians, the role of interest was slightly different. For them the role of interest was more muted, since they, in essence, had pursued the same path as their parents and other members of their extended family. This made them feel less certain about whether it was right for them to have pursued a career in music. This slight unease could be understood as a fear of *identity foreclosure* as described by Erikson in his theory of psychosocial development (1968, in Côté & Levine, 1987). Identity foreclosure can occur when a child or adolescent gets into a "set" identity or role too soon, without having had the time or opportunity to explore other options or roles. This could be the case when parents or other important people in a child's life has a strong opinion about the choices the child should make, but it can also happen when the adolescent chooses the "default position" that is available to them, while skipping the exploratory phase of their search for a more grown up social identity. This highlights the value of self-determination and autonomy for healthy psychological functioning, as posited by

Deci and Ryan (2012). However, both Anna and Christiane had resolved this possible foreclosure by taking ownership over their relationship with music as adults, and music had become a very positive force in their lives.

Do flow experiences affirm competence through metacognition?

Flow experiences were reported by several of the participants when asked to describe their best musical experiences. As described in the results sections, the musicians in the present study characterized musical flow experiences as (1) a sense of effortless effort, (2) the absence of fear and worries, (3) diminished self-consciousness or self-talk, (4) absorption in and merging with the task, (5) increased ability or mastery, as well as (6) time transformation. The participants linked flow experiences to a sense of fulfillment and purpose, and described it as a very enjoyable experience. Flow experiences did not appear to be the aim of their pursuit of music – rather, they were regarded as a reward that could not be aimed for directly. Furthermore, flow experiences seemed to provide important confirmation of competence for the participants, and also served to highlight the existential significance of their musical pursuit. In the present thesis, flow experiences seemed to provide two levels of enjoyment. Firstly, the "simple" and immediate joy of effortless performance, which involves letting the performance *flow* without trying to control it as it happens. Secondly, flow experiences provided a more indirect experience of joy and satisfaction when *flow* was interpreted as confirmation of competence and ability. From this, one could hypothesize that in order for flow experiences to serve as confirmation of competence there needs to be a *metacognitive* awareness of the flow experience. That is, the lack of self-talk and cognitive monitoring must be interpreted (via self-talk) as a sign of competence. Thus, a sense of competence would require a metacognitive interpretation of flow as an expression of competence. This way, flow experiences could help to fulfill the need for competence that is central to psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Future studies should examine the role of metacognition in flow experiences in relation to competence in order to determine this relationship.

Is kama muta theory relevant for explaining why music moves us?

Most of the participants felt like they were in a form of relationship with music itself. This "relationship" varied in form from concrete to abstract. Some participants likened it to an actual intimate romantic relationship, while others saw it more as an abstracted and willingly *imagined* relationship. It is important to note that in all cases this comparison should be

understood as a metaphor for how they felt towards music. This finding is important, because it can help us to understand how kama muta theory applies to music. The conceptualization of being in a relationship with music itself, or with the composer, could be likened to what Fiske calls a CS relationship (Fiske, 1992). In kama muta theory, a sudden intensification of a CS relationship is proposed as an elicitor of kama muta. Let's look at that in greater detail: When music is conceived of as a *persona,* it is implicitly understood as an *other.* Even if this is just an abstracted *other,* it is possible to regard the relationship to this other as a communal sharing relationship, as long as the listener conceives this abstracted *other* as someone or something with which they share central characteristics. In the case of music, this central characteristic could be a common ability for emotional expressivity. Thus, the central proposition is as follows: as long as music is implicitly or explicitly perceived as, or imagined to be an *other* – concrete or abstract – one could propose that so far as the listener enjoys this relationship, it can be understood as a form of CS relationship. If this is so, the proposition that kama muta is elicited by a sudden intensification of a CS relationship would be an appropriate explanation for why music is perceived as moving, even if it is not necessarily an exhaustive explanation. Future studies should examine this through experimental designs, in order to achieve more precise knowledge to what extent this is a sufficient explanation for the power of music has to move its listeners emotionally.

The musicians clearly felt that their relationship with music was intimate, and that it provided emotional comfort. This in line with previous research that has found that music is often used as a way to fulfill emotional and social needs (*e.g.*, Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2000). It is also in line with Levinson's claim music is enjoyable because it offers a sense of emotional communion with the composer or with the music's *persona* (Levinson, 1982). Furthermore, Bicknell (2007) argues that listening to music can be an intimate experience, and this is echoed in the findings of this study. But how does this sense of intimacy develop? Baumeister and Bratslavsky (1999) suggest that intimacy develops along three main dimensions: firstly, a mutual disclosure of personal information, secondly, having strong favorable attitudes toward the other, and thirdly, communication of affection. Communication of affection can take several forms, and be expressed "verbally, through acts that express concern, through touching and attention, or sexually" (p. 51). With music as the "other" in a perceived intimate relationship, *disclosure of personal information* could mean projecting one's own personal life experiences onto the emotional story of the music. Projecting something that is private and personal onto the music can be seen as an act disclosure, even if it only happens in the mind of the listener. Furthermore, a strong interest for music would also

involve having a *strong favorable attitude* towards music, and thus, this would constitute the second factor in intimacy. *Affection* could be expressed by giving one's attention to music, repeatedly and extensively. It is possible that both listeners and performers could experience a sense of intimacy and connection to the music in a way that would satisfy the basic need for relatedness. This would suggest that imagining the music as a *persona* and continuously investing in one's relationship with music could fulfill the basic need for relatedness.

Kama muta can co-occur with negative emotions

The musicians provided rich and nuanced descriptions of their experiences of being moved by music. The findings of the current study suggest that contextual factors to some extent influence the degree to which a particular musical performance is moving. Some suggested that they had to listen in a particularly attentive way in order to be moved, while others suggested that their general life satisfaction in the moment tended to influence their emotional responses to music. Furthermore, it appears that the relationship to a musical piece can grow through repeated intimate encounters with that piece in moving or emotionally significant circumstances. Konečni (2005) argues that one explanation for the fact that some music is moving to some people at some point in time, is the personal meaning that is attributed to the piece. He argues that in order for music to be moving, it needs to elicit "a significant personal associative context" (p. 33). Thus, he argues that the listener's autobiographical memory can inform their interpretation of a given piece of music, which in turn affects their emotional response to this music. This could be memories of specific moments in the listener's life, such as the wedding or funeral of someone the listener cares about, or other personally important milestones that are associated with strong emotions. As previously mentioned, Menninghaus et al. (2015) understand being moved to be a mixed emotion, consisting of both sadness and happiness. Based on the descriptions of the emotion of being moved by the musicians in this study, it sometimes appeared to be a mix of negative and positive emotion. Some of the musicians spoke of a pleasant tinge of sadness or regret that made the music even more moving. Sad music seems particularly apt at eliciting this blend of emotions. This has sometimes been called the sad music paradox (*e.g.*, Vuoskoski & Eerola, 2017; Levinson, 1982). The position that being moved can be experienced as a state of feeling a mix of emotions is not only in line with Menninghaus and colleagues' model of being moved, but is also in line with kama muta theory. In a study of moment-to-moment changes of kama muta, Schubert, Zickfeld, Seibt and Fiske (2018) found that kama muta cross-correlated positively with sadness for some videos, but negatively or not at all for others. This suggests that

sadness or other negative emotions *can* co-occur with kama muta, in a complex or ambivalent emotional state, but that it is not a *necessary* component of kama muta experiences. Furthermore, Vuoskoski and Eerola (2017) found that the aesthetic appreciation of sad music was mediated by being moved. They argue that feeling sad may contribute to the pleasure derived from listening to sad music, by intensifying feelings of being moved.

As we have seen, both contextual significance and sadness can influence the experience of kama muta from music. However, in this study, the most explicitly associated factor with kama muta was a sense of connection. In summary, interest, flow, and kama muta were mentioned by all of the participants as positive emotional states elicited by music. While flow experiences provided a sense of meaning and purpose, kama muta was associated with a sense of connection. These emotions both *preceded* and *followed* the participants' commitment to music. This way, the positive emotions were both a justification for the involvement with music, and a consequence of it.

Understanding intrinsic motivation: interest as talent, and talent as *difference*

While research has shown that interest is closely related to learning and motivation, some also argue that it is a central factor of giftedness. As we have seen, most of the musicians in the present study described an intense, almost obsessive, interest in music from an early age. Winner (2000) argues that a strong interest is often a sign of a propensity for the field in question. Winner and Drake (2013) have termed this kind of interest a *rage to master.* They argue that "only when children have such an intense interest are they willing to engage in extensive deliberate practice" (p. 1). Furthermore, they suggest that "an intense interest is almost always a sign of innate talent" (p. 1). Conversely, Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) argue that precocious ability in a given field is simply a result of time spent on the task. In their first study, they found that the main thing that set the top classical violinists apart from the second best was that the top performers had spent significantly more time on deliberate practice. In conclusion, they argue that it takes at least 10.000 hours of deliberate practice to reach expert level of skill within a given field (Ericsson et al., 1993). However, Winner (2000) argues that the deliberate practice hypothesis, put forward by Ericsson et al. (1993), is not a sufficient explanation for the development of gifted children. She argues that no child can be forced to spend all their free time on improving their skills without an inner motivation to succeed and a strong willingness to take on new challenges. Instead, she suggests that gifted children show a strong intrinsic motivation which sets them apart from other children.

This thesis does not seek to answer whether musical interest and musical ability is innate or learned. However, the intense interest described by the musicians in this study appears to be similar to the *rage to master* described by Winner. Winner and Drake (2013) have found that gifted children seek to understand the fundamental rules that characterize accomplishment in their selected fields in ways that are qualitatively different than the development of specific abilities in other children. In the visual arts, this means understanding perspective, depth and weighted balance. In music, it can mean having an early developed sensitivity to the emotional and expressive aspects of music, rather than merely being attentive to music's structural aspects like most people are (Winner & Drake, 2013). This suggests that innate talent and effortful practice are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are likely to be two sides of the same phenomenon: innate talent is expressed as a rage to master, that is, an inborn desire to fulfil one's exceptional potential through deliberate and consistent practice.

However, there is some debate about the usefulness of categorizing talent as 'innate'. Howe, Davidson and Sloboda (1998) warn against the potential inequality that can follow from describing some children as gifted, and others as not gifted, at an early stage of development:

> A consequence of the belief that innate gifts are a precondition for high achievement is that young people who are not identified as having innate talents in a particular domain are likely to be denied the help and encouragement they would need to attain high levels of competence. (p. 399)

They suggest that adults' expectations towards children can both *enhance* and *impede* a child's development. They argue, therefore that an emphasis on innate ability is likely to be of minimal benefit (Howe et al., 1998). Dweck (2008) also warns against the pitfalls of emphasizing inborn talent as an explanation for advanced ability in children. She suggests that the "naturals, carried away with their superiority, don't learn how to work hard or how to cope with setbacks" (p. 91). She argues that believing in natural talent and innate ability makes people less eager to practice and try to improve, as they supposedly already 'have it all'. She also assumes that people with such a *fixed mindset* would see setbacks as a proof that they lack talent after all, and thus make them more inclined to give up. She contrasts this to people with a *growth mindset*, who see a setback as an indication that they have to practice more.

Conversely, Winner (2000) argues that giftedness should be understood as a social and biological *difference* that has as many existential and self-related implications as being

different in other ways, and that it is important to understand talented children in order to provide them with a supportive and socially satisfying environment. For many of the musicians in this study, their giftedness contained seeds of loneliness, as their love for music set them apart from the people around them. This was described by journalist Andrew Solomon in his chapter on musical prodigies in *Far from the tree* (2012), a book about the multiple ways children can differ from their parents, such as in autism, deafness, schizophrenia – and giftedness. When Solomon summed up his findings on prodigies he recognized that "brilliance can be as much of an impediment to intimacy as any developmental anomaly, and the health and happiness of families of prodigies do not outstrip those of others in this book" (p. 404). Being gifted, alas, can have existential implications just like other kinds of differences do. This suggests that giftedness is not just something to be praised or applauded, but that it should also be regarded as something that has implications for gifted children's development and well-being. Furthermore, it could be that the perspective of musicality as innate could potentially make it easier for musically gifted children to accept the fact that in some ways stand out from the crowd. Whether expert ability is innate or a result of an interaction between multiple factors, both within and outside of the individual, it would be helpful to better understand how children that are seen as 'gifted' develop, and to pay more attention to the social and existential ramifications of such giftedness.

A comforting melody: feeling connected to others through music

Some of the musicians described how as soloists they often travel alone to perform with orchestras or hold recitals. When the orchestra members and the audience go home to their friends and families, the soloist in the end has to go back to the hotel – alone. Some of the musicians described that it is hard to know whether the connection they establish with the musicians that they play together with at festivals will last. This makes such connections feel "unreal". Some expressed that they felt like an outsider because of their interest in music, and that this interest made them stand out socially, at school or in their family. Some also expressed a sense of loneliness because other people so rarely were able to share the intensity of their experiences of music. Thus, their intense interest in music leaves them feeling like no-one truly understands them, and that there is some part of them that can't be shared. In a life cycle perspective, it seems that for some of them, the sense of being an outsider in childhood and adolescence was followed by the loneliness of being on the road as an adult. This

suggests that the experience of loneliness could occur both *in spite of* their connection with music, and *because* of it.

Loneliness is one of the most widely recognized factors of psychological distress. Moore & Schultz (1983) found that loneliness in adolescence correlated positively with higher rates of anxiety and depression, external locus of control, and feelings of powerlessness. However, music can serve as tool for emotional self-regulation, and can help transform difficult emotional states (Saarikallio, 2011). Tarrant, North and Hargreaves (2000) found that feeling lonely or bored were the two main reasons given by adolescents for why they listened to music. Music-related emotional experiences have also been found to provide meaning in adult life (Saarikallio, 2011). In a study of 118 adolescents, Papinczak, Dingle, Stoyanov, Hides and Zelenko (2015) found that listening to music helped modify negative cognitions and emotions. It also provided an opportunity for *emotional immersion*, where difficult emotions could be recognized and felt, while detached from their original triggers. Saarikallio (2011) states that "emotional self-regulation is acknowledged as one of the most important reasons for musical engagement at all ages" (p. 307). The role of emotional transformation through music was addressed also by Levinson in his chapter on music and negative emotion (1982). Here, he suggests six rewards from engaging with sad music, three of which are about feeling connected to the composer or the *persona* of the music. This is likely to be the case for music that is not sad, too. Thus, it seems that in place of other social relationships, music can sometimes provide a sense of human connection.

In the current study, music provided a sense of connection for the participants. This connection varied from concrete (connection to the audience), to abstract (connection to something greater). The connection provided by music seemed to be very meaningful and valuable for the musicians. Maybe even more so when this sense of connection was sometimes set against a background of feeling lonely or different. Bicknell (2007) argues that the emotional power of music can be explained by recognizing that music is fundamentally a *social* phenomenon. She argues that the social phenomenon of language can be substituted by music as a means for communication precisely because music, too, is a social phenomenon. Thus, there is no such thing as a private form of music, just like there can be no truly private language (Bicknell, 2007). But how is music social when there is only one listener, or when there is a performer without an audience? The question points to a possible tension between two forms of musical experience: the intimacy of the contemplative, introspective, solitary experience of music, and the social, participatory and communal experience of music. One finding in the current study was that strong emotional responses to music were followed by a

desire to savour and cherish these experiences alone, rather than share them with others. This is contrary to the claim of kama muta theory, which suggests that kama muta often elicits a desire to seek connection and closeness with others. Why is this so? One answer could be thatmusically-induced emotions may have a slightly different function than social emotions, and therefore these emotions have different behavioural consequences. In line with this argument, Schubert (2016) likens the experience of emotions from music to play: "Play endows us with the ability to decouple emotional feelings from their usual, real-life motivational tendencies" (p. 6). This is similar to a claim made by Levinson (1982), that musically-induced emotion serve as a confirmation of one's emotional health and capacity, but differ from ordinary emotion in that they are detached from their original triggers. However, another interpretation could be that musically-induced kama muta leads to a reaffirmation of one's commitment to one's relationship with music, rather than to one's social relationships. Thus, such experiences would serve to motivate a life-long devotion to music. More research is needed to better understand this mechanism.

Limitations and recommendations

The statistical generalisability of the findings from the present study is limited. With a sample of only ten participants one cannot infer that the findings are representative of a bigger population. However, other forms of generalisability will be more appropriate for the present findings. These include theoretical and communicative generalisation, as well as inferential generalisability, sometimes called "transferability" (Smaling, 2003; Macwell & Chmiel, 2013; Elliot et al., 1999), as described in the methods section. Thus, to the extent that the findings make sense, the reader is free to generalize or *transfer* the findings to other populations who share some typical characteristics of expert musicians, such as high performers in other art forms, and perhaps even expert athletes, or world-class chefs.

The semi-structured interview should be regarded as an atypical interpersonal situation or context, and thus, some of the information provided by the participants may have been influenced or coloured by the researcher's hypotheses before and during the interview (Kvale, 2007). However, this is in line with a constructionist understanding of knowledge, which argues that no knowledge is ever produced in a vacuum, or detached from and untainted by the circumstances within which it is produced. It is also in line with a phenomenological-hermeneutic understanding of knowledge production, in which knowledge results from a circular investigation of a phenomenon, which adds depth and meaning to the understanding of this phenomenon (Rennie, 2000). The usefulness and relevance of the findings will depend

on how well they communicate to the relevant audience, who in turn influence the meaning of the findings through their own interpretations. Thus, the generalizability of the findings is not predetermined, but depends on how well they communicate generalizable insights to the reader. The findings serve as the object for analogous reasoning, and generalizability is found by way of analogy rather than through statistical representativeness. This form of communicative generalizability is in line with hermeneutic understanding of knowledge.

Another potential limitation is that the interview setting varied somewhat across the interviews. The interviews were conducted at different times of the day, at different venues, and they varied in length. This may have affected the responses from the participants. In one of the interviews, a friend of the participant joined the conversation for the last part of the interview. This interview was conducted at a café and thus it looked like a social scene to the friend. This last part of that interview has been left out of the analysis. Furthermore, two of the participants (Peter and Christiane) were interviewed together. They were members of the same string quartet, and I had approached the whole quartet together without stating that I wished to speak to them one-on-one (the other two members of the quartet did not volunteer to participate in the study). When both showed up at the time of the interview, I decided to interview them together as both of them had taken time out of their schedule to make room for the interview. Although this interview set-up differed from the other interview set-ups it provided very fruitful information and insights. Therefore, it was included. A decisive factor in the decision to include this interview was that the two participants knew each other well enough to openly share their vulnerabilities and doubts in each other's presence. Furthermore, the format of the double-interview took on some of the characteristics of a focus group conversation, in the sense that each participant built on what the other said, which allowed for a richer conversation. In future studies, a focus group format may be an equally good or better approach for investigating the experiences of musically induced emotions, and the role of emotions as motivators.

Furthermore, some reflection upon the choice of theoretical framework for the study is in order. The study was carried out within a bigger, ongoing research project on kama muta and kama muta theory at the Department of Psychology at the University of Oslo, led by Beate Seibt and Thomas Schubert, in association with Alan Fiske. Thus, kama muta theory served as a particularly influential sensitizing concept (Blumer, 1954) through all phases of the current study. This study is an exploration of how music elicits kama muta in musicians, and how kama muta experiences serve as a motivator for performing musicians. In that respect, the purpose of the study should be regarded as *theory-building* (Stiles, 2015).

Therefore, I did not use other models or constructs of being moved as my starting point, such as for instance Menninghaus and colleagues' model of the construct of being moved (2015), or Konečni's research on being moved in response to art (2005) in connection to the findings, or as a framework for the study. Future studies should seek to better understand the phenomenon of being moved by music across the various theoretical conceptualization of being moved. Another consequence of this selective theoretical framework was that the construct of music-induced "awe" (Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Konečni, 2005) did not receive a lot of attention. Some of the participants' responses to music seemed to overlap with these understandings of awe. However, this was not emphasized in the analysis or in the discussion. Future studies should examine how music-induced awe differs from kama muta in relations to their elicitors and behavioural consequences.

Other theories served as sensitizing concepts that informed the analysis, as discussed in the methods section. These concepts and theories enabled a broader overview of the development and unfolding of the participants' musical involvement. This suggests that although the study could be seen as theory-building in terms of kama muta theory, it was also *enriching* (Stiles, 2015), in that it can provide insight and understanding for people that can be used to address real-life and pragmatic problems relating to giftedness, connection and loneliness. In this sense, the end result of the study could be seen as enriching for musicians, music teachers, parents of musically gifted children, as well as for music philosophers.

Conclusion

The object of the present thesis was to examine the role of positive emotions as motivators for musicians at different stages in their professional life. In addition, the thesis aimed to provide a phenomenological understanding of interest, joy (in relation to flow) and kama muta (being moved) in response to music through qualitative interviews with professional musicians. The positive emotions of interest, joy (in response to flow) and kama muta (being moved) stood out in the findings. The negative emotions of loneliness and ambivalence were also part of the musicians' lives, but in a different way than the positive emotions. While the positive emotions were usually direct responses to the music, the negative emotions occurred as a result of difficulties with social connection or from feeling different. The findings in this study suggests that a particularly heightened sensitivity to music can be alienating and lead to a sense of loneliness. It is important to bear this insight in mind when a child or adolescent

shows a strong interest in a specialized domain, whether it be music, sports or academia. Standing out in terms of skill and capacity can lead to loneliness when the pursuit of skill in the given domain becomes all-encompassing. The findings also suggest that connection through music can be a strong and positive force. In light of these findings, social connection should be emphasized as an antidote to the loneliness that stems from the difference of giftedness. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of strong emotional responses in the enjoyment of music. The ability to recognize the emotional qualities in music may vary from listener to listener. Yet, it seems that it is these emotional qualities, rather than the aesthetic and structural qualities of music alone, that instigate a sense of meaning and connection in the listener. Furthermore: While the relationship between music and emotion is already well established, the current study shows how a sense of connectedness instigated by positive emotions (especially kama muta) is associated with the enjoyment of music, and with a sense meaning. This experience of meaning is linked to the sense of connection that music can provide. In conclusion, this study shows how the experience of connectedness induced by music may contribute to the fulfillment of the basic psychological need to belong.

References

Amundrud, K. J. (2009). The phenomenology of interest-excitement (Hovedoppgave/Thesis for the Professional Programme). University of Oslo. Oslo.

Baumeister, R., Leary, M., & Steinberg, R. J. (1995). The Need to Belong: Desire for Interpersonal Attachments as a Fundamental Human Motivation. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*(3), 497-529.

Baumeister, R. F & Bratslavsky, E. (1999). Passion, Intimacy, and Time: Passionate Love as a Function of Change in Intimacy. Personality and Social Psychology Review. 1999. Vol. 3, No. 1, 49-67

Benzon, W. (2002). *Beethoven's anvil: Music in mind and culture*. Oxford University Press.

Biernacki, P., & Waldorf, D. (1981). Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling. *Sociological Methods & Research, 10*(2), 141-163.

Blumer, H. (1954). What is wrong with social theory?. *American sociological review*, *19*(1), 3-10.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 77-101

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. 2013. *Successful Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles, Calif: SAGE Publications.

Côté, J. E., & Levine, C. (1987). A formulation of Erikson's theory of ego identity formation. *Developmental review*, *7*(4), 273-325.

Cova, F., & Deonna, J. (2014). Being moved. Philosophical Studies, 169(3), 447-466.

Custodero, L. A. "Seeking Challenge, Finding Skill: Flow Experience and Music Education." *Arts Education Policy Review* 103.3 (2002): 3-9.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper and Row.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *The masterminds series. Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life.* New York, NY, US: Basic Books.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Motivation, personality, and development within embedded social contexts: An overview of self-determination theory. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation*, 85-107.

Dweck, C. S. (2008). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House Digital, Inc.

Elliott, R., Fischer, C., & Rennie, D. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology, 38*(3), 215-229.

Ericsson, K. A., Krampe, R. T., & Tesch-Römer, C. (1993). The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance. *Psychological review*, *100*(3), 363-406.

Fiske, A. P. (1992), "The Four Elementary Forms of Sociality: Framework for a Unified Theory of Social Relations," *Psychological Review*, **99**, 689-723.

Fiske, A., Schubert, T., & Seibt, B. (2017). "Kama Muta" or "Being Moved by Love": A Bootstrapping Approach to the Ontology and Epistemology of an Emotion. In *Universalism without Uniformity* (p. Universalism without Uniformity, Chapter 006). University of Chicago Press.

Fiske, A. P., Seibt, B., & Schubert, T. (2019). The sudden devotion emotion: Kama muta and the cultural practices whose function is to evoke it. *Emotion Review*, *11*(1), 74-86.

Fiske, A. P. & Vuoskoski, J. (2019). The Cultural Evolution of Singing: An Adaptation to the Niche Afforded by the Kama Muta Emotion. Manuscript in preparation.

Fiske, A. P. (in press). Kama Muta: *Discovering the Connecting Emotion.* Routledge.

Fredrickson, B. L. (1998). What good are positive emotions?. *Review of general psychology*, *2*(3), 300-319.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2003). The value of positive emotions: The emerging science of positive psychology is coming to understand why it's good to feel good. *American scientist*, *91*(4), 330-335.

Fredrickson, B. L., & Joiner, T. (2002). Positive emotions trigger upward spirals toward emotional well-being. *Psychological science*, *13*(2), 172-175.

Fritz, B. S., & Avsec, A. (2007). The experience of flow and subjective well-being of music students. *Horizons of Psychology*, *16*(2), 5-17.

Fukui, H., & Toyoshima, K. (2014). Chill-inducing music enhances altruism in humans. *Frontiers in Psychology, 5*, 1215. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01215

Gabrielsson, A., & Wik, S. L. (2003). Strong experiences related to music: adescriptive system. *Musicae scientiae*, *7*(2), 157-217.

Goodman, L. (1961). Statistical Methods for the Mover-Stayer Model. *Journal of the American Statistical Association, 56*(296), 841-868.

Hidi, S., & Renninger, A. K. (2006). The Four-Phase Model of Interest Development. *Educational Psychologist, 41*(2), 111-127.

Higgins, K. (2012). Biology and Culture in Musical Emotions. *Emotion Review, 4*(3), 273-282.

Hill, C., Knox, S., Thompson, B., Williams, E., Hess, S., Ladany, N., . . . Ponterotto, Joseph G. (2005). Consensual Qualitative Research: An Update. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 196-205.

Howe, M. J., Davidson, J. W., & Sloboda, J. A. (1998). Innate talents: Reality or myth?. *Behavioral and brain sciences*, *21*(3), 399-407.

Høffding, S. (2019). *A Phenomenology of Musical Absorption*. Springer.

Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (2003). Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion. *Cognition and emotion*, *17*(2), 297-314.

Konečni, V. J. (2005). The aesthetic trinity: Awe, being moved, thrills. *Bulletin of Psychology and the Arts*, *5*(2), 27-44.

Krapp, A. (2007). An educational-psychological conceptualisation of interest. (Author abstract). *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 7*(1), 5.

Kvale, S. 2007. *Doing Interviews.* London: SAGE Publications.

Leary, M. R. (1990). Responses to social exclusion: Social anxiety, jealousy, loneliness, depression, and low self-esteem. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *9*(2), 221-229.

Legard, R., Keegan, J. & Ward, K. 2003. In-depth interviews. In J. Ritchie, & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice – A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (pp. 138-169). London: SAGE Publications.

Levinson, J. (1982). Music and negative emotion. *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, *63*(4), 327-346.

Lewis, J., & Ritchie, J. 2003. Generalising from Qualitative Research. In J. Ritchie, & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice – A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (pp. 263-268). London: SAGE Publications.

Magnusson, E., & Marecek, J. (2015). *Doing interview-based qualitative research: A learner's guide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maxwell, J. A., & Chmiel, M. 2015. Generalization in and from Qualitative Analysis. In Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy, and R. Burke Johnson (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry*. New York: Oxford UP

McLeod, J. 2013. Qualitative Research. In M. Lambert (Ed.), *Bergin and Garfield's handbook of psychotherapy and behavior change* (6th ed., pp. 49-84). Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons.

Menninghaus, W., Wagner, V., Hanich, J., Wassiliwizky, E., Kuehnast, M., & Jacobsen, T. (2015). Towards a Psychological Construct of Being Moved. *PLoS One, 10*(6), E0128451.

Moore, D., & Schultz, N. R. (1983). Loneliness at adolescence: Correlates, attributions, and coping. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 12(2), 95-100.
Music (undated). In *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary.* Taken from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/music

Nakamura, J. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. "Flow Theory and Research." *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (2009): The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology.

Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014). The concept of flow. In *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology* (pp. 239-263). Springer, Dordrecht.

Nielsen, N. (2019, March 18). «Simon Høffding's book launch». Presentation at Simon Høffding's launch of the book *A Phenomenology of Musical Absorption*. The Department of Psychology (RITMO), University of Oslo. Oslo.

Papinczak, Z. E., Dingle, G. A., Stoyanov, S. R., Hides, L., & Zelenko, O. (2015). Young people's uses of music for well-being. Journal of Youth Studies, 18(9), 1119-1134.

Park, M., Gutyrchik, E., Bao, Y., Zaytseva, Y., Carl, P., Welker, L., ... & Meindl, T. (2014). Differences between musicians and non-musicians in neuro-affective processing of sadness and fear expressed in music. *Neuroscience letters*, *566*, 120-124.

Rennie, D. (2000). Grounded Theory Methodology as Methodical Hermeneutics: Reconciling Realism and Relativism. *Theory & Psychology, 10*(4), 481-502.

Renninger, K. A., & Su, S. Interest and its development. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation*, 167-187.

Saarikallio, S. (2011). Music as emotional self-regulation throughout adulthood. Psychology of music, 39(3), 307-327.

Schubert, E. (2016). Enjoying sad music: Paradox or parallel processes? *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *10*, 312.

Schubert, T., Zickfeld, J., Seibt, B., & Fiske, A. (2018). Moment-to-moment changes in feeling moved match changes in closeness, tears, goosebumps, and warmth: Time series analyses. *Cognition and Emotion, 32*(1), 174-184.

Seibt, Schubert, Zickfeld, & Fiske. (2017). Interpersonal closeness and morality predict feelings of being moved.

Seligman, M., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Fowler, Raymond D. (2000). Positive Psychology. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 5-14.

Smaling, A. (2003). Inductive, analogical, and communicative generalization. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *2*(1), 52-67.

Smith, J. A. (2004). Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *1*(1), 39-54.

Snape, D. & Spencer, L. (2003). The Foundations of Qualitative Research. In J. Ritchie, & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice – A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (pp. 138-169). London: SAGE Publications.

Steinnes, K. K., Blomster, J. K., Seibt, B., Zickfeld, J. H., & Fiske, A. P. (2019). Too Cute for Words: Cuteness Evokes the Heartwarming Emotion of Kama Muta. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *10*, 387.

Stiles, W. B. (2015). Theory building, enriching, and fact gathering: Alternative purposes of psychotherapy research. In *Psychotherapy Research* (pp. 159-179). Springer, Vienna.

Strick, M., & Van Soolingen, J. (2018). Against the odds: human values arising in unfavourable circumstances elicit the feeling of being moved. *Cognition and Emotion*, *32*(6), 1231-1246.

Tarrant, M., North, A. C., & Hargreaves, D. J. (2000). English and American adolescents' reasons for listening to music. Psychology of Music, 28(2), 166-173.

The Philosophy of Music (2017). In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* Taken from: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/music/#MusiOnto

Tomkins, S. (1962). *Affect imagery consciousness: Volume I: The positive affects*. Springer publishing company.

van Beest, I., & Williams, K. D. (2006). When inclusion costs and ostracism pays, ostracism still hurts. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *91*(5), 918-928.

Vuoskoski, J. K., & Eerola, T. (2017). The pleasure evoked by sad music is mediated by feelings of being moved. *Frontiers in psychology*, *8*, 439.

Wassiliwizky, E., Koelsch, S., Wagner, V., Jacobsen, T., & Menninghaus, W. (2017). The emotional power of poetry: Neural circuitry, psychophysiology and compositional principles. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, *12*(8), 1229-1240.

Wiles, D. (2000). *Greek theatre performance: An introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Willig, 2008. 2013. *Introducing qualitative research in psychology (2nd ed.).* Maidenhead: McGraw Hill Open University Press.

Winner, E. (2000). Giftedness: Current theory and research. *Current directions in psychological science*, *9*(5), 153-156.

Winner, E., & Drake, J. (2013). The Rage to Master: The Decisive Role of Talent in the Visual Arts. In *The Complexity of Greatness* (p. The Complexity of Greatness,

Chapter 16). Oxford University Press.

Zickfeld, J. (a), Schubert, T., Seibt, B., Blomster, J., Arriaga, P., Basabe, N., . . . Pietromonaco, Paula R. (2019). Kama Muta: Conceptualizing and Measuring the Experience Often Labelled Being Moved Across 19 Nations and 15 Languages. *Emotion, 19*(3), 402-424.

Zickfeld, J.(b), Schubert, T., Seibt, B., & Fiske, A. (2019). Moving Through the Literature: What Is the Emotion Often Denoted Being Moved? *Emotion Review, 11*(2), 123-139.

Zioga, I., Luft, C. D. B., & Bhattacharya, J. (2016). Musical training shapes neural responses to melodic and prosodic expectation. *Brain research*, *1650*, 267-282.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Interview guides

The interviews mostly covered the following topics, outlined in the interview guide. The ones that strayed too far from this have been excluded from the study. Some key biographic moments were always covered: starting to play, deciding to play as a career, potential moments of wanting to quit, potential pauses or breaks form the instrument.
Probing questions, follow-up questions and specification question were used as and when needed, such as: "*What's it like when…? If you were to explain that sense when… how does it feel? How do you recognize the experience? What happens then?*"

English interview guide

Introductory question

- Could you tell me a little bit about your life as a musician?

Getting to know music and starting to play an instrument

- How and when did you first become interested in music?
- When and how did you first learn to play?
- Could you tell me about your first strong experience of music?
- How did you decide you wanted to become a professional musician?

Emotional responses to music

- Could you you tell about the most powerful experience you've had with music?
- Was it while listening or performing?
    - If the person mentions being moved by music or something similar to KM or flow, ask: When was the first time you experienced it?

Kama muta responses to music

When participants spontaneously bring up the experience of being moved

- How often do you get moved by the music? Daily, weekly, or once in a while?
- Would you that being moved is an experience you aim to have with music?

- So when it happens, when you get moved by the music, do you then want to keep it for yourself, or do you want to go and share that experience with someone?

If the respondent does not spontaneously mention experiences of being moved/kama muta:

- Vignette: *"So, I was at this concert and they were playing the Fantasy by Schubert, for four hands piano. And the guy next to me had all these tears flooding down his face. What is it about music that makes it able to elicit tears like that? Has that ever happened to you?"*
- If yes, proceed with the above questions. If no, proceed to next question.

Perceiving a *persona* in music

- Do you ever feel like you're almost in a relationship with the music itself?
- Do you sometimes feel like there's a *persona* in the music?

Doubts or obstacles

- Have you ever wanted to quit? Why/why not? What stopped you?
- In times of struggle, what keeps you going?

Closing question

- Is there anything I haven't asked you that you wish I'd asked you, or anything that you would like to add?

Norwegian interview guide/norsk intervjuguide

Åpningsspørsmål

- Kan du fortelle meg litt om livet ditt som musiker?

Om å oppdage musikk og å begynne å spille et instrument

- Når og hvordan ble du interessert i musikk?
- Når og hvordan lærte du å spille et instrument?
- Kan du fortelle meg om ditt tidligste minne med en sterk musikkopplevelse?
- Hvordan bestemte du deg for å bli profesjonell musiker?

Emosjonelle reaksjoner på musikk

- Kan du fortelle meg om den sterkeste opplevelsen du har hatt med musikk?
- Var det mens du lyttet til musikk eller mens du spilte selv?
    - Dersom personen nevner opplevelser knyttet til *flow* eller å bli rørt/kama muta, spør: Når var første gang du opplevde dette?

Kama muta-opplevelser som respons på musikk

Når respondentene spontant nevner opplevelser av å bli rørt:

- Hvor ofte opplever du å bli rørt av musikken? Daglig, ukentlig eller en gang innimellom?
- Er dette en opplevelse du søker deg mot med musikk?
- Når du blir rørt, er det da noe du ønsker å holde for deg selv, eller er det noe du ønsker å dele med noen andre?

Hvis deltakeren ikke spontant forteller om opplevelser av å bli rørt/kama muta:

- Vignett: *"Jeg var på en konsert der de spilte* Fantasie *for firhendig piano av Schubert. På slutten hadde han jeg satt ved siden av tårer som strømte nedover ansiktet. Hva er det musikk som gjør at det kan utløse tårer på den måten? Har det noen gang skjedd med deg?"*
- Hvis ja, fortsett til spørsmålene over. Hvis nei, fortsett til neste spørsmål.

Opplevelse av en *persona* i musikken

- Har du noen gang følt det som om du er i et slags *forhold* med musikken?
- Har du noen gang forestilt deg eller opplevd at musikken er et levende vesen, at det er en egen *persona?*

Tvil eller utfordringer

- Har du noen gang ønsket å slutte? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? Hva gjorde at du ikke sluttet?
- Når du opplever motgang, hva holder deg gående?

Avslutningsspørsmål

- Er det noe jeg ikke har spurt deg om som du skulle ønske jeg hadde spurt deg om, eller noe du ønsker å legge til?

APPENDIX B: KAMMUS 1.0 questionnaire (Zickfeld et al. *(a)*, 2019)

KAMMUS 1.0

{In all sections, Likert scales, 0 = “not at all” to 6 = “a lot”.}
{Sections should be presented in the order indicated; numbered items should be randomized in slots within each section, setting aside intermingled slots for the lettered distractor items. That is, there should never be more than three numbered ‘real’ items in a row before coming to a lettered distractor item.}

Section 1_

Please indicate whether you experienced any of the following sensations, feelings, or

actions, and if so, to what extent:

1. Moist eyes.
2. Tears.
3. Goosebumps or hair standing up.
4. Chills or shivers.
5. A warm feeling in the center of the chest.
6. Some feeling in the center of the chest.
7. Choked up.
8. A lump in the throat.
9. Difficulty speaking.
10. I put one or both hands to my chest.
11. I took a deep breath or held my breath.
12. I said something like “awww.”

A. Sneezed or felt like sneezing.

B. Headache.

C. Laughed or giggled.

D. Sick to my stomach.

E. Dizzy.

Immediately *afterwards,* I felt

11. Buoyant or light.
12. Refreshed, energized, or exhilarated.

Section 2_

Use Part A items for experiences in which you were directly involved.
Use Part B items for experiences that you observed, heard, or read about.
Fill out just one Part, A or B, but not both.

A

Please rate to what extent each of the following statements are true:

1. I felt an incredible bond.

3. I felt a special sense of belonging.

4. I felt an exceptional sense of closeness appear.

5. I felt the emergence of a remarkable feeling of oneness.

6. I felt a unique kind of love spring up.

7. I felt a phenomenal feeling of appreciating someone or being appreciated.

9. I felt an astonishing sense of needing someone or being needed.

10. I felt an extraordinary feeling of welcoming or being welcomed.

11. I felt that I gave or received exceptional care.

12. I felt that I gave or received a great kindness.

A. I felt that I made someone extremely upset or someone made me extremely upset.

B. I felt an unusual feeling of anxiety about someone or I made someone usually anxious.

C. I was exceptionally horrified by someone or I made someone feel exceptionally horrified.

D. I felt really confused by someone or I made someone feel really confused.

E. I felt extremely bored by someone or felt that I was boring someone extremely.

B

Please rate to what extent each of the following statements are true:

1. I observed, heard, or read about an incredible bond.

3. I observed, heard, or read about a special sense of belonging.

4. I observed, heard, or read about an exceptional sense of closeness appear.

5. I observed, heard, or read about the emergence of a remarkable feeling of oneness.

6. I observed, heard, or read about a unique kind of love spring up.

7. I observed, heard, or read about a phenomenal feeling of being appreciated.

9. I observed, heard, or read about an astonishing sense of being needed.

10. I observed, heard, or read about an extraordinary feeling of being welcomed.

11. I observed, heard, or read about exceptional care being given to someone.

12. I observed, heard, or read about a great kindness.

A. I observed, heard, or read about something extremely upsetting.

B. I observed, heard, or read about an unusual feeling of anxiety.

C. I observed, heard, or read about a feeling being exceptionally horrified.

D. I observed, heard, or read about an interaction that was really confusing.

E. I observed, heard, or read about an incident that was terribly boring.

Section 3_

Please indicate whether you had each of the following feelings just afterwards, and if so, to what extent:

1. I felt like telling someone how much I care about them.
2. I wanted to hug someone.
3. I wanted to do something extra-nice for someone.
4. I felt especially friendly.
5. I felt more strongly committed to a relationship.

A. I felt like going away to be by myself.
B. I felt like yelling at someone.

Section 4_

Please indicate whether each of the following was true, and if so, to what extent:

1. I was eager to tell my friends or family about the experience.
2. I like to have the experience together *with* others.

Section 5_

Please indicate whether each of the following was true, and if so, to what extent:

{Always place items alpha and beta (in random order) before the other items of this section, whose order should be randomized separately.}

First, please indicate how positive you felt, and how negative you felt – you might have felt both positive *and* negative, one or the other, or neither.

α. I had positive feelings.

β. I had negative feelings.

1. It was heartwarming.
2. I was moved.
3. I was touched.
4. It was a nostalgic moment.
5. It was a poignant experience.
6. I felt a part of something larger than myself.
7. I felt in love.

A. I felt sad.

B. I felt great respect.

C. I was proud.

APPENDIX C: Informed consent forms in English and Norwegian

Informed consent

Background and purpose
This is an invitation to participate in a research project carried out at the University of Oslo. The research project is about the relationship between music and emotions. The project is led by professor Alan P. Fiske at UCLA (afiske@ucla.edu), in collaboration with associate professor Beate Seibt (beate.seibt@psykologi.uio.no) at the University of Oslo. This thesis project is conducted by Camilla Heiervang (camihh@student.sv.uio.no). Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or comments.

What does participation entail?
Participation involves being interviewed about your thoughts and feelings regarding music. You will also be asked to describe your own experiences related to music.

Potential advantages and disadvantages
In this study, you will be asked to reflect about your own thoughts and emotions regarding music. This might affect your mood positively or negatively, depending on the nature of these experiences.

What will happen to the information we collect about you?
The data will be anonymized immediately after the interview. Your name will not be linked to the material, and any information that could be used to identify you will be replaced by "***". I will not ask you to share sensitive or private information. The recording of the interview will be deleted at the end of the research project.

Voluntary participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. You can at any time decide to leave the study. If you want to participate in the study, you must give your consent at the bottom of this page.

Your rights
If you do consent to participate in the study, you have the right to access the data registered about you at all times. If you want to leave the study, you have the right to demand that any data about you is deleted, unless the data has already been incorporated into analyses or used in scientific publications. You also have the right to receive information regarding the results of the study. To do this, please contact the research team.

I have read the information and accept the terms of condition. I hereby consent to participate in the study.

____________________ ____________________________________

Date Signature

Informert samtykke

Bakgrunn og hensikt
Dette er en invitasjon til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt tilknyttet Universitetet i Oslo, som undersøker emosjoner i forhold til forskjellige situasjoner. Prosjektet ledes av Professor Alan P. Fiske fra UCLA (afiske@ucla.edu), i samarbeid med Professor Beate Seibt fra Universitetet i Oslo (beate.seibt@psykologi.uio.no). Dette hovedoppgaveprosjektet leses av Camilla Helen Heiervang (camihh@student.sv.uio.no). Ta gjerne kontakt dersom du har spørsmål eller kommentarer.

Hva innebærer studien?
Deltakelse innebærer å delta i et intervju om motivasjon og følelser hos musikere. Du vil bli spurt om dine tanker og følelser knyttet til musikk. Du vil også bli bedt om å beskrive egne opplevelser knyttet til dette.

Potensielle fordeler og ulemper
I denne studien bes du om å reflektere over dine egne følelser og opplevelser knyttet til musikk. Dette kan muligens påvirke humøret ditt, avhengig av forhold rundt disse beskrivelsene.

Hva vil skje med informasjonen om deg?
Alle opplysningene vil bli behandlet uten navn eller andre identifiserende opplysninger, slik at det vil være umulig å identifisere deg i resultatene av studien. Jeg kommer ikke til å be deg om å utlevere sensitiv eller privat informasjon. Opptaket av intervjuet vil bli slettet når studien sluttstilles.

Frivillig deltakelse
Deltakelse er frivillig og du kan når som helst velge å forlate studien. Dersom du ønsker å delta i studien må du indikere ditt samtykke nedenfor.

Dine rettigheter
Hvis du samtykker til deltakelse i studien har du rett til å få tilgang til hvilke opplysninger som er registrert om deg. Dersom du trekker deg fra studien, har du rett til å kreve at de innsamlede dataene blir slettet, med mindre opplysningene allerede er innarbeidet i analyser eller brukt i vitenskapelige publikasjoner. Du har videre rett til å motta informasjon om resultatene som framkommer av studien. Ta kontakt med forskerteamet for å gjøre dette.

Jeg har lest informasjonen og vilkårene over og sier meg enig med dem og ønsker herved å delta i studien:

____________________ ____

Dato Signatur