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Review: *Katrina McFerran, Phillipa Derrington, and Suvi Saarikallio (Eds.): Handbook of Music, Adolescents, and Wellbeing*

Critique: *Katrina McFerran, Phillipa Derrington et Suvi Saarikallio : Guide musique, adolescence et bien être*

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## Book Review

### *Handbook of Music, Adolescents, and Wellbeing*

Katrina McFerran, Phillipa Derrington, and Suvi Saarikallio (Editors)

Oxford University Press, 2019

ISBN 978-0-19-880899-2

*Handbook of Music, Adolescents, and Wellbeing* broadens and deepens the literature exploring music, music therapy, and adolescents by including practitioners and researchers from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Contributions from music therapists, music psychologists, music educators, music sociologists, and community musicians blend both practice and research orientations, offering multiple perspectives, respectful views, and inclusive attitudes. Having worked as a music therapist with adolescents for much of my career, I eagerly consumed Katrina McFerran's earlier book, *Adolescents, Music and Music Therapy: Methods and Techniques for Clinicians, Educators and Students* (2010), so I welcomed this addition to the literature on music therapy and adolescents.

The book is divided into three parts, each of which focuses on a critical issue for adolescents and begins with an introductory chapter by one of the editors. Part 1 concerns emotions and offers different perspectives on the intersection of music, adolescents, and emotions. Recognizing that music therapists tend to prioritize the emotional experience of an individual whereas music psychologists focus on the influence of music on emotions, in her introductory chapter McFerran proposes the concept of *crystallization* which emphasizes varied perspectives, methods, and multiple meanings. She states that binary concepts do not work as a means of understanding the intersection of music and emotions in adolescence, and she cites examples of young people who listened to the same song with different intentions and emotional responses. If these intentions can be brought to consciousness, argues McFerran, then music can be a source of emotional strength. Emotions are a central focus in adolescents' lives and the articles in this section describe multiple perspectives on how music can be used for expression, regulation, and intention, as well as encouraging young people to understand their own agency in choosing how to use music in their lives.

In Chapter 2, Andeline dos Santos, a music therapist in South Africa, describes a music therapy group for adolescents referred because of aggression. The group allowed the aggression to be received, explored, and processed. In addition, in the music-making, other facets of the young people were witnessed and accepted. In Chapter 3, music psychologists Genevieve Dingle, Leah Sharman, and Joel Larwood from the University of Queensland, Australia, offer a review of young people's emotional immersion in music, particularly related to anger and sadness. Research regarding how young people used music to regulate their emotions is described. Tan-Chyuan Chin, a music psychology researcher from Melbourne, Australia, continues the research into measuring adolescents' responses to music in Chapter 4, concluding that a mixed methods approach including at least two components of the following methods—biochemical—neurophysiological, behavioural—expressive, and subjective experiential—is well-suited to capture the dynamic and complex emotional responses of young people to music. In Chapter 5, music therapist Josephine Geipel from the University of Heidelberg, Germany, proposes a manual of principles and recommendations for interventions in working with adolescents struggling with depression. Chapter 6 presents a conceptual model of musical affect regulation, outlined by Finnish music psychologist, Margarida Baltazar. Considering that adolescents frequently use music for emotional regulation, this model of musical mechanisms and regulatory strategies provides researchers and treatment providers with a conceptual model to facilitate adolescents' use of music for their well-being. Finally, in Chapter 7, Andreas Wöfl, a music therapist from Germany, ends this section with an overview of the uses of music with youth to prevent violence.

Part 2, introduced by Suvi Saarikallio in Chapter 8, concerns identity, focusing on “music as a resource for agency and empowerment in identity construction” (p. 89). Adolescence is a time of identity formation and Saarikallio makes the case that a sense of agency, or “the subjective experience of being the actor in one’s life” (p. 90), is critical to that task. Music can be a tool to achieve that agency as well as a resource when that sense of agency fails. The following six chapters explore facets of agency and identity, both theoretically and in case examples.

In Chapter 9, Canadian music psychologist Dave Miranda explores the connection between personality traits and music in adolescence, specifically what personality traits are connected with music listening and music-making. Alexandra Lamont and David Hargreaves, music educators from the United Kingdom, continue the exploration of music as a resource for developing identity in Chapter 10, investigating the connections between music listening preferences and social identity. In Chapter 11, Tia DeNora, a music sociologist also from the United Kingdom, discusses the use of music in ageing as an outer performance of an inner state and how that might offer insight into age-based emotions and conflicts.

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 move from theoretical to practical considerations as presented by three music therapists. Norwegian music therapist Viggo Krüger presents a case study in Chapter 12 based within the Norwegian child welfare system, wherein music has been shown to function as the “structuring resource” (p. 127) for the young person linking one’s own personal strategies to one’s participation in the community and society at large. Further case vignettes are presented in Chapter 13 by Daphne Rickson from New Zealand, who shares her work with adolescents living with ADHD and a collaborative research project involving music therapists and young people with intellectual disabilities. The findings were created and presented in the young people’s voices. Chapter 14 concludes with Australian Elly Scrine’s call for music therapists to explore gender and sexuality when working with adolescents and she cites several vignette examples of how this might be done.

In her introduction to Part 3, Philippa Derrington outlines the possibilities of connection with adolescents in music therapy. She demonstrates this with a case study of her practice in school settings, including a discussion of the use of video within the music therapy session. In Chapter 16, Canadian philosopher and educator Susan O’Neill explores the meaning that adolescents find in their engagement with music and how that may impact their well-being. An understanding of the connection of music and well-being continues in Chapter 17. Andy Bennett and Lisa Nikulinsky, sociologists from Australia, report on their research investigating the music scene of adolescents in a township in southwest Australia, concluding that being a part of a music scene provides adolescents with a fulfilling connection. Helen Oosthuizen, a music therapist from South Africa, presents a case study of belonging and connecting through music and how this process takes place with adolescent sex-offenders in Chapter 18. She allows the young people to share their story in her report, revealing their struggles and strengths, and how the music empowers them.

In Chapter 19, by American media studies specialists Roseann Pluretti and Piotr Bobkowski, the authors explore the impact of social media on the developmental tasks of adolescents and what effect this has on young people’s engagement with music. American music therapist Michael Viega expands on digital music cultures in Chapter 20, including how they directly impact his practice as a music therapist. In the final chapter of the book, Carmen Cheong-Clinch from Australia describes her work with young people with mental illness. She used their preferred music in the music therapy group as a way to connect to their recovery focus.

This book is a solid piece of academic writing, clearly written and well-documented. I particularly appreciated the emphasis on diverse points of view, articulated in McFerran’s description of *crystallization* in Chapter 1 (p. 3). The varied views of music psychologists and music therapists and the presentation of research and case examples give depth to the topic of adolescents and music that fills a necessary and important gap in the literature.

From the point of view of a clinician with an interest in research, the conceptualizations regarding emotion, identity, and connection are valuable. These ideas can serve as an anchor when jumping into the often-stormy seas of understanding the lives of adolescents and the functional roles of music within their development. From the point of view of a clinician working with a group with adolescents, applications and tools for immediate use are not so readily visible. However, the case examples, particularly those groups reported by Daphne Rickson and Helen Oosthuizen, are very moving in that they allow the young people's voices to be heard. These chapters containing the case examples provide a refreshing balance to some of the theoretical chapters, in which I sometimes got lost.

The chapters on video, digital, and social media have considerable practical information that may be useful to clinicians and researchers alike. This is a fast and ever-changing aspect of practice for music therapists and it is helpful to have it documented. Providing opportunities to share music and validating musical choices is a powerful way to connect with any client, particularly adolescents.

Of note, the print used for the extended quotations was difficult to read as it was small and pale. As well, the Foreword contains good stories, but I did not find it all that connected or relevant to the text. I was surprised that following Chapter 21, the book ended, without a concluding harvest of the ideas and experiences reported. As a reader, clinician, and potential researcher, it would have been helpful for the editors to reflect on where this collected research might go next.

*Handbook of Music, Adolescents, and Wellbeing* is a positive and substantial addition to the literature on music and adolescents, both for researchers and clinicians. It offers theoretical constructs based in evidence and practical tools from documented experience for thinking about and connecting to adolescents through music. The voices expressed in these articles, and the ways in which the authors navigate the tumult experienced by this age group, offer tools and stories that can help us see, beyond the shouts and stony silence, young people who are struggling to find their way.

#### **Reviewed by Melody Newcomb, MA, CCC, MTA**

Melody Newcomb is a music and expressive arts therapist in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is a graduate of the University of Kansas (Music Therapy and Music Education) and Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Clinical Mental Health Counselling—Expressive Arts Therapy). She has worked with adolescents in residential treatment and currently is part of the team in a day program for adolescents struggling with eating disorders. She also sees adolescents individually through a community counselling centre. In addition to adolescents, she leads groups with adult inpatients in mental health. Her passion is facilitating the creative process and witnessing the resources that those struggling with mental illness bring to the healing process.