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# Negative Emotions and Music Revisited

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## Contemporary Aesthetics Volume 3 (2005)

### **Does Sad Music Make One Sad? An Ethnographic Perspective**

*by Peter Manuel*

#### **ABSTRACT**

The question of the presence and role of negative emotions in the experience of music – Does sad music make one sad? – has been recognized as a key to understanding much musical experience, especially in terms of the apprehension and expressive power of specifically formal features of music. One set of scholars, sometimes loosely labeled "emotivists," has argued that negative emotional responses do play a central role in the apprehension of much music, that is, that actual sadness is a natural, intentional and essential response to sad music. Advocates of this view base their arguments in large part on stated assumptions that many listeners do claim that sad music makes them sad. This article presents the results of a survey of listener responses to music. In particular, in its admittedly limited sample, it finds little support for the emotivists' assumptions about listeners' reactions and raises doubts about their argument in general.

#### **KEY WORDS**

negative emotions and music, arousal theory, sadness in music, cognitivism/emotivism, music aesthetics, music reception

#### **1. Introduction**

The question of the presence and role of negative emotions in the experience of music – does sad music make one sad? – has been discussed at such length and with such sophistication in the literature on aesthetics that it might well seem that little or nothing more could be said about it. The academic interest in the question, as reflected in dozens of publications, might well seem obsessive were it not for the recognition that understanding how listeners appreciate sad music, especially abstract instrumental music, is a key to understanding much musical experience and aesthetic experience in general. Upbeat, kinetically stimulating music, vocal music with lyric texts and genres explicitly invoking extra-musical sentiments like patriotism or religious devotion—all these idioms involve dimensions of aesthetic responses that may be relatively easy to explain.

Scholars have recognized that focusing on the apprehension of a music style which is seen as precisely lacking in these features, quintessentially, Western instrumental art music of the nineteenth century, can illuminate the mechanisms by which the purely formal aspects of music generate meaning and affect. Thus attention has been concentrated on Western Romantic-era instrumental music not only because writers tend to be familiar with it but, more appropriately, because that genre that has been so explicitly and to a large extent justifiably upheld as a relatively abstract music, ideally

intended to be enjoyed for its purely formal properties in a process of disinterested aesthetic contemplation.[1] An understanding of the nature of the aesthetic reward of listening to sad music might indeed shed light on the pleasures of listening to music in general, as well as the apprehension of visual art and other media.

Short of a dramatic breakthrough from the field of psychology (whose literature has thus far been inconclusive), the only sort of progress may continue to come from persistent sharpening, clarification and exploration of the various issues involved as undertaken by writers on aesthetics. In this brief essay, while not advancing any general viewpoint on the debate, I wish to call attention to what I regard as a methodological flaw in the varieties of emotivist positions as advocated by Jerrold Levinson, Colin Radford, and Stephen Davies.

The cognitivist position, as argued variously by Carroll Pratt, Elsie Payne and, most extensively, by Peter Kivy,[2] holds that while a musical piece or passage might be expressive of a negative emotion like sadness, the listener's experience consists primarily not of sadness but of a more generalized state of being moved by the beauty of the music. In opposition to this view are scholars, including those labeled "emotivists," who opine that such a view denies the heterogeneity of musical experience, and claim that the experience of negative emotions, such as sadness, may be an integral, undeniable and appropriate response, however (as in the view of Davies) perhaps secondary to the general state of being moved as argued by the cognitivists.[3]

In this essay I wish to focus on a basic premise of the latter camp, namely that a significant number of listeners claim to be moved to sadness by music. Radford, Levinson, and Davies, the most outspoken advocates of the notion that musical experience may legitimately include sadness, all appear to use this premise as a basis and starting point for their subsequent discussions of why they think musical experience encompasses certain sorts of negative emotions. I point out here that these writers do not substantiate their premise, and report my own findings, however inconclusive, that very few of the roughly 50 listeners I have polled do in fact claim that music can make them sad.

The claim in question, as advanced explicitly or implicitly by these authors, is that a significant number of listeners attest to the role of negative emotions in their own musical experience. Radford writes:

"Listening to sad music does make people sad. To deny this is itself paradoxical because it involves the cognitivist maintaining that when people say that this is what happened, they are mistaken." [4]

Elsewhere, Radford writes that bright, cheerful room colors "lighten people's spirits," but he admits that this notion, presumably like his assertion about people being saddened by sad music, is merely an "impressionistic belief." [5]

Similarly, Davies refers ambiguously to "the testimony offered by some listeners about the character of their emotional response to music," which allegedly contradicts Kivy's cognitivist position. Thus Davies writes, "At first glance Kivy's approach faces an obvious problem: it runs against the undeniable tendency that people sometimes display to describe their responses as mirroring the music's expressive character." [6]

In like manner, Levinson, in his article discussing why negative emotions allegedly occur in musical experience, seems to take for granted the fact that they do occur. He claims that "a listener is standardly made sad by apprehending and then identifying with sadness in the music." While his discussion of the possible role of sadness in musical experience is astute, he makes no attempt to document his basic premise that listeners actually do feel or claim to feel sad. His article commences with a fictive description of an avid music listener who "is subjected to an unyielding bombardment of stimuli, producing in him a number of states which *prima facie* are extremely unpleasant, and which one would normally go to some lengths to avoid. He appears upset, pained, and at turns a small sigh or a shudder passes through his body...." [7]

My reaction to these assertions has been one of suspicion: I would like to know how many intelligent and self-reflective listeners really do insist that music, and we must specify instrumental music, as free as is possible from extra-musical associations, can make them sad. I do not find Levinson's portrait of the music listener to be entirely realistic, and I note, unless I have missed something, that none of these three authors explicitly claims that they themselves are made sad by music. In order to acquire some sense of the sorts of statements music listeners actually do make about their experience, I conducted what I would regard as a woefully limited but not entirely useless survey on the subject. I here report its results and suggest some implications. In particular, I found that among my sample, hardly any listeners once superficially acquainted with the cognitivist premise did in fact insist on the ability of music to make them sad *per se*.

Before discussing my findings, I must clarify that I do not intend the responses to be misconstrued as some sort of vote on the cognitivist vs. emotivist debate. Obviously, this is not the sort of issue that can be resolved by means of a poll, however expansive and elaborate. Rather, my survey is intended to address the very specific and hitherto unsubstantiated assertion that a significant number of listeners do claim to be made sad by music. Assessing the implications of these listeners' responses remains in many respects a separate issue, and scholars need not necessarily endorse the listeners' interpretations of their responses.

In soliciting listeners' views on the nature of their aesthetic reactions, I pursued a few different tacks (all methodologically imperfect in their own ways). First, I have discussed the issue in person with several musician or music-loving acquaintances of mine. Second, I have taught graduate seminars on music aesthetics three times in the last decade, to a total of some twenty students; in these seminars we read and animatedly discussed relevant publications and I solicited from students not only their intellectual opinions, but, more relevantly here, their thoughts on how they themselves experience music. Finally, I sent out via email a query, reproduced below, to several musician friends and to

members of two e-mail listserves (collectively, with around one thousand recipients).[8] In all, comments were received from around fifty people.

In all these contexts I have endeavored not to sway respondents' perspectives, presenting my own stance as essentially neutral. This pose is not entirely insincere; although I incline toward a cognitivist stance, I find some of the opposing arguments, especially, for example, as presented by Davies[9], to be plausible enough that I could be persuaded of their correctness.

My email query, although briefly outlining the cognitivist position in order to clarify the question, endeavored to be unbiased, and read as follows:

Dear colleagues,

As a music professor interested in issues of aesthetics, I'm wondering if list members could shed any personal light on an ongoing debate regarding the nature of musical experience. Among writers on music aesthetics, there are those who argue that although one may be deeply moved by 'sad' music (or 'sad' passages), that experience, however perhaps marked by a lump in the throat, is not in fact sadness per se (if it were, why would we enjoy it?), but rather a general state of being moved by the beauty of the music. Others argue that listeners do often experience genuine sadness in listening to sad music, resting their argument on the (unsubstantiated?) claim that many listeners do in fact describe their experience that way. I would be very interested to hear from list members regarding their own sense of how they experience quintessentially 'sad' music. For purposes of argument, we must exclude vocal or programmatic music (which is more concrete and involves other issues), and all emotional reactions that are affected by non-musical associations (e.g., the way the piece reminds you of your adolescent sweetheart, etc.). I would warmly welcome responses ranging from one word (e.g., yes/no) on up.

Yrs :::

Peter Manuel

It should be self-evident that I had a certain range of ideal respondents in mind. They should, of course, be aficionados not only of music but of Western classical music, for purposes of argument, if nothing else. Moreover, they should be educated enough to be able to reflect dispassionately on the nature of their own emotional responses; I assume that most classical-music listeners would fall into that category, whether or not they would feel inclined to dilate on the issue. Further, I consider it essential that respondents would be at least exposed, albeit in the space of a few sentences, with the two sets of positions, in however bowdlerized a form. I thus seek to exclude the large group of listeners who have never considered the possibility that, for example, the lump in their throat experienced through music might signify anything other than sadness; I suspect that such listeners might constitute the bulk of those envisioned by Radford *et al* as claiming to be saddened by music. I also purposely did not direct my query to musicologists or philosophers, who I presumed particularly likely to ramble on about the issue in general, rather than focusing on their own personal experiences. As suggested in my query, I explicitly sought to exclude vocal music, which may possibly involve a

qualitatively different sort of aesthetic response involving the concrete subjects presented in the lyrics. I also urged respondents to try to exclude the realm of what Leonard Meyer would call "referential meanings," involving extra-musical associations, memories and the like, as opposed to those forms of more abstract (embodied) meaning largely inherent in the music itself.

Ideally, then, I hoped for responses that might fall into two general categories, along the lines of: (1) "Although music may give me a lump in the throat, now that I think of it, what I feel is perhaps not sadness per se but a general state of being moved," or, alternately (2) "I understand the argument, but I insist that what I sometimes experience in listening is genuine sadness."

A number of legitimate objections to this methodology could be raised. First of all, the number of opinions obtained is too small to be conclusive in any way. Even more problematic is the schematic nature of the e-mailed query. Relatively few musical passages, in my opinion, can be accurately described in such simplistic terms as "sad," and the entire question "Does sad music make one sad?" is inherently reductive. While there are sound reasons for phrasing the issue in this way, it also fails to do justice to the richness of most musical expressivity and experience. A few informants voiced this concern, which was no doubt shared by many of those who did not respond.

It need scarcely be reiterated that the responders' views, aside from being contradictory in some respects, should not be accepted uncritically. Those who claim to be saddened by music could be claimed to be sadly mistaken, while the others could be regarded as emotionally stunted, or similarly confused as to the nature of their reactions. But let us proceed to their responses.

## **2. The (Select) Public Speaks**

In this section I reproduce several excerpts of comments received from individuals on this topic. Most of these consist of verbatim passages from email responses; a few others are drawn from direct conversations, in which I endeavored to maintain a neutral pose. I believe that the comments are of interest not only for the rough consensus of position that they suggest, but also as astute poly-vocal perspectives in themselves. If I may be forgiven for saying so, the debate on this issue in forums like the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* and elsewhere has tended to be dominated by a small handful of scholars, consisting of those who are especially interested in the subject and who have devoted the most thought to it. I do not intend this observation as a criticism of these scholars (who have so thoroughly influenced my own thoughts), but I believe there may be something to be said for exposure to a broader spectrum of voices. As far as I can tell, only one of my informants is an academic philosopher or musicologist, although I would opine that all are clearly intelligent and educated people, whether or not one chooses to endorse their opinions. Nevertheless, several of the opinions dovetailed nicely with or corroborated arguments made by scholars who have published on this question.

### 3. Interpretations

Colin Radford claims that only people confused by philosophical theories about the emotions would say that the response to sad music cannot be sadness.[12] While such a criticism might well apply to myself or to my graduate students, it could hardly apply to the several individuals cited above (including the fourteen-year-old Sophia), whose brains cannot be assumed to have been addled by reading Kivy, Hanslick and the like.[13] Indeed, the generally articulate and astute tenor of such informants' observations might suggest that, if anyone may be confused by philosophical theories, it is not they.

I should reiterate that the findings of this essay certainly do not demolish the emotivist position, although I believe it is significant that most of the comments received and quoted can be seen as questioning or rejecting that stance. Rather, my target is the specific premise, asserted by Radford, Levinson and Davies, that many listeners routinely claim to be made sad by music. It is entirely possible, of course, that these authors have encountered several listeners who make such claims or that they might in the future conduct their own surveys and find many such people. However, my own sample of around fifty people revealed only four people who claimed to feel a certain sort of sadness; of these, one stated that she first had to be feeling sad to begin with, another said the feeling was rare, and the other two were markedly ambiguous in their assessments of their emotional responses. As it is, we should thus wonder just who are these allegedly typical people referred to who claim to be made unambiguously sad by music and how proportionally numerous are they?

The responses presented here must naturally remain inconclusive, especially since we wish to retain the possibility that some or all of the informants are mistaken about the nature of their experience. Hence, indeed, some of them, such as Levy, attested to the impossibility of answering the question posed. Nevertheless, I believe the responses suggest certain interpretations. First of all, blithe and unsubstantiated claims such as those made by Levinson, that listeners are "standardly made sad" in listening to sad music, are simply untenable. Moreover, the responses should make us question whether it is appropriate to use the notion that listeners claim to be made sad as a reason for exploring the reasons why music might generate that response. That is, Levinson, Davies and Radford devote many pages to discussing why and how music can allegedly make us sad. Insofar as they seem to base their discussions on the premise that listeners claim to be made sad, I think there is good reason to question or reformulate the entire basis of their discussion.

Authors of the voluminous and still-growing body of literature on the negative-emotion issue have been astute in focusing on it as a key to understanding the most basic aspects of how music moves us. What is indeed remarkable is that despite so much erudite discussion by so many learned scholars, there persists complete disagreement about this most essential aspect of aesthetic apprehension. To some extent, this lack of consensus may derive from limitations inherent to the scholarly approach of aestheticians, most of whose treatment of the subject has consisted of essentially common-sensical, albeit sophisticated, arguments and rebuttals. One criticism occasionally voiced is that

While I discuss the implications of the responses in my concluding section, I may briefly point out certain general features here.[10] Only one informant claimed unequivocally that music could in fact typically make her sad, in a manner relatively free of extra-musical associations. Several insisted, along cognitivist lines, that they are not moved to sadness but are instead moved by the beauty of the music. A few, reflecting the lack of consensus in the field, stated that they were unsure as to the nature of their aesthetic experience in this respect. And two, justly protesting the reductive nature of the question, opined in so many words that they can experience a complex unleashing of emotion which could include a certain sort of sadness.

The roughly twenty graduate students in my aesthetics seminars may constitute a special group. In these seminars, as I have mentioned, we read and discussed the major publications on the theme, and I also encouraged students to reflect upon and articulate their own way of experiencing music. On the whole, neither a strong emotivist nor cognitivist consensus emerged, but no student insisted on the ability of music to make them sad. A more typical response was the following:

"When I listen to Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony, I feel something powerful; it could be sadness, but I'm not sure." (Rebekka Gold)

Aside from the students, several other informants, while not giving any indication of having read Kivy *et al*, expressed a fairly unambiguous cognitivist interpretation of their listening experience:

"I'm in the first group. I think that if you are seriously sad (clinically depressed) you're probably not listening to music anyway, and I don't believe that music can make you sad. Music can be profoundly moving because it deals with human emotions which may include sadness, but it explicates them, if it is any good, and makes them easier to deal with. And I do not mean that it is soothing: if you understand something you are less afraid of it. Music is intellectually and emotionally anti-sad." (Donald Clarke)

"Sad music impacts me, but I wouldn't describe it as a feeling of sadness; it's more of an intense beauty that moves me. Happy music tends to make me mad. Is there a category for me?" (Don Satz)

"Sometimes [it might make me sad], but that has more to do with circumstances outside the music -- like Whitman associating the thrush with the death of Lincoln. In general, I'm "generally moved." And here's something else: some might describe their feelings as sad because feelings are so repressed and reading so rare (in my country, at any rate) that people lack the vocabulary to articulate their feelings." (Steve Schwarz)

"Sad music does not make me sad, but rather makes me admire the beauty of the music. This often manifests itself with a lump in the throat or tears, but those are not tears of sadness. Overpoweringly joyful music (end of either part of Mahler 8) brings the same reaction. Music almost always affects me by lifting my emotions and making me happy,



joyful about ... These feeling-states are in a sense idealized, purified, and in some measure distinct from reality...

Put it this way: the ineffable sadness of, say, the Barber "Adagio for Strings" or Bach's so called "Air on the G string" brings us not depression but a kind of pleasure. True sadness is in no way joyful, in no way stimulates us to a higher plane; instead, it immobilizes us, or cuts us off from feeling, or provokes us to wild anger, or--anything but the sense of something wonderful that those works, or Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, or *Guernica*, or *Crime and Punishment*, etc., etc. leave us with. We cherish what those works bring us. Whoever looks back at true sadness with gratitude?" (Daniel Paget)

The comments of Seattle-based composer David Lamb were particularly articulate, and are worth quoting at length:

"As a composer I have spent years thinking about the problem of expressing emotions in music, but this is not really what Dr. Manuel asks about. A composer can do his best to express sadness, but it may or may not evoke a sense of sadness in a listener. There are certain pieces of music that almost always bring tears to my eyes, and yet they are more likely to be tears of joy rather than sadness. Last year I wrote a piece having to do with grief and the grieving process. In part it was my way of dealing with the death of a friend. Composing the music helped me work out my own grief and did not at all make me feel sad. A few times in my life I have seen people brought to tears by my own music, and it has never been by pieces that I thought of as sad. Most often it was with music that had a certain bitter-sweet tinge of nostalgia about it that people could identify with. Last week I went to a rehearsal of a youth orchestra that was preparing a work of mine. They were working on a movement that was really just a simple lullaby. When the rehearsal was over I noticed a mother sitting in the back of the room dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief. As I was leaving, she asked if I had written the piece. I admitted it. She sniffled and said that for some reason it went right straight to her heart. That was certainly not what I had in mind when I composed the music. Still, it was obvious that the woman was not sad. In fact she was very happy. I don't pretend to understand this... I think the reality is that people bring their own emotions to the music and find in it whatever they need. The blues was not meant to make you sad but to help you deal with the sadness you already had." (David Lamb)

Particularly astute and relevant is Lamb's observation that listeners may inevitably bring their own emotive histories to the listening experience, and indeed may use music in this sense, as a way of addressing but not necessarily experiencing sadness. Other informants' comments, such as the following, echoed this theme:

"I probably would not listen to music that forced me to feel any specific emotion. I want to be able to put my own feelings into the music. RE sad per se, I am trying to think of what music I have felt sad while listening to. My 1st thought was the 4th movement of Mahler's 9th symphony. I have literally cried listening to that, but was sad to begin with and was doing a Camille routine. Often I feel melancholy listening to it, but that is a much different emotion and can be pleasant or helpful; it has a sense of resignation which may be necessary to resolve some life situation ... Like any non-trivial art, IMO, one must

be able to put oneself into the piece and the best will allow for many moods." (Bill Blank)

Two informants, with whom I discussed the issue at length, opined, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Davies' argument,[11] that prior experiences might inherently evoke a *certain sort* of sadness in the complex and somewhat ineffable emotional response to music.

"Nobody comes to any aesthetic experience as a blank slate. There's no such thing. Every time you listen again to a piece, or even to something new, you bring to it a history of prior listenings, experiences, associations. Everything we do we approach with memory and meaning, like a grid, that might include sadness. ...Sadness might be a part of a memory mixed with nostalgia, yearning, loss...Have I ever cried after listening to a piece? Absolutely. The music stirred something in me. Was it sadness? It's hard to say, but I think of it as a sort of oceanic feeling, of being connected to something larger. Music has the power to provoke and summon feelings – could it be sadness? Sure, but tinged with so many other feelings. Does Shostakovich's 5th Symphony make me sad? The question is so reductive and unanswerable, because what it expresses is so non-verbal and ineffable." (Carla Levy, pianist)

A somewhat kindred view was expressed by my wife, pianist Beth Robin, whose eyes roll at the mention of this topic, but who can nevertheless offer an opinion on the matter:

"We all have to put our emotions on hold most of the time. So when I listen to a piece that moves me, I feel *unlocked*, as if I am able to experience those emotions. I feel a heightened awareness of beauty, a wave of emotion, some of which certainly *feels like sadness*, whether it is that or not."

Two informants did report rather equivocal endorsements of the emotivist position, one saying that sad music might rarely provoke sadness, and the other suggesting that music might intensify and heighten a pre-existing sad mood.

"Does 'sad' music make you sad? What a question! My answer is yes--rarely." (Jeff Dunn)

"When I'm sad, I like to listen to sad music, and it gives me if not a sense of comfort, rather a sense of fully experiencing my sadness, which is somehow satisfying." (Anne Manuel)

Finally, I conclude this section with one more opinion: my own, however warped it is by excessive exposure to Kivy, Davies and others. While I easily choke up when listening to the right kind of music in the right mood, I do not believe that I am experiencing sadness *per se*, but rather a general, if ineffable, state of being moved. I do, however, recognize the uniqueness of such aesthetic experiences and could perhaps be persuaded to alter my opinion.

whether the music would be characterized as sad, happy, tender, or whatever. Even the terror-laden opening of Shostakovich 4th makes me happier than I was before listening. I think the reaction to sad music is wired into us (or me, at least) because sad music is usually tender, appealing deeply to our vulnerabilities and making a connection between us and the composer." (Jeff Bondono)

"I've often thought about the sad music question myself. I'm a violinist and come from a family of professional musicians, so I'm a somewhat critical listener. I decidedly come down on the side of being moved by beautiful music. Like Barber's Adagio for Strings, or most anything by Shostakovich. They truly move me. I think I just associate them with being sad because they get played in sad movies. I just find them beautiful." (David Swaney)

A corroborating voice from the younger generation was provided by a precocious fourteen-year-old piano student, whose tastes range from Kabalevsky to bubble-gum music. Succinctly taking a stance on the unresolved and much-debated issue of whether emotions require objects, this young acquaintance opined, without any particular prompting,

"Of course music doesn't make me sad. For me, music is either beautiful or ugly. In order to be sad you have to be sad *about* something." (Sophia Rosa)

This view is reiterated by the following response:

"I must say that music has never made me sad. I've sometimes been very moved by music but it has never made me sad. I think this is a good thing because tragedies in your life and friends and family should make one feel sad, not listening to music. " (David Whitbeck)

A few others expressed a clear ambiguity as to the nature of their experience, such as:

"I've come to terms with the fact that I don't myself understand why I tear up, and if I were really that smart, I'd have my head examined. " (Chet Pryor)

"And Bach's works, because of the harmony, more than not, evoke for me, feelings of an elated sadness - or sad elatedness!! Oh dear, I have not helped at all!" (Naomi Z) ~~Whit~~  
-Jackman)

A few informants, such as the music professor quoted below, responded in a more theoretical vein, however consistent with the general approach of most of those cited above:

"I wonder whether music stimulates a physiological condition that is somehow itself the basis for an emotional state, but, shorn of context, is not quite the same thing as the emotional state itself. We feel the psycho-physical components of sadness, without truly being sad, just as we feel elation in other music, without having anything particular to be

aestheticians have failed to avail themselves of (much less undertake their own) neuropsychological studies, some of which have certainly addressed some of the same issues, albeit with a quite distinct methodology and language. Particularly fruitful may be the use of fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) studies of music reception and brain activity. Such studies, which have commenced in recent years, may reveal much about music reception, although they may leave many questions unanswered. A different sort of criticism of extant music aesthetic writing, more relevant to this paper, would involve the failure of aestheticians to attempt to base their arguments in any sort of ethnographic research. Instead, there has persisted in the writings of Radford, Levinson and others, a certain ivory-tower academic habit of making blanket generalizations about people's alleged reactions to music without any attempt at documenting such statements.

This essay has sought to take a tentative step toward redressing the latter shortcoming in the debate on the negative emotion issue, suggesting the untenable nature of a key premise in the emotivist position. I would argue that my findings shift the burden of proof on to the emotivists themselves: If they wish to claim that genuine sadness is a common, basic and desirable part of aesthetic response to music, then it is up to them to substantiate this argument, especially as they may be able to find few informed listeners who would attest to such an experience.

### Endnotes

1. Needless to say, other genres, such as Indian classical music, might be equally appropriate for such an inquiry, but would pose problems of familiarity to the primarily Western-based writers on the subject.

2. Kivy's numerous publications on the subject include the following: *Sound Sentiment: An Essay on the Musical Emotions Including the Complete Text of The Corded Shell* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); *The Fine Art of Repetition: Essays in the Philosophy of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and *New Essays on Musical Understanding* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). The *British Journal of Aesthetics* and *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* contain many reviews, articles, and rejoinders on the issue. See also the useful summary of the debate in Stephen Davies, *Musical Meaning and Expression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 283ff.

3. Note that the dichotomous "emotivist" and "cognitivist" designations are problematic and reductionist, as neuroscientists and psychologists generally believe that emotion is cognitively based and cognition has emotive elements.

4. Colin Radford, "Emotions and Music: A Reply to the Cognitivists," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47, 1 (Winter 1989), 69-76, ref. on p. 72.

5. See Radford, "Muddy Waters," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49 (1991), pp. 242-52.

6. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 286, 284.

7. Jerrold Levinson, *Music, Art, and Metaphysics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 321, 306.

8. The listserves were the "classm-L" (Classical Music List) and Dave Lamson's list (accessed via [listserv@home.ease.lsoft.com](mailto:listserv@home.ease.lsoft.com)).

9. E.g., particularly plausible is Davies' critique of Kivy, in *op cit.*

10. A few responses, not quoted here, focused on issues other than that specified, such as the relevance of the composer's emotions and intent.

11. See Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-20.

12. "Emotions and music..." p. 75.

13. Of those cited, the only evident exception would be Levy, whose comments were studded with references to the writings of Hanslick, Wagner and others whom she had read in college. Note that in spite of this, she did not adopt a strict cognitivist position.

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