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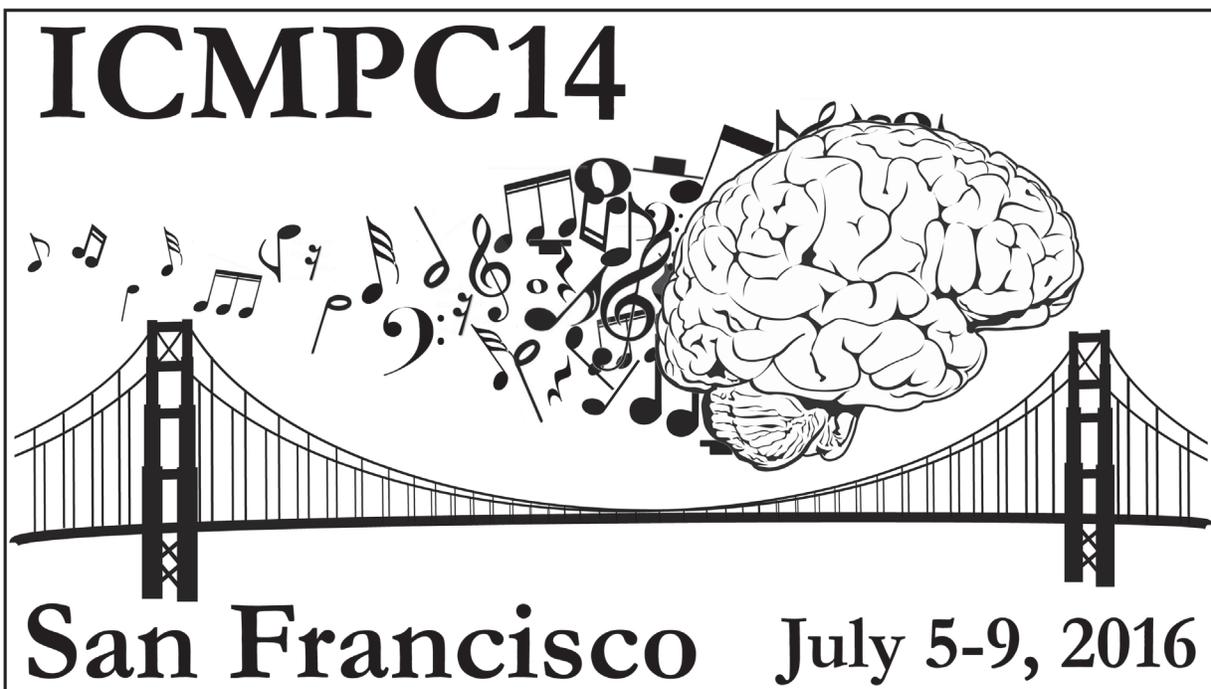
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Why listen to music right now? – Towards an inventory measuring the functions of music listening under situational influences

Jochen Steffens^{1,2}, Fabian Greb¹, Wolff Schlotz¹

¹Music Department, Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics, Germany

²Audio Communication Group, Technische Universität Berlin, Germany

Although a large range of factors affecting music listening behavior have already been identified, the question of who listens to what kind of music in which situation and why has not yet been adequately addressed. This paper describes first steps towards an instrument measuring the functions of music listening to predict musical choices in different situations. Our major premise was to capture the wide range of potential functions of music listening. Hence, we reanalyzed data from Schäfer et al. (2013) who did a literature review and extracted 129 distinct functions. For each of the three factors obtained in this study, separate factor analyses were calculated to disclose hierarchically underlying sub-factors. Based on these analyses, an inventory of 22 functions of music listening was created. Since the inventory is intended to capture the situational use of music, questions were formulated accordingly (“Why do you listen to music in this situation?”). The inventory was then used in an online study where participants described three self-selected situations in which they usually listen to music (1761 observations within 587 persons). For each situation, participants also reported on the functions of music listening and actual musical choices. Additionally, they filled out questionnaires on sociodemographics and personality traits. An exploratory factor analysis revealed a five-factor structure of the functions of music listening. The analyses further showed that the factors were substantially correlated with outside variables, in particular with situational factors (e.g. mood, attention) and properties of the chosen music (e.g. tempo, complexity). We conclude that the functions of music serve as relevant predictors of musical choices in different situations. Future research efforts will thus focus on improving the item set and testing its predictive power in a naturalistic setting.