Introduction

Elaine King and Helen M. Prior

The notion of familiarity is ubiquitous in our lives: it pervades everyday conversations, thoughts and activities. If one is familiar with someone or something, one might be described as being 'well acquainted', 'intimate' or 'close' to it. Idealistically, the Latin *familia* ('family') from which the word derives connotes a domestic, tightly knit unit. One might become more familiar with someone or something through repeated exposure, such as through meetings between people, frequenting a particular place, regular practice or dedicated study.

We often assume that familiarity is a dichotomous variable – we either know someone or something, or we do not – but we can think about familiarity on a bipolar continuous scale: we are more familiar with our nearest loved ones than our friends; more familiar with our close work colleagues than with acquaintances we have met on one or two occasions; more familiar with those acquaintances than with those whom we have read about, but not met; more familiar with the music recording we have listened to a hundred times than the one we have just encountered on a single occasion as background music. Yet familiarity is, in reality, still more complex, and is not adequately represented by this bipolar conception.

In some cases, we become familiar with someone or something without conscious effort or intention; in other cases, there is a deliberate desire, effort or need to increase (or decrease) our familiarity with someone or something.[1] There are of course countless reasons why an individual might wish to become more (or less) familiar with someone or something, but often it is simply because we want to know more (or less) about that person or thing than we already do.

In understanding the notion of familiarity, liking is a key variable. There is widespread belief that in the context of personal or professional relationships 'familiarity breeds contempt'[2] (that is, the more we get to know someone, the less we get to like them), yet this is by no means always the case: personal or

[1] Whether or not it is possible to de-familiarise ourselves entirely with someone or something merits attention; arguably, a process of de-familiarisation could be achieved intentionally or unintentionally through distancing (in time or space). For example, when writing this Introduction, we drafted the text and then came back to it at a later stage: we tried to de-familiarise ourselves with the original draft so as to review it critically through a 'fresh' pair of eyes.

[2] Apuleius, the Roman philosopher (124–70 AD) said 'familiarity breeds contempt; rarity wins admiration', while Aesop, the Greek writer, alludes to the proverb in his fables.

professional relationships can prosper over time. Indeed, the 'mere exposure' effect (Zajonc 1968), also known as the familiarity principle, is a psychological phenomenon which indicates that the more familiar we are with someone or something, the more we like it; in other words, we prefer something because it is familiar. However, our liking for someone or something will naturally fluctuate, and there could come a point at which familiarity with a person or thing leads to excessive comfort or boredom (or even contempt). There is potentially a fine line, therefore, between being 'under-' or 'over-' familiar with someone or something, and both states seem to be undesirable, as explained by an inverted U-shaped effect (this theory originated in the work of Wundt 1874). If 'optimum' levels of familiarity are desirable, then individuals might intentionally (or unintentionally) manipulate exposure to someone or something so as to 'control' this effect. The familiarity principle has been addressed in relation to liking and other factors in existing research over the past several decades and current thinking applied to music is presented in this volume (see overview below).

The way in which we become familiar with someone or something is influenced by our mode of interaction with it: familiarity gained through talking with someone on the telephone is not the same as familiarity gained through multi-modal interaction of a personal meeting. There are many ways in which musicians can become familiar with music, such as through performing, studying or listening to it, although the nature of engagement will affect the individual's experience and knowledge of it along with their sense of familiarity about it: a person listening to music while concentrating on some other activity will become familiar in a different way from a person listening to the same recording and giving it their full attention; a person listening to one recording of a piece will gain different knowledge about that piece from a person listening to another recording of the same piece; a musician performing a piece will experience it differently from someone listening to it.

Research in musicology, music psychology and music education often draws upon the notion of familiarity as it affects our understanding of and engagement with music. The largest body of research about familiarity and music focuses on listening. Philosophical, introspective accounts such as that provided by Cone (1977) have been supplemented by empirical research exploring the changes in the aspects of music that are understood by individuals as they become familiar with a specific piece of music (for two rare examples, see Deliège and Mélen 1997 and Pollard-Gott 1983). Attentive listening is not the only type of listening interaction known to be affected by familiarity, however: familiarity has been found to impact upon the effects of listening to background music while carrying out other tasks (Silverman 2010), something exemplified by numerous people on a daily basis. Other studies investigate familiarity as a variable influencing evaluative responses to music (Edmonston 1969; Gaver and Mandler 1987, Kinney 2009; Mull 1957; North and Hargreaves 1997, 2001, 2008; Ritossa and Rickard 2004; Schubert 2007; Tan, Spackman and Peaslee 2006), and such research often draws upon

the inverted U-shaped curve described by Wilhelm Wundt (1874; see above) and elaborated by David Berlyne (1971), as do some of the authors in this volume.

Emotional responses to music are often considered to be a prime motivator for listening to music. Familiarity is sometimes considered as a dichotomous variable in studies of such responses and through in-depth examination by using immediate or delayed repetition of a piece (Ali and Peynircioğlu 2010; Iwanaga, Ikeda and Iwaki 1996). Some studies use music participants who have become familiar with pieces through performance (Fredrickson 1999; Sloboda and Lehmann 2001) and the bodily effects of familiar music are also explored (Lingham and Theorell 2009).

Familiarity is not restricted to exposure with a specific piece of music. Music may be more or less familiar in its language or genre, and this has been found to affect listeners' ability to memorise new pieces of music as well as the generation of musical expectations (Curtis and Bharucha 2009; Demorest et al. 2008). Technological developments have created opportunities for wider dissemination of music, perhaps increasing the idiosyncrasies of an individual's listening experiences. With such an influence on a wide range of variables relating to music listening, it is perhaps surprising that familiarity effects have only rarely been considered as a core subject of study, rather than a variable to be taken into account in the examination of other aspects of musical engagement.

Musicology has perhaps tacitly acknowledged the effects of familiarity on musical understanding. Donald Francis Tovey's guide to the Beethoven Piano Sonatas (Tovey [1931] 1998), for example, is aimed towards students encountering pieces of music for the first time, and therefore provides an aide to their engagement with, and understanding of, the music. Arguably, this type of music analysis promotes familiarity with an 'ideal' understanding of a piece of music. Indeed, in musicology, including music analysis, an 'ideal' listener is often assumed (Cook 1990; Dunsby 1995). That 'ideal' listener will of course be familiar not only with a wide range of music, but also with the networks of influence surrounding composers and the effects of these on their music, as identified by musicologists. Scholarly interpretations and readings of musical works and events are, without doubt, influenced by an individual's familiarity with particular texts or methods of enquiry (Bent with Drabkin 1987; Cone 1977) and such issues inevitably impact upon the ways in which music educators tackle the subject too.

For performers, the notion of familiarity underpins studies of performance preparation by musicians working at different levels, including novice (Frewen 2010) and professional (Chaffin, Imreh and Crawford 2002), while it also relates to research on specific aspects of performance, such as memorisation (Ginsborg 2004, Williamon and Valentine 2002) and ensemble playing (Ginsborg and King 2012; King and Ginsborg 2011; Williamon and Davidson 2002).

Despite a plethora of research about the notion of familiarity and music, there is no existing book or journal that focuses specifically on the subject. Following a successful conference of the Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research (SEMPRE) on 'Music and Familiarity' at the University of Hull in

October 2009, this edited volume draws together leading research showcased at the event along with invited contributions from colleagues to expose contemporary theoretical and empirical approaches to familiarity in relation to listening, studying and performing music.

Overview of *Music and Familiarity*

The 13 chapters in this book are conceived as a broad narrative trajectory, although they have been divided into three parts so as to highlight the notion of familiarity from three key perspectives: listening (Part I: chapters 1–4), musicology (Part II: chapters 5–9) and performance (Part III: chapters 10–13). In Part I, the chapters are driven by music psychologists who explore the influence of familiarity on our engagement with music through listening based on empirical enquiries, specifically how much we listen, and how much we like the music we listen to (Chapter 1), the process of getting to know music through regular listening (Chapter 2), how comfortable we feel when listening (Chapter 3), and music's efficacy as a pain-reliever (Chapter 4). The second group, Part II, exposes the notion of familiarity from varied musicological stances, including ethnomusicological (Chapter 5), analytical (Chapter 6), philosophical (Chapter 7), practical (Chapter 8) and educational (Chapter 9). In Part III, the effects of familiarity are explored in relation to different aspects of the Western art and popular performance process, specifically through memorisation (Chapter 10), rehearsal (Chapter 12) and performance itself (chapters 11 and 13).

There are numerous themes that emerge across the volume, providing important links across the three parts: the role of schemata in our cognitive understanding of music (chapters 2, 5, 9 and 13); responses to Berlyne's influential research (chapters 1, 4, 10 and 11); socio-cultural issues (chapters 3, 5, 6 and 8); group-music making (chapters 9, 11–13); memory and learning (chapters 9–10); and reflexivity in research (chapters 5–8 and 13).

In Chapter 1 ('Keeping it Fresh: How Listeners Regulate their own Exposure to Familiar Music'), Alinka Greasley and Alexandra Lamont address existing theoretical hypotheses concerning the ways in which we engage with music over long timespans, arguing that existing models such as the inverted U-shaped hypothesis that are derived from laboratory-based studies are too simplistic for a real-life, longer-term context. They reveal the complex ways in which listeners modify their music listening over a one-month period and over their lifespan, highlighting the differences between individuals' habits, as well as listeners' awareness of the effects of familiarity on their enjoyment of the music.

Although Greasley and Lamont take a broad approach to listeners' familiarity with music, they also advocate more detailed study of familiarity with specific pieces of music over relatively long timescales. Such tactics are adopted by Helen M. Prior in Chapter 2 ('Familiarity, Schemata and Patterns of Listening'), who undertakes a fine-grained examination of three listeners' perceptual responses

to music by Clementi, Schoenberg and Berio over a fortnightly period of daily listening. Her presentation of qualitative data in representations of perceptual schemata allows some insight into the development of perceptual responses to these pieces over time, with such responses including descriptions of the listeners' understanding of the music as well as the fascinating connections made between music and their other experiences, knowledge and ideas.

Prior's focus on the effects of familiarity on specific pieces of music is continued to some extent in Chapter 3 ('The Effects of Repertoire Familiarity and Listening Preparation on New Audiences' Experiences of Classical Concert Attendance'), in which Melissa Dobson applies the concept of repeated listening to a real-life situation. Dobson reports the findings of a study in which she investigated the ways that repeated listening to specific pieces of music influenced novice concert attendees' enjoyment of concert performances of those pieces. Her findings demonstrate the complexity of our relationship with music as listeners.

In Chapter 4 ('Familiarity with Music in Post-operative Clinical Care: A Qualitative Study'), Katherine Finlay examines the use of music as an audio-analgesic through a study of music listening in a clinical setting. Although research indicates that music can support a standard clinical care regime, little research has investigated the impact of familiarity on the effectiveness of music in reducing pain. Finlay's chapter addresses this issue, exploring qualitative findings from a recent study of the use of music following knee surgery. Her findings underline the importance of familiarity as a variable with a strong influence on the benefits that may be gained from music listening.

In Chapter 5 ('Unfamiliar Sounds? Approaches to Intercultural Interaction in the World's Musics'), Henry Stobart contextualises and problematises the notion of familiarity as he reflects on our engagement with music, although his focus extends beyond the Western tradition to more or less familiar musical genres from other parts of the world. Stobart highlights the potential mismatch between familiarity and geographical proximity, the potentially perceptually narrowing effects of musical education, and the implications of perceptual mismatches across cultures, all of which provide important scope for consideration by all kinds of musicologists.

An analytical perspective on our engagement with music is demonstrated in Chapter 6 ('Well, What Do You Know? Or, What Do You Know Well? Familiarity as a Structural Force in Crumb's *Black Angels*') as Jonathan James Hargreaves considers the ways in which George Crumb manipulates familiar and unfamiliar musical materials to influence the listener's perception of meaning within his music. Hargreaves' analysis, however, takes into account not only those listeners familiar with the specific works quoted by Crumb in *Black Angels*, but also those who hear the work while they are unfamiliar with the other works quoted within the piece. As such, this chapter considers familiarity with music in multiple forms.

In Chapter 7 ('Familiarity, Information and Musicological Efficiency'), Vanessa Hawes shifts the focus from our engagement with pieces of music to our scholarly endeavour in musicology. She notes the complexities of the field, with

its disparate sub-disciplines and concomitant methodologies, and suggests ways of assessing the efficiency of communication between researchers working with different backgrounds. These means, she suggests, will provide helpful ways for the relatively inexperienced (unfamiliar) researcher to assess the value of research from disparate fields. Hawes argues for a philosophy of musicology to provide scope for reflection on the discipline.

A similarly reflective approach is taken by Clemens Wöllner, Jane Ginsborg and Aaron Williamon in Chapter 8 ('Familiarity and Reflexivity in the Research Process'), although their focus is less on the field of musicology than on the researchers within that field. Specifically, they discuss findings from a recent questionnaire survey exploring music researchers' engagement with music, and the implications this familiarity with their subject of study may have on their research.

In Chapter 9 ('Familiarity in Music Education'), Susan Hallam explores the role played by familiarity in music education, examining existing research in relation to the enculturation of musical language, the development of musical skills, and teachers and teaching. Educational issues are further considered in Chapter 10 ('The Significance of Familiar Structures in Music Memorisation and Performance') as Artemis Apostolaki explores the development of memorised performances both theoretically and empirically in the light of cultural differences in learning music. Specifically, Apostolaki examines the effectiveness of the solfège system in aiding memorisation for performance.

Moving away from issues of pitch and memory, Rowan Oliver examines the performer's relationship with musical time in Chapter 11 ('Groove as Familiarity with Time'). Oliver interrogates notions of 'groove' in popular performance from a performer's perspective, arguing that groove stems not only from temporal understanding between two or more performers, but also from a solo performer's conception of musical time. As such, a performer's familiarity with a particular temporal frame of reference is seen to facilitate the experience of groove through examples of musical material used in varied contexts.

In Chapter 12 ('Social Familiarity: Styles of Interaction in Chamber Ensemble Rehearsal'), Elaine King looks beyond the musical interaction within and between performers to consider the socio-emotional behaviour arising in the chamber ensemble rehearsal context. She applies complementary analytical frameworks in the study of social interaction between musicians working in 'new' (unfamiliar) and 'established' (familiar) duo partnerships. Her research introduces transactional thinking into the analysis of musicians' socio-emotional behaviour in rehearsal and supports theories of group development. Ensemble work is also the focus of Chapter 13 ('Familiarity and Musical Performance'). Mine Doğantan-Dack documents the elusive effects of repeated performances of the same work, and hence the experience of familiarity through performance itself, by a philosophical reflective analysis of classical trio performances. She draws together issues of both musical and social familiarity in her account.

As a whole, this book is securely bound together by its overall theme of familiarity. The diversity of perspective and methodology enables valuable contributions to different disciplines of music research, notably psychology, musicology, education, analysis, theory and performance studies. We hope that readers from all of these fields, among others, will find the volume stimulating and enjoyable, while the material will be of interest to a range of readers, including students and experienced researchers.

References

Ali, S.O. and Peynircioğlu, Z.F. (2010). Intensity of Emotions Conveyed and Elicited by Familiar and Unfamiliar Music. *Music Perception* 27/3: 177–82.

Bent, I. with Drabkin, W. (1987). *Analysis. The New Grove Handbooks in Music.* London: Macmillan Press.

Berlyne, D.E. (1971). *Aesthetics and Psychobiology.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Chaffin, R., Imreh, G. and Crawford, M. (2002). *Practicing Perfection: Memory and Piano Performance*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cone, E.T. (1977). Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story – Or a Brahms Intermezzo. In R.P. Morgan (ed.), *Music: A View from Delft* (pp. 77–94). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Cook, N. (1990). *Music, Imagination and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Curtis, M.E. and Bharucha, J.J. (2009). Memory and Musical Expectation for Tones in Cultural Context. *Music Perception* 26/4: 365–75.

Deliège, I. and Mélen, M. (1997). Cue Abstraction in the Representation of Musical Form. In I. Deliège and J. Sloboda (eds), *Perception and Cognition of Music* (pp. 387–412). Hove: Psychology Press.

Demorest, S.M., Morrison, S.J., Beken, M.N. and Jungbluth, D. (2008). Lost in Translation: An Enculturation Effect in Music Memory Performance. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 25/3: 213–23.

Dunsby, J. (1995). *Performing Music: Shared Concerns*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Edmonston, W.E.J. (1969). Familiarity and Musical Training in the Esthetic Evaluation of Music. *The Journal of Social Psychology* 79: 109–11.

Fredrickson, W.E. (1999). Effect of Musical Performance on Perception of Tension in Gustav Holst's First Suite in E-flat. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 47/1: 44–52.

Frewen, K.G. (2010). Effects of Familiarity with a Melody Prior to Instruction on Children's Piano Performance Accuracy. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 57/4: 320–33.

Gaver, W.G. and Mandler, G. (1987). Play it Again, Sam: On Liking Music. *Cognition and Emotion* 1/3: 259–82.

Ginsborg, J. (2004). Singing By Heart: Memorization Strategies for the Words and Music of Songs. In J.W. Davidson (ed.), *The Music Practitioner: Exploring Practices and Research in the Development of the Expert Music Performance, Teacher and Listener* (pp. 149–60). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Ginsborg, J. and King, E. (2012). Rehearsal Talk: Familiarity and Expertise in Singer–Pianist Duos. *Musicae Scientiae*; doi: 10.1177/1029864911435733.

Iwanaga, M., Ikeda, M. and Iwaki, T. (1996). The Effects of Repetitive Exposure to Music on Subjective and Physiological Responses. *Journal of Music Therapy* 33/3: 219–21.

King, E. and Ginsborg, J. (2011). Gestures and Glances: Interactions in Ensemble Rehearsal. In A. Gritten and E. King (eds), *New Perspectives on Music and Gesture* (pp. 177–201). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Kinney, D.W. (2009). Internal Consistency of Performance Evaluations as a Function of Music Expertise and Excerpt Familiarity. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 56/4: 322–37.

Lingham, J. and Theorell, T. (2009). Self-reflected 'Favourite' Stimulative and Sedative Music Listening: How does Familiar and Preferred Music Listening Affect the Body? *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 18/2: 150–66.

Mull, H.K. (1957). The Effect of Repetition upon the Enjoyment of Modern Music. *The Journal of Psychology* 43: 155–62.

North, A.C. and Hargreaves, D.J. (1997). Experimental Aesthetics and Everyday Music Listening. In D.J. Hargreaves and A.C. North (eds), *The Social Psychology of Music* (pp. 84–103). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

North, A.C. and Hargreaves, D.J. (2001). Complexity, Prototypicality, Familiarity and the Perception of Musical Quality. *Psychomusicology* 17: 77–80.

North, A.C. and Hargreaves, D.J. (2008). *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pollard-Gott, L. (1983). Emergence of Thematic Concepts in Repeated Listening to Music. *Cognitive Psychology* 15: 66–94.

Ritossa, D.A. and Rickard, N.S. (2004). The Relative Utility of 'Pleasantness' and 'Liking' Dimensions in Predicting the Emotions Expressed by Music. *Psychology of Music* 32/1: 5–22.

Schubert, E. (2007). The Influence of Emotion, Locus of Emotion and Familiarity upon Preference in Music. *Psychology of Music* 35/3: 499–516.

Silverman, M.J. (2010). The Effect of Pitch, Rhythm, and Familiarity on Working Memory and Anxiety as Measured by Digit Recall Performance. *Journal of Music Therapy* 47/1: 70–83.

Sloboda, J.A. and Lehmann, A.C. (2001). Tracking Performance Correlates of Changes in Perceived Intensity of Emotion During Different Interpretations of a Chopin Piano Prelude. *Music Perception* 19/1: 87–120.

Tan, S.-L., Spackman, M.P. and Peaslee, C.L. (2006). The Effects of Repeated Exposure on Liking and Judgements of Musical Unity of Intact and Patchwork Compositions. *Music Perception* 23/5: 407–21.

Tovey, D.F. ([1931] 1998). *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas: A Bar-by-Bar Analysis of Beethoven's 32 Pianoforte Sonatas* (revised edition). London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

Williamon, A. and Davidson, J. (2002). Exploring Co-Performer Communication. *Musicae Scientiae* 6: 53–72.

Williamon, A. and Valentine, E. (2002). The Role of Retrieval Structures in Memorizing Music. *Cognitive Psychology* 44: 1–32.

Wundt, W. (1874). *Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie*. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann.

Zajonc, R.B. (1968). The Attitudinal Effects of Mere Exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. Monograph Supplement* 9: 1–27.