

Press release

A new PhD project from Aarhus University investigates the motivational power of music in children and adults. The project was carried out by Maria Celeste Fasano, who is defending her dissertation on the 24th of June, 2019.

Abstract

Survey studies have shown that music listening is an important source of enjoyment and entertainment for children and adolescents. However, there is a lack of knowledge related to the neural bases of this strong drive. Moreover, despite promising findings showing that pleasurable music training is able to improve executive functions in this young population, there is still relatively little intervention research in this field. Finally, highly expressive playing and the development of a personal commitment to music seem to be strongly related to pleasurable experience of music but, surprisingly, this has not been investigated at a neural level yet.

This PhD project explores the neural underpinning of music pleasure and its interaction with learning processes in children, young adolescents and adults. Study 1 showed that music listening is recurrently able to 'attract' a reward brain network in young adolescents, explaining in part their constant drive for music. Study 2 revealed a positive effect of engaging music training on 8-10 year old children in terms of increased inhibitory control and reduced hyperactivity. Finally, Study 3 highlighted a shared recruitment of reward brain regions in expert pianists listening to a sonata and highly motivated to learn that sonata or able to perform it very well.

The defence is public and will take place on the 24th of June at 14:00 in Auditorium 1252-310 (Jeppe Vontilius), Aarhus University. The title of the project is "From pleasure to learning: The motivational power of music in children and adults".

After the defence, MIB will host a reception at Building 1A, Nørrebrogade 44, Aarhus University.

For more information, please contact PhD student Maria Celeste Fasano, mariacelestefasano@clin.au.dk.

Assessment committee:

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