DIDACTICA DANUBIENSIS

Intermodal Transfer: A Theoretical Construct for Understanding the Musical Image

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Abstract: This study aims to provide a theoretical foundation for the concept of the musical image and to explain the cognitive mechanisms involved in its understanding, highlighting the role of audiation and intermodal transfer in music education. The research draws upon perspectives from music psychology, musicology, and music pedagogy, building on the contributions of B. M. Teplov, P. Bentoiu, V. Bochkaryov, A. Gotsdiner, A. Toropova, J. R. Barrett, and E. Gordon regarding the musical image, perception, music-auditory representations, and audiation. The study employs theoretical and comparative analysis of the relevant literature, combined with an interdisciplinary synthesis of psychological, musicological, and pedagogical concepts, to develop an explanatory model of understanding the musical image. The analysis demonstrates that the musical image represents the integrative expression of the *values embodied in a musical composition*, while audiation constitutes the cognitive mechanism through which musical relationships are organized and transformed into artistic meaning. On this basis, intermodal transfer is conceptualized as the process of translating the musical image into complementary expressive languages, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of music and strengthening aesthetic experience. The findings provide theoretical and methodological guidelines for designing music education activities aimed at developing students' musical understanding and expressive competencies, offering valuable implications for researchers, teachers, and teacher educators. The paper proposes an original conceptual model of understanding the musical image, in which audiation explains the cognitive mechanism underlying the construction of musical meaning,

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Keywords: values of musical composition; musical image; auditory-musical representations; intermodal transfer; music understanding

1. Introduction

The ongoing transformation of educational paradigms, the modernization of school curricula, and the orientation of general education toward competency-based learning and the integrated teaching of the arts have prompted a reconsideration of the aims of music education. In this context, the emphasis has shifted from the transmission of knowledge and the development of performance skills to fostering authentic artistic experiences in which learners actively construct musical meaning. Nevertheless, regardless of curricular and methodological developments, cultivating the ability to understand the musical image remains a fundamental objective of music education. Without such understanding, artistic experience is likely to remain at the level of auditory perception and sound reproduction, failing to realize the formative potential of music.

The psychological foundations of musical perception and auditory-musical representations have been developed in the works of B. M. Teplov, V. Bochkaryov, A. Gotsdiner, and A. Toropova, while P. Bentoiu established the concept of the musical image from a musicological perspective. The pedagogical dimension of musical perception is further developed in the work of J. R. Barrett, whereas Edwin Gordon's *theory of audiation* explains the cognitive mechanism through which musical relationships are organized and transformed into understanding. Although these contributions provide valuable foundations for explaining musical perception and understanding, they have generally been examined independently, without being integrated into a unified conceptual framework capable of explaining the relationships among musical perception, auditory-musical representations, the musical image, and audiation. Consequently, the process through which *musical auditory experience* is transformed into a meaningful artistic representation and subsequently expressed through other *modes of representation* remains insufficiently theorized.

Within this context, *intermodal transfer* acquires particular significance for contemporary music education. In the present study, intermodal transfer is not regarded as synonymous with interdisciplinarity or integrated learning, since it does

not operate on curricular content but rather on different modes of representing the same musical experience. It is defined as the process through which a musical image, once understood, is translated and reinforced through complementary artistic languages—verbal, visual, motor, or affective—thereby deepening artistic meaning and enhancing the authenticity of musical experience. Building upon these premises, the present study proposes an explanatory model of understanding the musical image, developed through the integration of psychological, musicological, and pedagogical perspectives on musical perception. The study elucidates the functional relationships among auditory-musical representations, the musical image, and audiation, while establishing the role of intermodal transfer as a pedagogical mechanism for consolidating and expressing musical understanding.

The originality of the study lies in conceptualizing the musical image as the integrative expression of the *values embodied in a musical composition* and in developing a unified explanatory model in which audiation accounts for the cognitive mechanism underlying the construction of musical meaning, whereas intermodal transfer represents the pedagogical mechanism through which this understanding is deepened and expressed through complementary artistic languages.

2. Theoretical Perspectives on the Musical Image

In psychology, the concept of the *mental image* refers to a form of cognitive representation that enables the mental evocation of an object, phenomenon, or event in the absence of a direct perceptual stimulus. As stated in the *Larousse Dictionary of Psychology*, a mental image is "the mental representation evoked by the sensory qualities of an object absent from the perceptual field" (Larousse, 2006, p. 569). The authors emphasize that mental images are not mere copies of reality but active cognitive structures resulting from the processing of perceptual experience, capable of preserving, organizing, and transforming accumulated information. Consequently, the image is a product of memory, experience, and cognitive activity that facilitates the anticipation, interpretation, and understanding of reality. The *musical image* is not limited to the immediate perception of sounds; rather, it involves the evocation and reorganization of *musical auditory experience* at the level of mental representation.

Within the musical domain, the image may be understood as a complex mental representation constructed through the integration of auditory, affective, and imaginative experiences generated by musical discourse. It does not mechanically reproduce what is perceived during listening; instead, it organizes melodic, rhythmic,

harmonic, timbral, and expressive elements into a coherent structure, thereby endowing them with artistic meaning. From this perspective, the musical image emerges as the result of the interaction among perception, memory, imagination, and interpretation, which accounts for its dynamic, individual, and creative character.

In the literature on music psychology, the concept of the musical image is approached from the perspective of the psychological mechanisms involved in musical perception and understanding. In contrast to the musicological approach, which focuses on the artistic content and meaning of the musical work, **A.** Gotsdiner explains the musical image through the complex interaction of perceptual, emotional, motor, and cognitive processes. He defines the musical image as "the ideal representation of the sound of music in consciousness" (Gotsdiner, 1993, p. 97), emphasizing that it cannot be reduced to the mere auditory reflection of sounds but constitutes the result of the psychological organization of musical experience.

A particularly valuable contribution of A. Gotsdiner lies in demonstrating the active nature of musical perception. His experimental studies show that the reception of music involves not only the processing of auditory information but also the simultaneous engagement of emotional and motor responses through the formation of an "emotional-motor trace," which facilitates the internalization of musical experience [Idem]. From this perspective, the musical image emerges as a dynamic psychological construct that undergoes continuous reorganization throughout the unfolding of the musical work and depends on previously accumulated *musical auditory experience*. Furthermore, A. Gotsdiner emphasizes that the development of perceptual, imaginal, and musical thinking processes requires repeated experiences of listening and analytical engagement with music (Gotsdiner, 1993, p. 101). This observation is particularly significant, as it suggests that understanding the musical image is not a spontaneous act but the outcome of the progressive development of *auditory-musical representations*, which prepare the transition from sensory perception to the construction of artistic meaning.

In contemporary musicology, the *musical image* is not conceived as a fixed and immutable artistic product but as a dynamic phenomenon that is constituted and continually reconfigured through performance and reception. From this perspective, V. Bochkaryov argues that musical performance extends beyond the faithful reproduction of the musical score, requiring both the reconstruction of the composer's artistic intention and the development of the performer's own interpretative conception. As the author states, "the performer does not reproduce an already existing artistic image but recreates it in the process of artistic performance"

(Bochkaryov, 1997, p. 215). Accordingly, the musical image acquires the character of an open artistic construct, resulting from the interaction among the musical text, the performer's individuality, and the cultural context of the interpretative act.

This perspective naturally complements P. Bentoiu's conception of the three levels of existence of a musical work. Whereas P. Bentoiu (Bentoiu, 2023) distinguishes the sequence *structure – sonic realization – psychological reflection*, V. Bochkaryov emphasizes the creative role of the performer as the mediator between the composer and the listener (Bochkaryov, 1997). In this sense, the performer is not merely an intermediary of the composer's intention but an active participant in shaping the musical image through artistic experience, musical culture, and aesthetic sensitivity. Likewise, the listener cannot attain a profound understanding of the musical image without the artistic experience, musical culture, and aesthetic sensitivity necessary to organize and attribute meaning to the musical content. Consequently, the musical image is not mechanically transmitted from the composer to the listener; rather, it is reconstructed in every act of performance, which accounts for the legitimate diversity of interpretations of the same musical composition.

In the psychology of musical activity, the musical image is viewed not as a static, fully established structure but as a dynamic construct that is formed and develops throughout the processes of musical creation, performance, and reception. From this perspective, L. Bochkaryov considers the musical image to be the point of convergence between the composer's intention and the performer's artistic experience, being reconstructed in the act of performance and actualized in the listener's consciousness. The author emphasizes that interpretative activity does not begin with the mechanical reproduction of the musical score, but with the formation of a holistic representation of the musical work, stating that "the formation of the prototype of the musical work's image constitutes the content of the first stage of interpretative activity". Along the same lines, L. Bochkaryov highlights the decisive role of imagination, noting that "the leading role at this stage belongs to recreative imagination" (Bochkaryov, 1997, p. 233). These considerations demonstrate that the musical image is not exclusively the result of organizing the elements of musical language but rather the product of a complex psychological synthesis in which perception, memory, artistic experience, and imagination jointly contribute to the formation of a unified and expressive representation of the musical work.

The concept of the *musical image* occupies a central position in both musicology and musical aesthetics, being examined from the perspectives of the structure and expressiveness of musical language as well as the psychology of perception and the

construction of artistic meaning. The complexity of this concept derives from the fact that the musical image is not merely the outcome of organizing the means of musical expression but also the form through which the artistic content of a work becomes accessible to the listener's consciousness. In this sense, the musical image integrates the objective dimension of the musical work with the subjective dimension of its reception, constituting the meeting point between the composer's creative intention and the listener's aesthetic experience. As C. G. Jung observed, every artistic image originates in a profound symbolic core and is connected with the "elementary images of the unconscious," which endow artistic creation with expressive power and the capacity to generate multiple meanings (Jung, 1993, p. 132).

From the perspective of the theory of musical content, L. Kazantseva defines the musical image as "the artistic representation embodied ('materialized') in musical sound" (Kazantseva, 2009, p. 120). Building upon M. Kagan's conception of the artistic image as "the dialectical unity between the reflection of reality and the expression of the artist's attitude toward it," the author emphasizes the dual nature of the musical image: an objective dimension, represented by the artistic content of the musical work, and a subjective dimension, referring to the concrete manner in which this content is realized and interpreted (Kazantseva, 2009, p. 93). For the performer, these two dimensions become inseparable, since the authenticity of artistic performance depends on the ability to enter into the world of ideas, emotions, and associations that gave rise to the musical composition. From this perspective, performance is not merely the reproduction of the musical score, but an artistic reconstruction of the musical image achieved through the re-experiencing and actualization of the meaning conceived by the composer.

The dynamic and open nature of the musical image is also emphasized by other representatives of contemporary aesthetics. V. Kholopova regards the artistic image as "an integral representation formed by the subject concerning the idea and the future material embodiment of the work of art" (Kholopova, 2014, p. 109), emphasizing that the image precedes the artistic materialization of the creative act. From the perspective of reception, however, the construction of the musical image constitutes a gradual process of cognition in which the listener moves beyond the initial global impression and progressively gains access to the expressive details that structure the content of the musical work.

Along the same lines, L. Vygotsky points out that a work of art does not directly determine the meanings generated in the listener's consciousness, because "the work

itself can never be held responsible for the thoughts that arise as a result of its reception" (Vygotsky, 1984, p. 94). This observation confirms the active and creative character of artistic reception, in which prior experience, memory, imagination, and the listener's associative universe all participate in the construction of meaning. This perspective is further developed by Y. Lotman, who argues that "the deeper and more valuable a work of art is, the broader the range of its possible interpretations becomes" (Lotman, 1972, p. 122). Consequently, the musical image cannot be regarded as a fixed and definitive construct but rather as an open artistic structure, susceptible to successive reinterpretations by both the performer and the listener. It is precisely this semantic openness that explains why the same musical composition may generate different aesthetic experiences without losing its artistic identity. In our view, this characteristic constitutes one of the fundamental arguments for directing research toward the mechanisms through which the musical image is understood—a problem that extends beyond the description of the artistic phenomenon and requires the integration of musicological, psychological, and pedagogical perspectives.

Musical perception is not limited to the successive reception of auditory stimuli but is inherently oriented toward the construction of a complex artistic phenomenon—the musical image. In this regard, A. Toropova states that "musical perception is directed toward understanding the multidimensional musical-cultural phenomenon represented by the musical image" (Toropova, 2008, p. 27). This perspective shifts the emphasis from the mere perception of sounds to the construction of an integrative artistic representation in which musical content, expressiveness, and aesthetic experience converge into a coherent image. At the same time, the author highlights the dynamic and open character of the musical image, arguing that "the musical image is individually variable and, by its very nature, possesses a semantic surplus" (Toropova, 2008). In other words, the same musical composition may give rise to different interpretations and meanings because the musical image is constituted through the interaction between the musical score and the listener's inner world, being shaped by previous musical experience, the level of aesthetic culture, cognitive and affective characteristics, as well as the specific context of reception. From this perspective, the musical image is not a fixed and definitive structure but an open artistic construct that is continuously enriched as the listener's musical and cultural experience develops. The analysis of the literature demonstrates that, although the musical image has been extensively examined as an artistic and aesthetic phenomenon, the cognitive mechanisms through which it is constructed, internalized, and understood remain insufficiently explained. Accordingly, the

central issue is no longer the definition of the musical image itself but rather the explanation of the process through which *musical auditory experience* is transformed into artistic representations and meanings. The semantic openness of the musical image explains the need to employ complementary modes of representation and understanding—verbal, visual, plastic, bodily, and others—since none of these, taken individually, can fully encompass the semantic potential of a musical work. Consequently, intermodal transfer should be understood not merely as a teaching strategy but as a natural mechanism for progressively approaching and deepening the understanding of the musical image.

The theoretical perspectives discussed above suggest that the understanding of the musical image emerges through the interaction of perceptual, cognitive, and semantic processes. These relationships are synthesized in the conceptual framework presented in *Figure 1*.

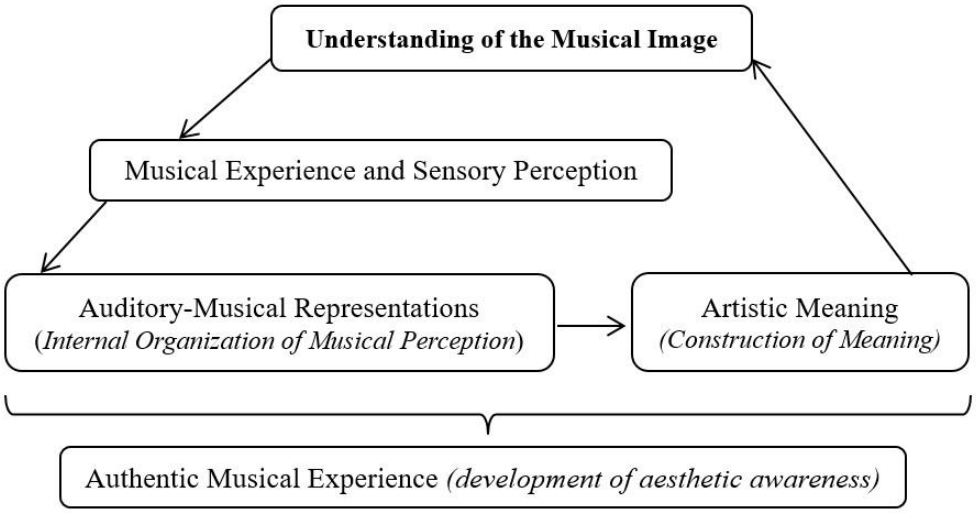


Figure 1. Cognitive Model of the Formation and Understanding of the Musical Image

3. The Musical Image as the Integrative Expression of the Values of a Musical Composition

In music education, understanding a musical composition extends beyond identifying the elements of musical language or recognizing its genre and formal structure. The artistic meaning of a musical work is constructed through the integration of all its expressive components into a coherent musical image capable

of conveying meanings, emotions, and values. From this perspective, the musical image may be regarded as the integrative expression of the values embodied in a musical composition, as it unifies its affective, expressive, cognitive, and aesthetic dimensions into a coherent artistic whole.

Within the framework of the present study, the *values of a musical composition* are not interpreted exclusively as aesthetic values but rather as the set of elements that facilitate the construction of artistic meaning and guide the process of musical understanding. These values constitute pedagogical reference points through which learners progressively enter the semantic universe of music and serve as a conceptual framework for organizing activities such as music listening, vocal performance, instrumental performance, improvisation, and musical creation. The values of a musical composition represent pedagogical reference points through which learners explore and interpret the semantic universe of a musical work. Each of these values activates specific cognitive, affective, and aesthetic processes, thereby contributing to the construction of the *musical image* as the integrative expression of artistic meaning. The educational functions of these values are summarized in *Table 1***.**

Table 1. Values Embodied in a Musical Composition and Their Contribution to Understanding the Musical Image

Values Embodied in a Musical Composition	*Contribution to Understanding the Musical Image*
Emotional experience	→ Evokes emotional resonance and personal engagement in the reception of the musical work.
Elements of musical language	→ Reveal the expressive potential of melody, rhythm, tempo, timbre, dynamics, mode, and harmony, thereby contributing to the construction of musical meaning.
Musical image	→ Integrates artistic meanings into a coherent aesthetic whole.
Musical genre	→ Guides the stylistic, cultural, and functional interpretation of the musical work.
Musical form	→ Organizes the development and structural coherence of the musical image.

Understanding the musical image is not achieved through the isolated analysis of a single element of a musical composition but through the integrated consideration of the entire set of values that structure its artistic discourse. Each of these values activates distinct cognitive and aesthetic mechanisms: *emotional experience* fosters affective engagement with the musical work; the *elements of musical language* provide the expressive foundation of its sonic organization; *musical genre* guides stylistic and functional interpretation; and *musical form* ensures the coherence and

structural development of the artistic discourse. From this perspective, each value contributes to revealing a particular dimension of the musical work; however, only their interrelationship enables a comprehensive understanding of its artistic meaning.

From a pedagogical perspective, this approach has important implications for the organization of the educational process. Understanding the musical image cannot constitute the starting point of instruction but rather the outcome of a gradual process of exploring and integrating the values embodied in a musical composition. The more profoundly learners understand the expressiveness of musical language, the logic of musical form, the characteristics of musical genre, and the affective dimension of a composition, the more clearly the musical image is formed in their consciousness, becoming the expression of an authentic and meaningful understanding of the musical work.

According to P. Bentoiu, the musical image is neither an isolated element of musical discourse nor a mere reflection of artistic content; rather, it represents the expression of the internal unity of the musical work. His conception is based on the premise that music should be understood as an organized process, asserting that "music is … an articulated sound flow" (Bentoiu, 2023, p. 40). This formulation emphasizes that musical discourse is not composed of accidental sequences of sounds but of functional relationships among the elements of musical language, characterized by coherence, continuity, and expressive articulation. Consequently, the artistic value of a musical composition does not reside in the isolated expressiveness of melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, or dynamics, but in the way these elements interact and are organized into a unified structure capable of generating a musical image.

Building upon this conception, P. Bentoiu proposes one of the most insightful musicological definitions of the musical image, stating that "such a possible unity of the musical flow [...] I shall call the musical image" (Bentoiu, 2023, p. 40). Through this definition, the musical image is understood as a unit of artistic cohesion and synthesis, in which all the expressive components of a composition converge to shape artistic meaning. From this perspective, the musical image cannot be identified with any single element of musical language but constitutes the result of their functional integration into an artistic whole. This conception is of particular relevance to the present study, as it supports the view that the values embodied in a musical composition do not function independently but are organized into a unified semantic structure that guides both the understanding and the interpretation of the musical work.

A particularly valuable contribution to music education is Bentoiu's distinction between the simple musical image and the complex musical image. He considers the simple musical image to be the smallest syntactic unit capable of carrying expressive meaning, whereas simple musical images are progressively organized into complex musical images corresponding to the architecture of the musical work as a whole. This approach provides an important theoretical foundation for the analysis of school repertoire, as it enables the educational process to progress from identifying local expressive nuclei toward understanding the global musical image.

Within this framework, the musical image may be interpreted as the integrative expression of the values embodied in a musical composition, since it reunifies emotional experience, the expressiveness of the elements of musical language, musical genre, musical form, and the artistic content of the work into a coherent artistic construct, transforming them into a meaningful whole for both the performer and the listener. Accordingly, the musical image does not represent one value among others within a musical composition; rather, it is the result of the cognitive and pedagogical integration of all the constituent values embodied in the musical work.

4. Understanding the Musical Image through Intermodal Transfer

According to P. Bentoiu, understanding the *musical image* is neither the result of passive reception nor of a mechanical succession of auditory impressions, but rather a complex psychological process of organizing and integrating *musical auditory experience*. He argues that musical perception does not follow the linear unfolding of musical discourse, since attention and memory operate simultaneously in constructing a unified mental representation. Thus, "attention works in collaboration with memory" (Bentoiu, 2023, p. 41), and this interaction enables the continuous reorganization of musical information as the musical discourse unfolds. Consequently, understanding the musical image requires moving beyond the isolated perception of individual sonic events and integrating them into a coherent and meaningful configuration. This perspective anticipates many of the explanations later developed in cognitive psychology and is consistent with B. Teplov's theory of *auditory-musical representations*, E. Gordon's concept of *audiation*, and A. V. Toropova's interpretation of musical perception as being oriented toward the construction of the musical image.

P. Bentoiu further explains that this integration is accomplished through the activity of memory, which continuously reorganizes auditory information into meaningful units. In this context, he states that "memory makes certain pauses in order to regroup

the traversed path into a single image" (Bentoiu, 2023, p. 41). Accordingly, the musical image does not emerge through the successive accumulation of auditory impressions but through their restructuring into a unified cognitive synthesis.

The process of music reception is described by the author as both discontinuous and anticipatory. P. Bentoiu emphasizes that "the perception of music does not occur in perfect continuity, but in a succession of phases" (Bentoiu, 2023, p. 42), demonstrating that understanding does not arise from the mere temporal succession of sounds but from their organization into meaningful units. Moreover, the listener does not merely integrate previous musical auditory experience but continuously projects meaning onto the subsequent unfolding of the musical discourse. Through this observation, P. Bentoiu identifies one of the *fundamental mechanisms of musical understanding*—anticipation—an idea that was later developed in Edwin Gordon's *theory of audiation* as well as in contemporary research on musical expectancy.

In his analysis of the psychological mechanisms underlying music reception, P. Bentoiu assigns a decisive role to the processes of synthesis. He argues that the musical image is not the outcome of the successive analysis of individual sonic elements, because "the mind performs an act of synthesis from the very beginning" (Bentoiu, 2023, p. 44). Consequently, "the sonic material is not received analytically but synthetically, as a unified image" (Bentoiu, 2023, p. 45). This conception places the musical image at the level of a global configuration constructed through the simultaneous integration of melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and timbral relationships. The author further explains that the musical image can be regarded as fully constituted only when the musical discourse reaches a point of stability and closure, which accounts for his assertion that the image is formed only when "a point of repose" has been reached (Bentoiu, 2023, p. 45). From this perspective, understanding the musical image emerges as the outcome of a continuous process of cognitive integration in which perception, memory, anticipation, and synthesis operate in a complementary manner to construct the artistic meaning of the musical work.

From a psychological perspective, understanding the musical image begins with the attribution of meaning to musical discourse. B. Teplov argues that music cannot generate an authentic aesthetic experience before it becomes an object that is understood and invested with meaning by the listener. In his words, "before music can become for the child an object of aesthetic perception and emotion, it must first become an object that is understood and endowed with semantic content" (Teplov, 1947, p. 6). This idea demonstrates that the musical image does not emerge

spontaneously during listening but is progressively constructed through the cognitive processing of artistic content, thereby providing the foundation for both musical understanding and subsequent aesthetic experience.

B. Teplov's conception complements P. Bentoiu's musicological perspective by explaining the psychological mechanism underlying musical perception. He maintains that the distinctive feature of musical experience does not lie in the isolated perception of sounds but in perceiving their organization as the expression of artistic content. Accordingly, "what is specific to musical experience is the perception of the sonic fabric as the expression of a particular content," meaning that the listener perceives music as a bearer of meaning rather than as a succession of acoustic phenomena (Teplov, 1947, p. 7). Within this framework, the musical image may be understood as the result of integrating sonic relationships into a unified semantic configuration, a process in which perception, memory, and musical experience collectively contribute to understanding the artistic meaning of the musical work.

In the contemporary literature on music education, understanding a musical work is approached from the perspective of its multidimensional exploration, extending beyond the exclusive analysis of the elements of musical language. J. R. Barrett argues that music education should facilitate the transition "from merely being exposed to music to genuinely encountering it," since musical experience acquires depth only through the exploration of the relationships among the musical work, its cultural context, its artistic expressiveness, and the listener's personal experience (Barrett, 2023, p. 48). From this perspective, understanding music does not consist in accumulating isolated information about the composer or the elements of musical language; rather, it is the gradual construction of a meaningful experience in which the different dimensions of the musical work complement one another.

To support this approach, Barrett proposes *The Facets Model*, a heuristic framework designed for the systematic exploration of musical works. She explains that the model "invites students and teachers to take stock of what is known and felt while also serving as a launching pad for new avenues of inquiry" (Barrett, 2023, p. 50). Consequently, understanding music becomes a process of progressive discovery in which each question opens new connections between aesthetic experience and conceptual understanding. J. R. Barrett thus shifts the emphasis from the psychological explanation of musical understanding to its pedagogical organization, demonstrating that the musical image can be progressively constructed through the systematic investigation of the constitutive dimensions of a musical work. In this

respect, *The Facets Model* provides a heuristic framework that guides learners from observing musical elements toward an integrated understanding of artistic meaning.

E. Gordon's conception offers a cognitive perspective on musical understanding, grounded in the analogy between language development and the development of musical competence. He states that "although music is a literature, not a linguistic language because it has no grammar, children learn music much the same way they learn language" (Gordon, 2013, p. 16). From this perspective, music is not acquired through the accumulation of knowledge about musical language but through the progressive internalization of tonal and rhythmic relationships, which enables the construction of musical understanding.

To explain this process, E. Gordon introduces the concept of *audiation*, defining it as the process through which music is "heard and comprehended silently when the sound is no longer or may never have been physically present" (Gordon, 2013, p. 34). He further summarizes this idea in the statement that has become central to his theory: "Audiation is to music what thought is to language" (Gordon, 2013). Accordingly, audiation does not refer merely to inner hearing or the memorization of sounds but to the cognitive process through which musical relationships are recognized, organized, and integrated into a coherent structure of meaning. In this sense, audiation constitutes the internal cognitive mechanism underlying the understanding of musical language.

This perspective naturally complements P. Bentoiu's conception of the musical image. Whereas P. Bentoiu explains the musical image as the outcome of an act of psychological synthesis, Edwin Gordon explains the cognitive mechanism that makes this synthesis possible. During *audiation*, the listener establishes relationships among the elements of musical discourse, relates them to prior musical experience, and anticipates their subsequent development, thereby giving rise to a coherent and meaningful musical image. Musical understanding is therefore not limited to the accurate reproduction of sounds but involves the construction of a mental structure capable of sustaining the expressive meaning of music.

From the perspective of the present study, Gordon's theory provides the cognitive framework necessary for explaining intermodal transfer in the process of understanding the musical image. Audiation organizes musical relationships and attributes meaning to them, resulting in the formation of an internal musical image that is sufficiently stable to be expressed through other modes of representation. At this stage, intermodal transfer emerges as the process through which the musical

image is translated, reorganized, and expressed through verbal language, bodily movement, visual representation, or other symbolic forms without losing its expressive and semantic core. Through this process of transformation, the musical image is not merely externalized but also verified, restructured, and further elaborated, leading to a deeper and more conscious understanding of musical content. Accordingly, *audiation* may be regarded as the cognitive mechanism underlying musical understanding, whereas intermodal transfer represents the pedagogical mechanism through which this understanding is consolidated, expanded, and creatively expressed through complementary artistic languages.

Intermodal transfer is characterized by its integrative, transformative, creative, and reflective nature, as it facilitates the transition of the musical image from internal representation to multiple forms of artistic and cognitive expression. This process does not involve a mere change in the mode of expression but rather the transformation of an already understood musical content into another representational system while preserving its expressive and semantic core. During this transformation, the tonal, rhythmic, and expressive relationships organized through *audiation* are reinterpreted through verbal language, bodily movement, visual representation, visual art, or dramatic expression, each representational mode revealing new dimensions of the musical content. From a cognitive perspective, intermodal transfer possesses a representational character because it operates on already established auditory-musical representations, and a heuristic character because each new transformation generates additional connections, thereby restructuring and deepening the understanding of the musical image. At the same time, its experiential and interdisciplinary character transforms the learner from a recipient of the musical message into an active participant in the construction of artistic meaning, fostering the integration of perceptual, cognitive, affective, and expressive dimensions into a unified aesthetic experience. In this sense, intermodal transfer should be understood not merely as a methodological procedure in music education but as a pedagogical mechanism for consolidating and developing the understanding of the musical image, through which it is verified, enriched, and creatively expressed in the complementary languages of the arts. Based on the theoretical perspectives discussed above, the proposed conceptual model synthesizes the functional relationships among auditory perception, auditory-musical representations, audiation, the musical image, and intermodal transfer (Figure 2).

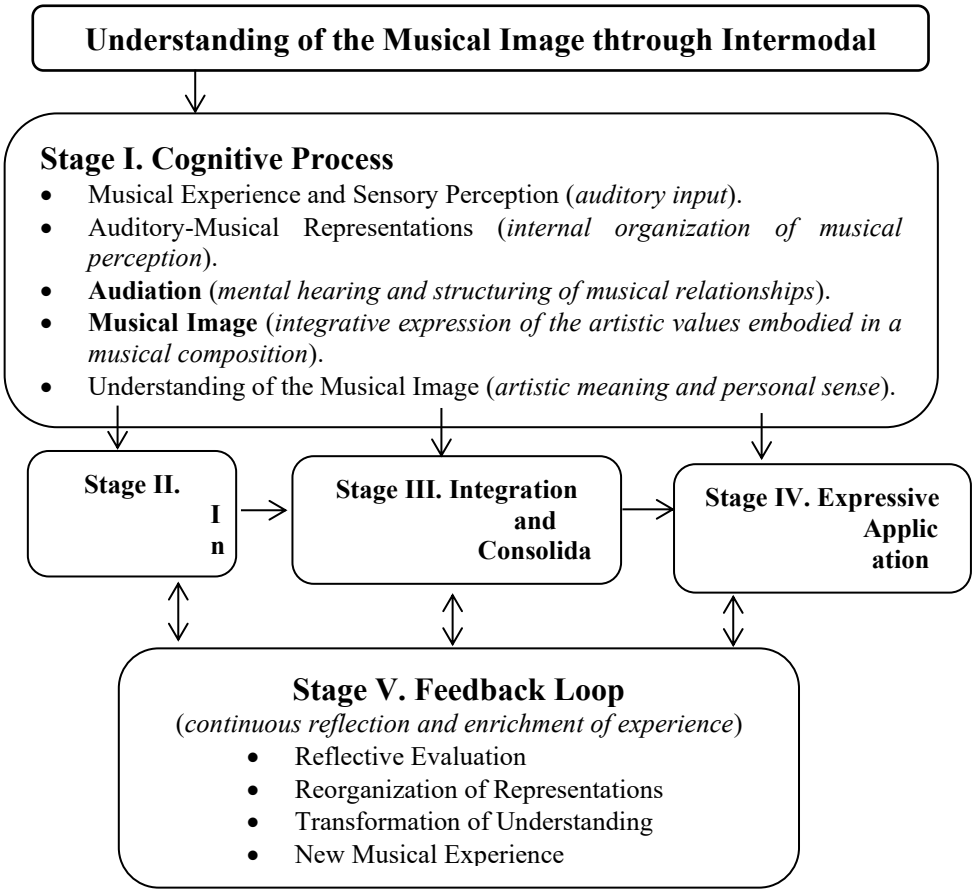


Figure 2. Conceptual Model of the Understanding of the Musical Image through Intermodal Transfer

Within the framework of the present study, intermodal transfer should not be equated with interdisciplinarity, integrated learning, or STEAM approaches, since it does not describe relationships among disciplines, curricular content, or domains of knowledge. Rather, it denotes a cognitive mechanism of understanding through which the same musical image, once internalized and endowed with meaning, is translated and reconfigured through different modes of representation—verbal, visual, motor, affective, or symbolic—while preserving its semantic and expressive core. In the present study, *intermodal transfer* is introduced as an original conceptual construct that explains the cognitive and pedagogical process through which an already understood musical image is transformed into complementary modes of artistic representation while preserving its semantic and expressive core.

5. Conclusions

The comparative analysis of the psychological, musicological, and pedagogical perspectives has demonstrated that the understanding of the musical image constitutes an integrative cognitive process that extends beyond the level of auditory perception and leads to the construction of the artistic meaning of a musical work. The study has demonstrated the complementarity of the conceptions advanced by B. Teplov, P. Bentoiu, and E. Gordon, showing that auditory perception, auditory-musical representations, and *audiation* operate successively and complementarily in the formation and understanding of the musical image.

An important outcome of the study is the development of a conceptual model of the understanding of the musical image, according to which auditory perception provides the initial sonic experience, *audiation* organizes and interprets musical relationships, and the musical image represents the integrated expression of this cognitive activity. The proposed model explains not only the nature of the musical image but also the cognitive mechanism through which it is constructed and understood.

The study also substantiates the role of intermodal transfer as a pedagogical mechanism for consolidating and deepening the understanding of the musical image. Unlike interdisciplinarity or integrated learning, intermodal transfer involves the transformation of an already understood musical image into other expressive languages while preserving its semantic and expressive core, thereby becoming the creative manifestation of authentic musical understanding. By integrating the concepts of musical image, auditory-musical representations, *audiation*, and intermodal transfer, the study extends the theoretical framework of music education and provides conceptual guidelines for designing educational approaches aimed at fostering the understanding of the musical image and the meaningful construction of musical understanding.

The originality of the study lies in conceptualizing the *musical image* as the integrative expression of the *artistic values embodied in a musical composition* and in developing a *theoretical model of the understanding of the musical image*, which explains the functional relationships among auditory perception, auditory-musical representations, audiation, and intermodal transfer. Furthermore, the present study introduces the concept of *intermodal transfer* as an original conceptual construct that explains the pedagogical process through which an already understood musical image is transformed into complementary modes of artistic representation while preserving its semantic and expressive core. Within the proposed model, audiation

provides the *cognitive mechanism underlying the construction of musical meaning*, whereas intermodal transfer represents the pedagogical mechanism through which the understanding of the musical image is consolidated, enriched, and creatively expressed through complementary artistic languages.

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