

To what extent is the mental health and wellbeing of Eastern European Migrants connected to music?

by Audrius Cerkasovas

Personal profile

My name is Audrius. I came from Lithuania to the UK 18 years ago and have had a huge variety of experiences/job roles including my current role community interpreter, which I enjoy the most. I speak 5 languages, however interpreting and translating 3. I'm passionate about what I do, I've found my place in the local/wider communities and would like to do more for them and make a difference. I am also passionate about music and sports.

As an ambassador and a community researcher, I'd like the voice of the ethnic minorities to be heard, for them to feel, be equal and fully accepted. In order to do this and be fully inclusive I go above and beyond whenever interpreting, while meeting the code of ethics criteria.

The ethnic minority communities have a lack of services they can access, either due to language barriers or lack of information/opportunities available to them. I wish to address this by fulfilling this role as Ambassador/Community researcher to my full potential.

My personal weakness is I strive for perfection and sometimes this gives me a headache. I am great at delivering verbal communication, but I struggle to put my thoughts in writing.

I am confident, competent, energetic, reliable, enjoy meeting new people. I adapt to any environment and would like to use my skills to contribute positively to any work situation. I am straightforward with a positive attitude and a friendly disposition. I always follow an ethos, treat people how you like to be treated.

I do have a humorous side which builds a great rapport with people.

I'm a big believer/practitioner of power of thought. If you put your mind to something you can achieve it. I also believe the music can play huge part in individual's life both, mentally and physically.

We as interpreters, ambassadors, community researchers do things for people, not because of what we can get in return, but because of who we are and the value we add for others.

Presenting the awareness being researched

There is nothing new that I'd like to introduce you to, however I want to raise awareness and I guess gently remind us all about the beauty and the incredible power of music. For this reason, I decided to research how music affects the well-being of a group of people that I have a close connection with.

I believe many people know the benefits of music and what it does to their mental health, physical health, and wellbeing, but most of them do not necessarily apply nor use music consciously in a way to enhance their well-being.

To narrow it down, I have chosen to dig deeper and spread the word, just like you may share some good news, facts or results with someone you know who knows someone. It could spread like a virus, but in this case, more like arranged sounds put together in order to make you feel relaxed, joyful, motivated, sleepy, perhaps inspired.

My assumption at the beginning of research was I thought there will be a deep connection among eastern European migrants to folk music, however it turned out not to be the case.

My research question is,

To what extent is the mental health and wellbeing of Eastern European Migrants connected to music?

I decided to find participant for my interviews and focus group from different parts of Eastern Europe. In doing so, I had an opportunity to hear them all on how they are affected by daily life routines and what meaning the music brings to them. By carrying out this research, although I had suspected that music would be important to them, I definitely had my eyes and ears and mind opened more and was able to fully investigate my research question.

This research as mentioned above will hopefully raise awareness to how people can improve their focus and in general be happier, and healthier. I also hope that this research helps to add an interesting perspective to our knowledge of how music can impact the wellbeing of Eastern European migrants here in the UK.

Literature review

I have conducted my literature review on how music can be helpful in relation to people's mental health and wellbeing. Music improves people's daily lives by them engaging with, listening to, playing, singing and dancing. I carried out research, found supporting information to raise awareness of the benefits of music. I have learnt there are so many scientifically proven ways that show all the benefits of music for mental health.

For tens of thousands of years people had some sort of music. There was bird song, people had sticks to use to make noise/rhythm, animal skin to make a drum. By putting sounds in order, they were creating a rhythm and some sort of melody. From the rhythm evolved a dance. From the rhythm and dance, song was created, folk song ingrained in different cultures and countries.

Stanborough (Stanborough, 2020) states that in 2009, archaeologists excavating a cave in southern Germany uncovered a flute carved from a vulture's wing bone. The delicate artifact is the oldest known musical instrument on earth — indicating that people have been

making music for over 40,000 years. Although we can't be sure exactly when human beings began listening to music, scientists do know something about *why* we do. Listening to music benefits us individually and collectively. Here's what research tells us about the power of music to improve our physical, mental, and emotional health (Stanborough, 2020).

Music literally changes the brain. Neurological researchers have found that listening to music triggers the release of several neurochemicals that play a role in brain function and mental health:

- dopamine, a chemical associated with pleasure and "reward" centres
- stress hormones like cortisol
- serotonin and other hormones related to immunity
- oxytocin, a chemical that fosters the ability to connect to others

Eastern European folk music called Romani comes from Russian traveller gypsies brought back from Northern India. Apart from Romani music for local use, in Eastern Europe a separate Romani music originated for entertainment at parties and celebrations. This music drew its themes from Hungarian, Romanian, Russian and other sources. Eastern European music and folk music are very similar in every single country of Eastern Europe. I am from Lithuania and I have played Lithuanian and Russian folk music as a musician. Music has been with us for tens of thousands of years and will continue to be with us till the end of time. For the last 30 years my mother was telling me that if you sing and dance you will be happy and healthy, and I've been doing that ever since. Even though a lot of people think that they can't hold a note or sing, it doesn't mean that they can't express themselves in these ways. It is proven that releasing the sound or reaching the note can make a difference to wellbeing.

Williams (2020) suggests that there is research to prove that music is effective in decreasing stress levels by reducing hormone cortisol levels in the body and that they have a direct positive effect much like an anti-depressant. He also makes the claim that you receive a natural high from playing music for fifteen minutes and that your brain releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter that leads to a state of excitement, joy, and happiness. Thirdly, Williams states that there is research to prove that specific music compositions and songs can release dopamine and serotonin in your brain and as a result, you will experience feelings of sheer happiness, joy, and well-being. Similarly, learning to play music also releases norepinephrine that sparks feelings of euphoria. Williams states that there is proven research that shows

symptoms of depression started to decrease due to a keen sense of relaxation after a group of individuals listened to and played music.

Williams (2020) also states that a study shows that classical music is effective to create positive moods, while heavy metal and techno music increases the severity of the depressive symptoms.

We as humans, know the benefits of music, but not necessarily know how huge they can be.

I have interviewed 3 people and seen a focus group of 6. I tried to gather participants from a range of countries in Eastern Europe to discuss the connection of music to their mental health and wellbeing. Music has shown a profound link and I am positively sure this is the case for the majority of the world's population.

Although many migrants may face difficulties in our lives in the UK, our relationship with music is something that gives us energy and uplifts our spirits. Music also connects us, providing us an opportunity to express ourselves in the way we love.

Music for change (2020)

The **Safe and Sound** programme, Canterbury-based **Music for Change started in 1997** and since 2005 has been working with young people, refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers from Europe. Safe and Sound also created close work with Music In Detention, Music for change have been bringing international music and artists to communities to change public attitudes to developing countries, providing positive role models of international diversity and educating people about different cultures.

This work was supported by Sing Up, the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, produced by Youth Music with AMV.BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, supported by Government. Music for Change found that it was having an impact with its music workshops on the way young people think and respond to migrant refugees and asylum seekers. The Safe and Sound project involved working with local residents to improve awareness and understanding of immigration and the challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers, which is an important aid to integration into host communities.

Enabling people to see a migrant as a *person* is an important part of Music for Change's work.

Since 2007 Music in Detention started to use music to improve the emotional wellbeing of immigration detainees. Music is universal; it transcends language, it faces inward and outward, both a social activity and a direct line to our emotions.

I have added the quotes below because I believe they are inspirational, reflective, interesting, informative and show the expression of a wide range of thinkers from all walks of life, from different historical periods of times how important music is to everybody. We can learn that Music is in the lives of everybody and is a fundamental piece needed in life. I found these quotes give more supportive claims about the core questions being researched.

“Music — what a powerful instrument, what a mighty weapon!” – [Maria August von Trapp](#)

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything.” – [Plato](#)

[Albert Einstein](#) declared, “If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician.”

“Music is powerful. As people listen to it, they can be affected. They respond.” – [Ray Charles](#)

“Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without.” – [Confucius](#)

Summary:

My primary research is related to the positive impacts of music for Eastern European migrants and has identified the power and influence of music to support mental health and well-being.

The focus group that I facilitated and 3 separate interviews that I held, had many mutual views relating to the benefits that music has provided them with in their lives.

In summary I found that the articles referred to show proven research that music is fundamental to mental health and well-being for everyone. I carried out further primary research which shows the proven benefits of music.

Research methods

I started by calling and texting some people I know, not to ask them to participate, but to ask them if they know somebody from Eastern Europe who'd like to share their thoughts about music and the connection to their wellbeing and mental health. Ideally, I wanted to make sure I interviewed people I don't know that well or people that I have spoken to or seen only once or twice. By doing so, I felt it was the right thing to do as without knowing them well I could be totally impartial and it made sense to me.

The questions for the interviews were:

- 1) How would you describe your general state of wellbeing?

Prompt: how's life in general? Work/life balance

- 2) Do you ever listen to music when you feeling down or low?
- 3) What kind of music you like to listen?
- 4) How does this music help you?
- 5) Is there a special memory attached, or some link, or nostalgia to the music you prefer to listen to?
- 6) Could you tell me something the way you listen?
- 7) Anything else you'd like to say how significant folk or any other music is to your life?

Prompt: is this therapeutic for you, do you get inspired, feelings you get, how would you feel if you did not have the music, or the world did not have the music?

Focus group questions:

- 1) What meaning the music bring to you?
- 2) How does the music make you feel?
- 3) What's your favourite piece of music and why?

The participants were from the few different countries in Eastern Europe: Lithuania, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Bulgaria, ranging from all sorts of occupations, characters and perceptions to life.

The interviews were held at the interviewees houses with arranged times suitable for them. I took into account their priorities and made sure they could spare me 10-15 min.

The focus group of 6 was a bit more challenging to organise, because everybody had to agree to come in the same day at the same time. Although, not easy to organise the meeting in the current pandemic climate, we were still able to agree with everybody to attend and gather in Hove Park. The focus group session lasted 45 minutes.

The participants ages were ranging from early 30's to late 50's for the interviews and the focus group of 6 from late 20's to early 60's. There were 4 men and 4 women, who have been in the UK for between 10 to 20 years.

A couple of people dropped out of the focus group, however at the last minute I got lucky and was able to replace them. I must add the whole experience was brilliant and all the participants were more than happy to share their thoughts, memories and feelings.

Ethical considerations

According to Ethics of Care principles (Ward and Gahagan,2010), I took these into consideration in the following ways while carrying out my research.

I made sure that **Trust** was there between myself and the participants. Although I did not know most of them really well, I was able to explain what would happen during the interviews and focus group session. I introduced the theme and explained carefully what research was all about. I also, was able to assure them about confidentiality and make sure the participants were going to be comfortable and any concerns or worries would be addressed straight away.

Another big issue to consider was **Responsibility**. I needed to gain trust to allow the sessions to be recorded. I explained how I will use the recordings and what I will do with them after. Also, made sure with the participants that if they got stuck with any of the questions, I would support them by offering some helpful prompts. That definitely made the

participants feel stress free and more confident. Also, I made sure I carefully represented their expressions and views in the finished report.

Finally, **Attentiveness**, we agreed to the timescale previously discussed and met at the participants houses in their gardens. For the focus group, I made sure that social distancing was considered and we met outside to make sure we were Covid compliant. People always have things to do and I totally understand how that works. So, stopping the participants from their daily routines and chores wasn't my intentions at all. Although at the end of our interviews, we wanted to continue with the conversations.

Findings and analysis

I interviewed and communicated with Eastern European Migrants from various different walks of life with different perceptions.

My research participants really stressed how important, uplifting, inspiring, therapeutic and enabling music is to them.

My findings from all the research, focus groups and individual interviews I have been engaged with show the following:

How music is uplifting:

During the interviews that I have conducted I found that the general consensus revealed how music has an uplifting and essential power to the participants. The supportive scientific evidence that I found in my literature review that backs this up.

Many participants shared similar views on the benefits from music for their mental health and well-being. These are some expressions I'd like to share:

"It lifts me up. It clears the head, definitely feel better." (a coffee shop worker)

"Music can lift your mood up, take back to the places, bring back the nostalgia, flood with emotions, bring back the love memories, happy company, time, the place and so on." (a bank worker)

"It fills me with fun, it's like energy drink, but much better." (a digger driver/operator)

"Definitely energy, it empowers me, I feel happy," (self-employed tradesman)

"If I feel good, the music will make me feel great." (self-employed tradesman)

These quotes show how passionately the participants expressed themselves when speaking about the joy and uplift that listening to music brings them. They said that when their lives were difficult times music lifts them and as the last quote shows, when this participant feels good, music makes him feel great.

Music can inspire;

While conducting my literature research I found a study shows that classical music is effective to create positive moods.

“Classical music in general is my favourite type of music.” (a cleaner)

Researchers found that dopamine is released when listening to music, a chemical associated with pleasure. Research shows that you receive a natural high from playing music, learning to play music also releases norepinephrine that sparks feelings of euphoria.

The following extracts from my research, indicate the inspirational power of music that some participants spoke about:

“I listen to the music when I want to improve something, sort of helping to do another push when I am weak or slow” (a digger driver)

“It relaxes me and sometimes inspires me.” (a carer)

Equivalent to therapy

Music has shown a profound link to mental stability as well as physically and it can be therapeutic one way or another. Some people listen to music when they feeling down, while others when they feel good. Music literally changes the brain. As mentioned, neurological researchers have found that listening to music triggers the release of several neurochemicals that play a role in brain function and mental health, stress hormones like cortisol, serotonin and other hormones related to immunity, oxytocin, a chemical that fosters the ability to connect to others. Music has the power to improve our physical, mental, and emotional health.

It is interesting therefore that my participants expressed the deeper connections that listening to music gave them, even comparing music to therapy, to taking medicine or to a meditative state:

“It keeps me out of depression, I am always motivated to do something, I am relaxing my mind from what’s happening around.” (a coffee shop worker)

“Like a therapy takes the headache away.” (a mental health nurse)

“Soothing.” (a mental health nurse)

“I imagine myself in the mountains somewhere high, no one’s around and I am in complete harmony.”

“When I get bad memories or just having some negativity around me, I take a “pill”, (listen to music, move the body, shake the booty) like a doctor prescribed....” (a carer)

“I work as a nurse at NHS, always advising my patients to listen to music.” (NHS worker)

How important music is:

I found the articles I researched referred to scientific proof that music is fundamental to mental health and well-being for everyone. Releasing the sound or reaching the note can make a difference to wellbeing. Music is effective in decreasing stress levels by reducing hormone cortisol levels in the body and that has a direct positive effect much like an anti-

depressant. Specific music compositions and songs can release dopamine and serotonin in your brain and as a result, you will experience feelings of sheer happiness, joy, and well-being. Symptoms of depression started to decrease due to a keen sense of relaxation after a group of individuals listened to and played music.

My interviews and focus group affirm the importance of music in the lives of my participants. They expressed themselves powerfully when speaking about what music means to them. They found the words to express how fundamental music was to their well-being. Their expressions reveal that music is more than just something that they enjoy, it brings colour and energy and meaning to their lives.

“I can’t wake up without music in the morning ... music is my life.” (NHS worker)

“Without the music the Earth will die.” (NHS worker)

“Definitely without music the world be grey, wet, sad and empty place.” (a cleaner)

“Music always helps, makes life more colourful, I use music as a tool to do anything in my life. If I had to make a choice between losing my site or hearing, I’d choose site, at least I could hear the music.” (a digger driver)

We can learn from the findings above that music is fundamental to mental health and wellbeing for everyone in one form or another. Music has multiple abilities in reaching people from all walks of life and improving their existence. We can take positivity from music in our everyday lives and learn to appreciate the benefits it brings. Music is a medicine.

I wanted to interview a group of Eastern European Migrants to represent their views on music and the connection it has to their mental health. I wanted to raise awareness that music has powerful benefits. Music is uplifting, inspiring, therapeutic and important, it literally enriches and prolongs your life. Their expression of the positive power of music in their lives amazed me.

They have clearly expressed what the literature has told us already, that music is good for your **body, mind and soul**.

Conclusion

My initial interest to do this research was very close to my heart, still is. For many years I knew something and been aware of what music does to you, how it plays a significant and important to your entire being. But recently my desire to dive in a bit deeper has increased, to try to make sense of the effects that the music gives.

I have always wanted to explore further and find out, what’s happening, how music works, why are we experiencing all sorts of feelings whilst listening to, playing, singing or dancing to it. I realised I love music when I was about... actually when I was a baby my parents told me the only music that calmed me down was “Boney M”, 70’s great disco group and mainly the song “By the rivers of Babylon”.

I wanted to understand how people, particular Eastern European migrants, perceive music; what do they feel, how important music is to them and how they use it, express it, or is there any difference between who you are and where are you from. This is why I interviewed and communicated with Eastern European Migrants from various different countries in Eastern Europe.

What I know for sure is that music definitely brings people together from all walks of life no matter, at any age, black or white, sick or healthy, happy or sad, down or uplifted, broken or inspired. Music is a part of every known society, past and present, it is common to all human cultures across the globe.

The work I have conducted brought me great pleasure and knowledge that I will be able to share with anybody. I know for sure there is more to music and how it helps in a wide range of different ways, methods, techniques. There are specific studies and professions to explore this even deeper, however you don't have to know them all to experience the effects of music, just feel it and go with it.

References

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Appendix:

Interview 1 Lithuanian woman

How would you describe your general state of wellbeing? (how are you?)

- I am good more or less, always could be better.

Work – life balance?

- Well, work in excess of life balance if I am honest, but at the moment is what it is. Some day will get better.
- I am coping with the load of work and hoping for better days to come really 😊.

Do you ever listen to music when you feeling down or low? Can you explain the situation where listening to music might help you to feel better?

- Sometimes, I do not have to be down or low. It depends on a mood. I don't have to be happy nor sad, I have to want it or need it just like to rest.
- It does not have to be some sort of special, very renown or famous piece of music. It can be for example, solo piano accompanied by the orchestra, opera, native South American Indian folk flutes, can be quite various. It lifts me up. It clears the head, definitely feel better. The particular melody can be stuck in my head for significant amount of time.

What kind of music do you like to listen? Why? background of music too actually, more sounds, better it is.

- Classical music in general perhaps, not necessarily from specific county. There are known pieces of music that are transformed, remixed, added bits and pieces and made sort of current music. Also, can be performed by different singers to original and yet, still great. There are few musical pieces that can get my attention.
- I don't know why, I just feel the music going through my whole body, feeling my pulse calming, makes me relaxed. There is a group called "Pentatonics", they perform all famous pieces of classical music arranged for few voices and for me brings lots of joy. Headphones, full volume, completely lost in it. Powerful.

How does this music help you? How this particular piece of music makes you feel better?

- Definitely relaxing. Its like having a good swim or splash in the swimming pool.
- Makes me feel mentally, physically good, very therapeutic. I try to hear the full

Is there a special memory attached, or some link, or nostalgia to the music you prefer to listen?

- I don't know, I guess it depends. I cannot give you specific examples.

Could you tell me the way you listen? Is it better whilst jogging, lying down..... and how often?

- For me in bed would be the best way. No one is around, quality headphones on, just me and the music. Totally in it and no view needed. Imagining anything I want....
- Not that often, once or twice per week. Actually, sometimes I can listen to music every evening.

Anything else you'd like to say how significant the music is to your life? Do you get inspired, what feelings you get, how would you feel if you did not have the music, or it didn't exist?

- It's a great pleasure. I do miss a good live symphonic orchestra.
- Improves general wellbeing, cleansing.
- If there is no music, you wouldn't know what that is at all, but definitely without music the world be grey, wet, sad and empty place.
- The music also a medication

Interview 2 Lithuanian man

How would you describe your general state of wellbeing? (how are you?)

- I am good actually, thanks.

Work – life balance?

- Trying all my best to keep it balanced. Life/work, anything else, all the needs required.

Do you ever listen to music when you feeling down or low? Can you explain the situation where listening to music might help you to feel better?

- Yes. Most often the music helps through a long journey, brightens up the monotony, again it can depend on a mood, the music can lift your mood up, take back to the places, bring back the nostalgia, flood with emotions, bring back the love memories, happy company, time, the place and so on.

What kind of music do you like to listen? Why?

- My favourite genre of music is Rock N Roll, I'd say, however I also like dance music, blues, can be a bit wider spectrum, but Rock N Roll is the best.

How does this music help you? How this particular piece of music makes you feel better?

- As I previously mentioned, the music definitely can lift the mood up, also can contribute towards having a better evening. It is linked to me, my family and we are connected to it quite a bit.
- It relaxes me and sometimes inspires me.

Is there a special memory attached, or some link, or nostalgia to the music you prefer to listen?

- "Linkin Park - What I've done" is the song where every time I am listening to it, I get the flash backs straight to their live concert at London's O2 arena, I feel everything I felt at the time in 2008: the spectators, the shouting/screaming, even the smell of the people. Its like having a time machine that takes me there every time I listen to it.
- It is a such pleasant feeling and remembrance of a super great time.

Could you tell me the way you listen? Is it better whilst jogging, lying down..... and how often?

- Yes, whilst walking, driving, at the party of course, whilst having dinner, actually almost all the time... 😊, not in the bathroom, although my son likes it, but yeah, let's say most of the time in/at most of the places 😊.
- 2hours a day, every day, yes it takes huge part of my life. Never paid attention to this before.

Anything else you'd like to say how significant the music is to your life? Do you get inspired, what feelings you get, how would you feel if you did not have the music, or it didn't exist?

- I was actually a Lithuanian folk dancer for 8 years and I know that without the music there would not be any dancing. That's why the music and dancing is very close to my heart. Although I danced more than listened to the music, but you can not separate this from each other. My whole teenage years even more, I was totally addicted to the music, it went hand in hand.
- I know for sure that music helps mental stability as well as physically and it can be therapeutic one way or another. It can be flooded with positive and negative emotions, however mainly with positive.
- No music? No life! However, the music existed for thousands of years, where early people were banging pieces of wooden sticks into the tree trunks or something 😊
- For some people the bird singing can be music to their hearts.

Interview 3 Russian man from Latvia

How would you describe your general state of wellbeing? (how are you?)

- Really good, life's a dream 😊. Its like Heaven, healthy kids, got the jobs, food on the table, we can treat ourselves. What else you can dream about...

Work – life balance?

- My work is a dream, seriously, I sit on my bum for 9 hours and getting paid for it 😊

Do you ever listen to music when you feeling down or low? Can you explain the situation where listening to music might help you to feel better?

- No, but I listen to the music when I want to improve something, sort of helping to do another push when I am weak or slow, for example, in the gym after long day at work, some good old tunes helping me to finish what I came here for.
- I also, listen to music with my kids, they make me laugh when they sing and dance 😊. Then we all sing and dance and it is so uplifting.

What kind of music do you like to listen? Why?

- I call it, "mine kind of music". Good old rap for me is the best. There were few great Russian rappers, but I like all sorts of music, 90's Russian pop groups like, "Laskavij Mai", "Na-Na", "Ivanushkii International",
- I like the beat in rap and rave, it fills me with fun.

How does this music help you? How this particular piece of music makes you feel better?

- Music in general provides me with memories, like taking me back in the day.
- In the gym the "hard" good music tunes helping me to go an extra mile, like energy drink, but much better.

Is there a special memory attached, or some link, or nostalgia to the music you prefer to listen?

- Yes. I remember this special tune, the special girl back in the day, the first dance, the first kiss, the last dance and the last kiss.
- 15 years later we accidentally met in Turkey whilst I was holidaying, what the odds on that one, but most importantly we danced to the same special music tune.
- If it wasn't for the same song, we would have never met again.

Could you tell me the way you listen? Is it better whilst jogging, lying down..... and how often?

- Depending on the mood or situation, the music always finds the way to my daily routine and it does not matter to me some particular way, as long as I am in the mood to listen to music. It can be anywhere, anytime.
- The chosen tunes never make it worse, only better.

Anything else you'd like to say how significant the music is to your life? Do you get inspired, what feelings you get, how would you feel if you did not have the music, or it didn't exist?

- Music is power! I can always calm my kids down with putting "The Gummy Bear" song 😊. Music is everywhere, live, online, "Tik Tok"...
- Music always helps, makes life more colourful.
- At the huge rave parties, people are like robots under the music spell dancing for hours and hours.
- I use music as a tool to do anything in my life. If I had to make a choice between losing my site or hearing, I'd choose site, at least I could hear the music.
- It'd still be the splash of different sounds, like the door squeak, seagulls, and then somebody would put the sounds in order together to make music.

Focus group of 6

The participants are Russian/Lithuanian speakers from the few different countries:

Lithuania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Russia.

What meaning does music bring to you?

Prompt: happiness, creativity, energy, thoughts of home...? Could you tell me what part this music plays in your life and the state of your wellbeing? How important this music to you emotionally and why?

Lithuanian man 1 "Remy"

- Definitely energy, it empowers me, I feel happy, lifts my mood up, especially good music.

Lithuanian man 2

- Happiness, power,
-

Kazakh woman

- It keeps me out of depression, I am always motivated to do something, for example, every morning first thing I do is put on the radio "Capital Brighton", they always play good music. It's brilliant start of the day, bring it on, whatever the day throughs in.
- I don't get tired, I continue to do things I need to do. I am relaxing my mind from what's happening around.

Lithuanian woman

- It depends in what mood I am, can be romantic, something powerful.
- It relaxes a lot.

Bulgarian man "Nic"

- calmness, music can change my mood.
- Me too, I love listening to music in the morning as a starter of my day. I can't wake up without music in the morning, I put TV or "alexa" on. It makes me positive, happy to go to work.
- Music is my life, I can't play, but I am a huge fan.

Russian woman

- Music helps me when I am sad, it's a part of my life. I listen to it at work, whilst driving to work, when cooking.
-

How does the music make you feel?

Prompt: mentally, physically, does it motivate or empower you?

Russian woman

- Sometimes I like nostalgic songs, feeling the nostalgia is good too.
- Makes me relaxed, like a therapy takes the headache away. I also get inspired to do, think, engage with something, it lifts my mood up.

Bulgarian man "Nic"

- When I am upset, angry, or I have been put in a difficult situation, what I do is listening to music, singing to myself and all this definitely makes me feel good.
- Music can make you want to go clubbing big time. Also, can be really relaxing, soothing. I spend my/our evenings with my kids and wife listening to Bulgarian folk and talking to my mum or dad on social media.
- I just want to say, without the music the Earth will die 😊

Lithuanian man 1 "Remy"

- Me too actually, the music puts me on a right track. Even I don't know how to sing, but it does give me a buzz :-). I have a smile to go an extra mile...
- It's like a "good virus".
- For me, I can listen to folk music only live, at the parties, weddings, then it blows me away.
- The music stimulates the brain.
- Please leave music alone 😊

Lithuanian man 2

- Yes, music for me must be loud! Especially when I am in the car, almost to the point where my ear drums explode 😊. When I arrive to work, that music I listened is stuck for the rest of the day, also infecting others with it.
- I want to add what Kazakh woman mentioned, one moment can be great, everything is awesome and suddenly this song or melody that is so sad and nostalgic can, in fact, is bringing me down with some sort of nostalgic memories or just nostalgia.
- Again, it depends on many factors, I guess. Also, the music can mess with your mind, for example, "football's coming home" 😊

Kazakh woman

- When I hear some great tunes I like, I am always making sure to add this to my favourite list. My whole body is sort of ready for action 😊.
- There are few tunes that put me down, from being on a hive to being a bit like what's happened, just a minute ago I was jumping moving around, now I am done,

- no energy. Talking about “Adele”, by trying to shut her up, listing through music channels to find some happier sounds to get on with the day.
- I imagine myself in the mountains somewhere high, no one’s around and I in complete harmony.
- For me the folk is associated with sadness, because I remember my parents playing, singing, dancing folk music. It has a deeper connection.

Lithuanian woman

- When I get bad memories or just having some negativity around me, I take a “pill”, (listen to music, move the body, shake the booty) like a doctor prescribed... 😊. The music definitely motivates and uplifts me. It does get under the skin.
- I like the folk music and miss it actually.

What’s your favourite piece of music and why?

Prompt: artist, band, genre, decade....., how this music is connected to your wellbeing?

Russian woman

- Pop music, meditation music, it’s therapeutic. Most of them all I like Russian music, it means a lot, I understand everything better.
- 80’s and 70’s music takes me back, would like to add actually that “The Hotel California” by “The Eagles” is the most nostalgic and most beautiful song to me, I always remember my husband.

Lithuanian woman

- I listen to any music really, have not got a particular artist, genre nor decade.
- There is nothing bad about the music at all.
- The actual music is totally connected to my wellbeing.

Kazakh woman

- For me, I like older music like Loui Armstrong or 60’s, 70’s. No one sings like this anymore, it gives me goosebumps. Its so charming. I guess alder we become, listening more to meaningful music songs. It connects me so strongly that I feel so great. Definitely good for wellbeing. It’s so close to my heart.

Bulgarian man “Nic”

- Rock, like “Bon Jovi”, “Queen”, “ACDC”, because mainly those are the ballads, slow music. It brings the memories from the past. Of course, I like fast music as well. I just can’t be without the music. It is good to exercise.
- I work as a nurse at NHS, always advising my patients to listen to music.

Lithuanian man 1 “Remy”

- No difference to me what type of music is best. I like rock, pop, jazz, you name it.

- If I feel good, the music will make me feel great. Also, I do feel direct connection to my wellbeing.
-

Lithuanian man 2

- For me it is an impossible thing to single out one song or piece, but if I have to, it would be "The Bohemian Rhapsody" by "Queen". It consists with few genres together in one. Starts with sort of classical touch, continues with rock, elements of pop and on....
- Also, I love "Linkin Park". All of this is a sweetness to my wellbeing.