


**MUSIC THERAPY, IMPROVISATION AND LISTENING: A STUDY ON CREATIVE PRACTICES CENTERED ON SOUND**

**MUSICOTERAPIA, IMPROVISACÃO E ESCUTA: UM ESTUDO SOBRE PRÁTICAS CRIATIVAS CENTRADAS NO SOM**

**MUSICOTERAPIA, IMPROVISACIÓN Y ESCUCHA: UN ESTUDIO SOBRE PRÁCTICAS CREATIVAS CENTRADAS EN EL SONIDO**

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**RESUMO**

Este artigo apresenta reflexões e resultados de uma pesquisa conduzida com o Coletivo Sonus, grupo composto por seis musicoterapeutas que, ao longo de 2024, reuniram-se mensalmente para realizar práticas de improvisação musical livre seguidas de debates reflexivos. Teoricamente fundamentado na orientação musicocentrada, em autores como Nordoff e Robbins (1977), Zuckerkandl (1973) e Rudolf Steiner (2012), o estudo articula os conceito de experiência (Bondía, 2022) e de criatividade musical (Schafer, 2011). O estudo investigou as percepções e transformações subjetivas dos participantes ao vivenciarem a improvisação como fenômeno relacional e terapêutico. Os dados foram coletados por meio de gravações e transcrições das discussões realizadas em grupo focal, e analisados segundo a técnica de análise de conteúdo (Bardin, 2011). A análise revelou quatro categorias temáticas centrais: (a) senso de liberdade criativa; (b) superação lúdica do erro; (c) audição acurada; e (d) consciência sobre si. Os resultados apontam para a expansão da compreensão musical dos participantes, para a superação de paradigmas estéticos hegemônicos e para o fortalecimento dos processos terapêuticos mediados pelo som através da improvisação. A prática improvisacional revelou-se espaço privilegiado para a realização de experiências significativas, nas quais escuta, criação e subjetividade se entrelaçam, contribuindo para o aprofundamento clínico e formativo em musicoterapia.

**Palavras-chave:** Musicoterapia. Improvisação Musical. Orientação Musicocentrada.

**ABSTRACT**

This article presents reflections and findings from a qualitative study conducted with Coletivo Sonus, a group of six music therapists who met monthly throughout 2024 to engage in free musical improvisation sessions followed by reflective discussions. The study is theoretically grounded in a music-centered orientation, drawing on the work of Nordoff and Robbins (1977), Zuckerkandl (1973), and Rudolf Steiner (2012). It integrates the concepts of experience (Bondía, 2022) and musical creativity (Schafer, 2011) to examine improvisation as a relational and therapeutic phenomenon. Data were collected through recordings and

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transcriptions of focus group discussions and analyzed using content analysis (Bardin, 2011). The analysis yielded four central thematic categories: (a) a sense of creative freedom; (b) playful overcoming of error; (c) refined listening; and (d) heightened self-awareness. The results indicate an expansion of participants' musical understanding, a challenging of hegemonic aesthetic paradigms, and a strengthening of therapeutic processes mediated through sound and improvisation. Improvisational practice emerged as a privileged space for meaningful experiences, where listening, creation, and subjectivity intertwine, contributing to both clinical deepening and professional training in music therapy.

**Keywords:** Music Therapy. Musical Improvisation. Music-Centered Orientation.

## RESUMÉN

Este artículo presenta reflexiones y resultados de un estudio realizado con el Colectivo Sonus, un grupo de seis musicoterapeutas que, a lo largo de 2024, se reunieron mensualmente para practicar improvisación musical libre, seguida de debates reflexivos. Con fundamento teórico en enfoques centrados en la música, desarrollados por autores como Nordoff y Robbins (1977), Zuckerkandl (1973) y Rudolf Steiner (2012), el estudio articula los conceptos de experiencia (Bondía, 2022) y creatividad musical (Schafer, 2011). El estudio investigó las percepciones y transformaciones subjetivas de los participantes a medida que experimentaban la improvisación como un fenómeno relacional y terapéutico. Los datos se recopilaban mediante grabaciones y transcripciones de debates de grupos focales y se analizaron mediante análisis de contenido (Bardin, 2011). El análisis reveló cuatro categorías temáticas centrales: (a) sensación de libertad creativa; (b) superación lúdica de errores; (c) escucha precisa; y (d) autoconciencia. Los resultados indican una ampliación de la comprensión musical de los participantes, la superación de paradigmas estéticos hegemónicos y el fortalecimiento de los procesos terapéuticos sonoros a través de la improvisación. La práctica improvisatoria resultó ser un espacio privilegiado para experiencias significativas, donde se entrelazan la escucha, la creación y la subjetividad, contribuyendo a la profundización del desarrollo clínico y educativo en musicoterapia.

**Palabras clave:** Musicoterapia. Improvisación Musical. Consejería Centrada en la Música.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

"Music is able to allow access to depths where spirit and nature are still one again."  
(Emma Jung).

The present work presents reflections on sound possibilities built from free musical improvisation sessions, undertaken by a group of music therapists gathered in the Sonus Collective. This group arose from the participants' interest in undertaking creative and reflective paths, from which they sought to work with musical creation, through improvisations, with a view to therapeutic work, envisioning possible contributions of the so-called Musicocentric orientation to their clinical and personal initiatives.

From the aforementioned practices of musical improvisation, carried out from the perspective of the centrality in the therapeutic power immanent to the sound phenomenon, the Sonus Collective began, as an increment of its work, theoretical studies that, initially, focused on the work of Victor Zuckerkandl (1973), whose reading was articulated with the lectures of Rudolf Steiner (1989) on the deep human experience with sound<sup>4</sup>

For Sales and Freire (2024), Brazilian researchers who are dedicated to the theme of the centrality of the musical phenomenon in the music therapy context, the term "Musicocentrado" has been present in the field of Music Therapy since the eighties, of the twentieth century.

"The term *Music-Centered* appeared publicly for the first time, in the 1980s, in the name of the institute founded by music therapists Barbara Hesser, Helen Bonny and Carolyn Kenny, the "Bonny Foundation: Institute for Musicocentric Therapies" (SALES and FREIRE, 2024, pg. 02)

It is important to emphasize that, in this work, we use the expression "Musicocentric Orientation" as an allusion to a theoretical and philosophical foundation, which sustains several therapeutic initiatives or Music Therapy models, among which we highlight the Guided Image Method, proposed by Helen Bonny, and the Creative Music Therapy of Paul Nordoff and Clive Robbins. Such models seek to value the subjective musical senses of patients in therapeutic processes.

In Brazil, a proposal for a Music-centered model has recently emerged from the Institute of Creativity and Development based in the city of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul. This proposal was prepared by Music Therapist André Brandalise, and is called

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<sup>4</sup> Das Wesen des Musikalischen und das Tonerlebnis im Menschen (Rudolf Steiner Verlag - Dornach/Schweiz)

"Musicocentric Music Therapy Model", resulting from a study process started in 2001 and which has as a milestone the publication of the work "Musicoterapia Músico-Centrada", authored by Brandalise. The elaboration of the aforementioned Music Therapy Model also receives important contributions from names such as Gregório Queiroz and Marina Silva and is configured as the first Brazilian initiative to propose a model for the clinic in Music Therapy.

Among the various strategies that can be used in a process of treatment with music, musical improvisation occupies a prominent place in the clinic, in such a way that in Musicocentric Orientation Music Therapy, improvisations contemplate their own musical aspects, obtained from the relationship of the human being with his musicality. Expressive gestures are observed through musical manifestation, through improvisations in which the patient can express his creativity and spontaneity, correlating the internal representative experience of each one.

Musical improvisations or recreations, structured in a Music Therapy setting, allow the patient to relive, update and resignify situations and emotions, explore and express unspeakable feelings, in addition to reflecting on the 'meaning of life' (Petersen, 2021). From the musical dialogue, typical of a relationship built by creative elements loaded with symbolic meanings that constitutes improvisation, valuable meanings are revealed for the therapeutic process itself, which acquires an experiential character.

The concept of representative, or meaningful, experience is of great importance for the debate on Musicocentric Orientation and for this reason we will discuss this concept below.

## **2 SONICALLY CENTERED EXPERIENCE**

Jorge Larrosa Bondía is a philosopher dedicated to the studies of the educational field and who, above all, is dedicated to the theme of experience. For the aforementioned author, experience is the phenomenon that occurs to the subject, moving and/or moving him, so that he can perceive himself, in his immersion in the unique process that occurs to him, that is, in the very unfolding of the experience.

Experience, the possibility that something happens to us or touches us, requires a gesture of interruption, a gesture that is almost impossible these days: it requires stopping to think, stopping to look, stopping to listen, thinking more slowly, looking more slowly, and listening more slowly; to stop to feel, to feel more slowly, to linger on details, to suspend opinion, to suspend judgment, to suspend will, to suspend the automatism of action, to cultivate attention and delicacy, to open our eyes and ears,

to talk about what happens to us, to learn slowness, to listen to others, to cultivate the art of encounter, to be very silent, to be patient and to give oneself time and space. (Bondia, 2022, p. 25).

We understand, therefore, that the phenomenon of experience is a complex phenomenon which requires an attitude, a care, on the part of the subjects who seek to experience something in order to, in some way, achieve valuable effects for their own lives and for the lives of others.

In order to move towards the complexity of music as a phenomenon of experience, we believe it is also pertinent to evoke what Rudolf Steiner says about the sense of hearing, which, according to his approach, Anthroposophy, is one of the four "higher senses". For Steiner (2012), the sense of hearing is on a different, higher level than the other senses, since through it it becomes possible to perceive the interiority of what is external to us. Steiner explains the experience of hearing in the following terms:

We relate even more intimately to the interior of the external world through the sense of hearing. Sound already reveals to us a lot of things about the internal configuration of the outside (...) when I make something sound, I perceive, in a way, intimately the interior of what is sounding (Steiner, 2012, p.13).

For Steiner, therefore, hearing is on the same level as the "sense of the other's self", which in our culture is called empathy, and which is the ability to get closer to what the other feels. Hearing and the sense of the self of the other are higher senses alongside the sense of self and the sense of thought.

Zuckerlandl (1973) points to an important characteristic present in the relationship of people in the West with the sound phenomenon: "when we think of music as art, we isolate it from the world of everyday reality; when we consider it as the art of sounds, we isolate it from the other arts." (p. 12). In his reflections, therefore, the author poses the problem arising from the distancing of music from everyday reality, since it is placed as "art", such a form of human expression moves away from the rituals that primarily constituted its presence in social life.

Blacking (2000) clarifies in a pertinent way the relevance of music in everyday life, even indicating that the social fabric itself is determinant for the elaboration of sound:

We will not be able to explain the principles of a composition or the effects of music until we are able to understand well the relationships between musical experience and

human experience itself (...) I have come to understand the society in which I live better from the moment I have better understood the music in it (Blacking, 2000, p.35).

In this way, it seems to us that the isolation of music as a consumer product leads us to perceive only partially its importance in the constitution of the societies in which we live, making the sound experience not deeply linked with the human experience, since the consumption of musical products gives rise to superficial relations, of a market nature.

For Nachmanovith (2012) *apud* Woituski *et al* (2017), improvisation is a game, which is related to playing, used from our experiences and objects that we love to express ourselves in a free, creative and fun way. In music, the act of improvising enables the encounter with musicality in a communicative function, that is, it is the attempt to take risks, to enter an unknown field, placing oneself in front of any obstacle, with expressive and creative intent.

Considering, therefore, that music has a strong presence in social life and, also, glimpsing that such presence can interfere in the perception that each individual has of himself and his creative potentialities, we launch ourselves into this reflection in search of sound experiences, communally realized, in order to reflect on the possibilities that the act of creating music spontaneously, that is, improvising can bring to the way people take ownership of themselves and become aware of the reality in which they are inserted. The present study will certainly present possibilities or reflexive reverberations for the scope of clinical practice in Music Therapy.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The present work employs a qualitative approach to investigate the perceptions of the participants of the Sonus Collective, in moments of free improvisation musical practices, in which the expressive needs of the group members were manifested through collective musical interventions. This group was formed in the first half of 2024 and had the participation of 06 music therapists who, monthly, met to perform a moment of free musical improvisation, followed by debate.

In addition to the meetings for the practice of improvisation, the *Sonus* Collective also held theoretical study meetings which take place in an *online* format. Since the researchers were also members of the aforementioned group (*Coletivo Sonus*), the present reflection is part of the list of what is understood as an experience report, which "situates the knowledge resulting from a process; in other words, it can be considered in an intersection of processes, from the collectivized to the most singular" (Daltro and Faria, 2019, p.226). The main focus

of the research process is the narratives elaborated throughout the process by the participants of the investigated group.

It is important to emphasize that the present study investigates how the members of the Collective *Sonus* perceived and reflected on the practices of free improvisation and that the focus of this research lies in the reflexive narratives elaborated after the moments of improvisation, in the        The needs for individual expression are manifested through collectively shared musical interventions. Here the study is inserted in the field of narratives.

We point out that this investigative work effort comprises, as Lüdke and André point out, that the research:

[...] it inevitably brings with it the load of values, preferences, interest and principles that guide the researcher. [...] Thus, the vision of the world, the starting points, the foundations for understanding and explaining this world will influence the way he proposes his research or, in other words, the assumptions that guide his thinking will also guide his research approach. (2020, p.03)

Thus, we sought to collect impressions, perceptions and reflections from the participants of *the Sonus* Collective, which, throughout the year 2024 (from May to December), followed a path made up of shared sound experiences, through which it was sought to establish connections with the theoretical studies carried out by the aforementioned group on one of the main theoretical bases related to the Musicocentric orientation, the work *Sound and Symbol*, by Victor Zuckerkandl (1973).

The research methodology adopted here seeks to value the voice of the subjects of the musical experience, as we understand that each individual has an internal "researcher" who advances when learning in environments of reflective interactions, because, as Josso points out: "it is a question, first of all, of admitting that there is a researcher in each one of us and that this researcher only advances to the extent that he is able to learn himself, thanks to or in spite of interactions with others." (Josso, 2004, p. 166).

Although the present study does not delve into the individual histories of the participants, it seeks to use their reflections from the group musical practice experienced in the *Sonus* Collective, to build a reflective narrative about the therapeutic possibilities of improvisation work, which took place over eight creative and reflective meetings of the aforementioned group, consisting of six participants, during the year 2024.

The research is configured, therefore, as an exploratory study of a qualitative nature, using the moments of debate that occurred after all the moments of improvisation of the

Sonus Collective, for data collection, in such a way that in the moments of exchanges and discussions, the group began to function as a focus group that, in the definition Backes, Colomé, Herdmann and Lunardi, is constituted as:

[...] a space for discussion and exchange of experiences around a certain theme. In addition, the group stimulates debate among participants, allowing the topics addressed to be more problematized than in an individual interview situation. Participants generally listen to the opinions of others before forming their own, and they constantly change their position, or better substantiate their initial opinion, when engaged in group discussion. (2011, p. 439).

Data collection, according to Gil (2009), recognizes the involvement of researchers in the investigation process and in the consequent organization of perceptions emerging from the debates and, thus, is also aligned with the aforementioned perspective of Lüdke and André (2020) who postulate the understanding that research, as a human and social activity, is influenced by values, preferences and principles of the researchers, and there is no neutral separation between these agents, the research and its results.

For the operationalization of the research work and study of the collected data, all the moments of debate of the Sonus Collective, which occurred after the moments of musical improvisation, were recorded and later transcribed, in order to constitute the *corpus* of the present study.

As pointed out, the moments of reflective exchanges (focus group) always occurred after the sound experiences, which were conducted by the members of the group, who took turns to direct the musical work on the occasion of each improvisation meeting. Therefore, a relay strategy was practiced, which allowed all participants to assume, at least once, the conduction of musical improvisation experiences. The reflective occasions, for group discussion, lasted an average of thirty to forty minutes.

The ideas and impressions expressed by the participants, freely expressed, were transcribed and organized into thematic categories according to the meanings that emerged from the speeches of the members of the Sonus Collective. We seek theoretical-methodological support in content analysis techniques, as recommended by Laurence Bardin (2011). Thus, analyzing the senses and meanings of the statements brought by each of the subjects participating in this investigation was the essential procedure for carrying out this work.



We point out, as pertinent, that Bardin indicates that: "content analysis, on the other hand, aims at the knowledge of variables of a psychological, sociological, historical order, etc., by means of a deduction mechanism based on indicators reconstructed from a sample of particular messages." (BARDIN, 2011, p. 50).

Finally, we reiterate that the present research adopted a mostly qualitative approach to understand the perceptions arising from the experiences with free improvisation practices, carried out by the members of the Sonus Collective. Data collection, therefore, took place through debates in a focus group constituted by Music Therapists who are members of the *Sonus* Collective, whose speeches were analyzed using content analysis techniques.

The theoretical bases of this study include, therefore, the articulation between different investigative conceptions: research and training (Josso, 2004); the value of shared experience (Larrosa, 2022); the non-neutrality of the researcher (Lüdke and André, 2020) and Content Analysis (Bardin, 2011).

Considering the methodological approach defined for the present study, we organized the contents of the discourses and speeches that were presented in the moments of discussion that followed the improvisation meetings. The aforementioned work of systematizing the contents led us to identify four thematic categories that permeated or guided the interventions of each participant: a) sense of creative freedom; b) playful overcoming of error; c) accurate hearing and self-awareness.

## 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering the content analysis strategy defined for the present study, focusing on the manifestations of each participant in the moments of discussion in the focus group, it was possible to perceive the first thematic category translating into the participants' statements. The **sense of creative freedom** was present in the narrative interventions, in the moments in which each member of the group pointed to the awareness of their own musical practice, and to the understanding of this work built from improvisations, whether alone or together. The statements that referred to the awareness of musical practice added that in moments of improvisation there was the possibility of creating and that the creative act was the driving force of music.

As a result of the sound realization made possible by creativity, the participants mentioned that they felt welcomed by the musical making itself, which allowed them freedom to include unusual musical constructions, which revealed themselves as creative possibilities.

Such sound expressions brought unusual musical coherence, in such a way that the dualistic notion of correct and incorrect sound was transcended. Thus, the notion of playful overcoming of error emerged as a second category of analysis of narratives. In this way, it is considered that through the experienced musical making, there is no condition of "wrong note", but possibilities of expressive paths through which the music runs, through a playful sense.

At the same time that the participants felt free to dare sonically through improvisation, it was possible to verify an attentive perception of the sound aspects, which invited everyone to reflect on the practice together, so that each participant had the possibility to ponder on their own musical manifestation, in relation to the other sonorities that were part of the improvisation moment. Thus, the notion of **accurate listening** arose from the observation that each participant was available, in an attitude of active listening, which was sharpened throughout the improvisation practices and was constituted as the third category of analysis of the speech contents presented.

From the first meetings, all participants alluded to somatic reactions that, in their perception, were a result of the musical practice itself. We found in the reports moments in which the perception of the participants' image and body schema was mentioned and alluded to positive changes, establishing the fourth category here called **self-awareness**. Mood swings, or even overcoming physical fatigue, were part of such narratives.

According to the answers obtained from each participant, we observed that there was a balance in the statements referring to each thematic category, because of the total transcribed material, 14 statements referred to the **sense of creative freedom**; 9 brought the idea of **playful overcoming of error**; 15 were linked to the idea of **accurate hearing** and 14 brought the notion of self-awareness, totaling 52 transcribed speeches.

To present some reflections elaborated by the members of the Sonus Collective, in the present work and in order to guarantee the anonymity of its members, we will use an alphanumeric coding, differentiating each participant (P) through an Arabic number. The code "P1" therefore refers to participant number 1 and so on.

We will present the results by initially bringing some answers concerning the category **sense of creative freedom**. In this category, participant 2 (P2) presents the following statement:

I tried not to rationalize about what I was doing and tried to let it flow. I found myself producing sounds like that, which even I was surprised to do. But it's cool because it

seems that even if you release a sound, it always seems to have its value within the whole (P2, on 05/18/2024)

The speech transcribed above dialogues with an intervention by P6 that evokes the issue of freedom, bringing the concept of *Music Child*, which is fundamental in the work of Nordoff-Robbins' Creative Music Therapy (1977). The aforementioned terminology, musical child, points to the understanding that sound creativity, that is, musicality, is an innate manifestation of each being, as a way of responding to musical sound stimuli, as a manifestation of a universal sensitivity to music and its elements (SALES and FREIRE, 2024). Thus, participant P6 expressed himself:

There is a moment in our lives when we are playing, doing something sonically, that we feel a course of freedom (...) and this expression is what for me is this entity, this *music child* that they talk about, which is the freest and most spontaneous way for you to express yourself (P6, on 06/22/2024)

A connection of meaning between the participant's speech, transcribed above, and what participant 5 (P5) says: "it had been a long time since I felt this sensation of a certain freedom and happiness, man, joy, ecstasy of touching", Such manifestations are also connected with what participant 2 (P2) expressed: "Not only reproduce but also develop, create, build, change, expand, whatever the verb of action is, but the idea is always that, and it's very cool" (08/24/24).

This connection with the making of music, experienced from a feeling of freedom, puts the group in tune with aspects of each participant's musicality, so that a possibility of experiencing basic aspects of each individual's musical expression is built and that establishes a sound sense that is inherent to the group itself, as explained by participant 2's manifestation (P2), "We start to create patterns of encounter, no matter how loose it was, the thing organizes itself, without anyone deciding anything" (09/14/24).

Participant P1 presents ideas that reinforce what we have presented so far about the sense of creative freedom, which develops through the musicality of each one, manifested in improvisation, by the group:

You enjoy not the break in isolation, because there were already six people, but what the Germans call *Cluster*, you know, which is that sound block, that mass of sound, which is simply the result of the most sincere manifestation that each one of us can bring at that moment (P1 on 05/18/24).

With regard to the **playful overcoming of error**, another category evidenced by the participants' statements, we verified during some discussions, the occurrence of narratives that pointed to possibilities of sound realization and that allowed space for unusual interventions. P4, takes the following position on such possibilities:

... At first I was very stuck in my thinking, tense, I wasn't relaxed to make sounds, and I was just on that same note, right? very tense. Over time I relaxed, then I loosened up more and made several sounds, I realized that sometimes my sound was influenced by your sound, and I became more relaxed (P4 on 05/18/24).

Another participant, reinforcing P4's statement, points to the possible interdictions of the creative sense when the performer is too concerned with making the sound considered correct:

Sometimes we are so concerned with hitting the right note, that this concern with hitting the right note does not allow us to let the music be spontaneous, that it happens. It anchors, in the sense of arresting one's own creative action (P1 on 10/20/24)

In general, if we consider some common sense beliefs, it is believed that music presents "right" and "wrong" paths, so that the choices of the performer, which interfere with the musical structure at the time of improvisation, impose behaviors that are based on these beliefs and that can hinder spontaneity and creativity in moments of sound immersion. As mentioned in P2:

I tried to get away from all forms of the pattern. And so, it was interesting because you kept it and I tried to go the opposite, but it's so difficult, it's so difficult, so I tried to structure rhythmic patterns that dialogued, but didn't collaborate with this pulse, right? Get out of line. I found it very challenging (P2 on 09/14/24).

The same participant (P2), in another statement, points to the overcoming of the dual belief between "right" and "wrong", when he says that: "there is no right and wrong, at that moment any sound will do a specific function to contribute to this dynamic sound relationship" (P2 on 05/18/24).

It is important to observe the convergence of the statements that point to the overcoming of the concepts of "right" and "wrong" with the reflections of Zuckerkandl (1973) who presents, in his theory, the concept of "dynamic relationship of notes". The aforementioned author expresses his ideas by saying that a note, at the end of a melody, is

a note that becomes active, we hear a state of disturbance of balance, like a desire of itself to meet each other notes.

The statement of participant 3 (P3) seems to allude to an internal state of conflict that the need to "get it right" in music can provoke:

"There were times like this, that thing of panic that you bring, this thing of self-demand. And I'm at a moment now that this is coming, right? something of intimacy (...) but it was something new for me, improvising. And I didn't think because I knew how to play a little flute, I could improvise, that I was nervous" (P3 on 06/22/24).

As it is a group of Music Therapists with academic training in Music, the awareness of the sound relationships established during the improvisations emerged in the speeches in a very significant way. In this sense, a **sense of accurate hearing** is presented in the transcribed interventions. Such a sense, however, does not reveal a desire to adapt the sound produced in improvisations to pre-established sound patterns, but presents an expansion of the conception of music by the members of the Sonus Collective. P2 put himself in the following terms: "the sounds, they attracted each other, I was able to see a little of it (...) " simply the conjuncture of the sounds there: they attracted each other and formed that" (P2 on 06/22/24)

P5's statement is important with regard to this third thematic category, when he points to a search for the other through hearing: "the dialogue, it went to another level where we were able to listen to each other (...) From what I heard from you with a note, I was able to create my impression of that note you made." (P5 on 10/20/24).

This sense of accurate hearing is connected with Rudolf Steiner's postulate about the sense of hearing. The aforementioned author puts it as follows: "when I make something sound, I perceive, in a certain way, intimately, the interior of what is sounding (...) in sound we actually perceive the interior of the external world" (Steiner, 2012, p.13).

According to participant P1, "when we are in a sound perspective that does not have this commitment, for example, there is no defined scale, right? It is always the commitment we have in fact, which is perhaps the most difficult: to let it happen sonically" (P1. 18/05/24).

These ideas express an expanded conception of music itself that, despite the participants having formative links with undergraduate courses in music, transcend the still hegemonic experience, established by tonalism. Also according to participant P1:

It's as if we were talking through this (...) talking through this sound image, that we suddenly realize that it is being constituted there at that moment, it will only exist there, and that it is the heritage of that group, at that moment, and that because it belongs to the group, it also needs to be heard by the whole group (P1. 05/18/24).

Schaffer (2011), referring to an improvisation experience with 5 wind instrumentalists, observes that the analogy between spoken conversation and improvisation in music proves to be a coherent means for the engagement of the performers, which interferes with the fluency during the improvisation game. In this sense, the real value of an experience serves both for the latent development of improvisation and for the exercise of auditory perception.

The notion of **self-awareness** came to the fore as we found manifestations of the participants alluding to mood swings or even physical state, which occurred as a result of improvisation practices. In the very first improvisation meeting, P2 expressed himself as follows:

This state of relaxation is interesting, isn't it? I'm also feeling some pain, exercise pains. But at that moment there, I was standing, and my legs and knees are very locked. But at that moment I wasn't feeling it, it's as if I was just floating, there in the sound (P2 on 05/18/24).

According to P3's speech, still about the expression of tiredness, it is noticeable how the music transposes such an organic condition: "I also feel like this, sometimes a tiredness from work. Today I came very tired from university, (...) but it's another energy, I was able to connect and it was very cool" (P3 on 11/09/24).

In the same direction, in the next meeting, P4 referred to the relief of physical pain related to an anxiety condition he felt at the beginning of the improvisation: "I felt very calm, I was fine, I was a little anxious, you know. Headache and... so, it was only when we started playing that I calmed down more" (P4 on 06/22/24)

In her work on the Guided Imagery Method (GIM) by Helen Bonny, Liesert (2017) presents a reflection that links music and feeling:

(...) Music offers a framework for emotions. This means that music does not inherently "possess" a specific emotional quality. Instead, music provides a framework within which the client can find certain emotional qualities (p.138).

For Helen Bonny, "The affective customer experience must be supported by music, embodying the humanistic concept of the maximum experience". The author has established

six effects that the musical experience can trigger. Among these effects, we highlight the possibility that music, according to Bonny, "promotes positive, oceanic and religious-type experiences, which can have transformative properties for the individual." (Bonny apud Liesert 2017, p. 152).

In this sense, the manifestation of participant P6 is quite pertinent: "intuition is something like this, which seems to speak of our reality, at the same time that it brings memories. (...) it responds to something that is mine, it allows me this state of presence of myself" (P6 on 07.20.24)

The material collected in the discussions that took place after the moments of improvisation, brought very expressive and valuable speeches for the present reflection. The abundant material collected and discussed here allowed us to find connections between the philosophical postulates of Musicocentric Orientation Music Therapy in the face of the creative practices undertaken by the *Sonus Collective*.

## 5 CONCLUSION

According to the manifestations of the participants of the *Sonus Collective*, the improvisation practices carried out by the group dialogue with the theories of Zuckerkandl, who alludes to the power of attraction of notes, based on the impetus of sensitivity of each performer in contact with music, in a terrain in which there are no pre-defined aesthetic beacons. Such a context calls on the participants to follow the forces of attraction that are proposed by the sound exercise itself, which is carried out based on the creative listening of the musical phenomenon, at the moment it occurs.

The statements collected and analyzed in the present work also point to valuable perceptions that touch an expanded understanding of musical practice and that interfere in the perception that the individual has of his own creative capacities, which, in the musical exercise, contribute to the perception of the subject himself about himself, about his peers and about the reality that welcomes and also conditions them.

The analysis work carried out here also points to the importance of overcoming beliefs about what music is, so that the notion of "right" and "wrong" is seen from a critical perspective, free from predefined aesthetic ties, more linked to therapeutic effects than to artistic aspects that in everyday life can restrict the very notion of music.

From the perspective of the expansion of sound consciousness, of a critical reflection on the ties that the cultural industry imposes on individuals, this reflection becomes valuable

and reveals musical potentials that, in the context of improvisation carried out by the Sonus Collective, have left their state of latency and become sonically manifest contents.

The participants' speeches reveal, in many moments, the pleasure of discovering sound as a relational phenomenon in which the individual summons his creative potential, placing it in dialogue with the creative manifestations of his peers. Such moments are sustained by the ability to listen to oneself and others during the sound explosions provided by the freedom of the act of improvising. A broader sense of listening, which brings together sonically manifested subjectivities, connects with therapeutic conceptions that are based on listening as a path of encounter and dialogue.

The thematic categories from which we organized the analysis of the data indicate, initially, perceptions of a personal nature, however, such findings point to the confluence of subjective senses that dialogue through the unusual and ephemeral music, which dissolves sonically at the end of the improvisation, but which remains as a deep vivid experience, lived by each improvising member.

Each subject reinvents himself in the act of free musical creation. Without ties, or attachments to aesthetic paradigms, but giving wings to sound creation. Unusual possibilities are revealed and strengthen improvising individuals. In a playful way, the notion of error is overcome to give way to a renewed perception of oneself and of others, a perception that, based on accurate listening, evokes a liberating sense of music itself that was imprisoned in cultural moorings.

Music therapy strategies and approaches in our reality still derive from musicological knowledge and, in some cases, it is difficult to establish the boundaries between Music Therapy, Music Education and artistic performance. The work of the members of the Sonus Collective, carried out from the desire to deepen the Musicocentric orientation, reveals a greater breadth with regard to the practice of improvisation. Such a practice is, in the field of musical training, seen as something advanced and, for this very reason, reserved for experienced musicians.

In the case of Coletivo *Sonus*, the sense of improvisation is detached from musical aesthetic expectations and through the sound practices shared in the group's meetings, a broader understanding of music and its therapeutic effects can be observed. The participants reveal in their statements a high level of satisfaction with the experiences they lived, while linking these moments to the theories studied. This indicates that there was an expansion of



the understanding of Musicocentric Orientation Music Therapy from the articulation of theory with the improvisational practice undertaken by the group.

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