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University of Nottingham

MUSIC TRANSFORMING CONFLICT

Ariana Phillips-Hutton
University of Cambridge



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Music Transforming Conflict

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Ariana Phillips-Hutton
University of Cambridge

Author for correspondence: Ariana Phillips-Hutton, asp38@cam.ac.uk

Abstract : Teach the world to sing, and all will be in perfect harmony – or so the songs tell us. Music is widely believed to unify and bring peace, but the focus on music as a vehicle for fostering empathy and reconciliation between opposing groups threatens to overly simplify our narratives of how interpersonal conflict might be transformed. In this Element, I offer a critique of empathy's ethical imperative of radical openness and position the acknowledgement of moral responsibility as a fundamental component of music's capacity to transform conflict. Through case studies of music and conflict transformation in Australia and Canada, I assess the complementary roles of musically mediated empathy and guilt in post-conflict societies and argue that a consideration of musical and moral implication as part of studies on music and conflict offers a powerful tool for understanding music's potential to contribute to societal change.

Keywords : guilt, empathy, conflict transformation, Secret Path, Sorry Song
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Contents

1	How Can Music Help?	1
2	Constructing Transformation	17
3	Singing Sorry	31
4	Chanie's Story	42
5	Reckoning with Sonic Histories	53
6	How Music Can Help	58
	References	62