THE APPLICATION OF BASIC EMOTION THEORY IN PERFORMANCE

EMMANUEL SOWICZ

WHAT IS BASIC EMOTION THEORY (BET)?

PSYCHOLOGY

– BET EMERGED IN THE 1970S

– SMALL NUMBER OF 'BASIC' EMOTIONS

– CORRELATED TO FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, ENABLING PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

OVER TO MUSIC…

– IN MUSICOLOGY, CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HUMAN EMOTION AND MUSIC HAS BEEN STUDIED FOR A LONG TIME

– SYSTEMATIC APPLICATION OF BET IS RELATIVELY RECENT (2 DECADES OR SO)

– BASIC EMOTIONS CORRELATED TO AUDITORY CUES

– SEE THE WORK OF PATRICK N. JUSLIN (MUSICAL EMOTIONS EXPLAINED, 2019)

WHY SHOULD THIS INTEREST PERFORMERS?

A STEP BACK:
A QUESTION OF
MUSICAL PHILOSOPHY

WHY DO WE PLAY MUSIC?

EMOTION IS A KEY MOTIVATION FOR LISTENING TO MUSIC

THEREFORE…

IF EMOTIONS PLAY A CENTRAL PART OF MUSIC, EXACTLY *HOW* PERFORMERS CAN BEST COMMUNICATE EMOTIONS IS CRITICAL

MUSIC – SCORE
(ANALYSIS)

ARTISTIC CONCEPT
(INTERPRETATION)

TECHNICAL MEDIUM
(EXECUTION)

REPRODUCIBILITY…

SPECIFIC MUSICAL IDEAS SHOULD HAVE SPECIFIC TECHNICAL CONSEQUENCES

HOW TO MAKE THESE DECISIONS?

‘I THINK THIS MUSIC IS ABOUT THE BITTER ANGUISH OF LOSS’

OK, great…

Should I play that F# loudly or quietly?

FRAMEWORKS

– Intuition (personal)

– Cognitive science (intersubjective)

FINALLY…

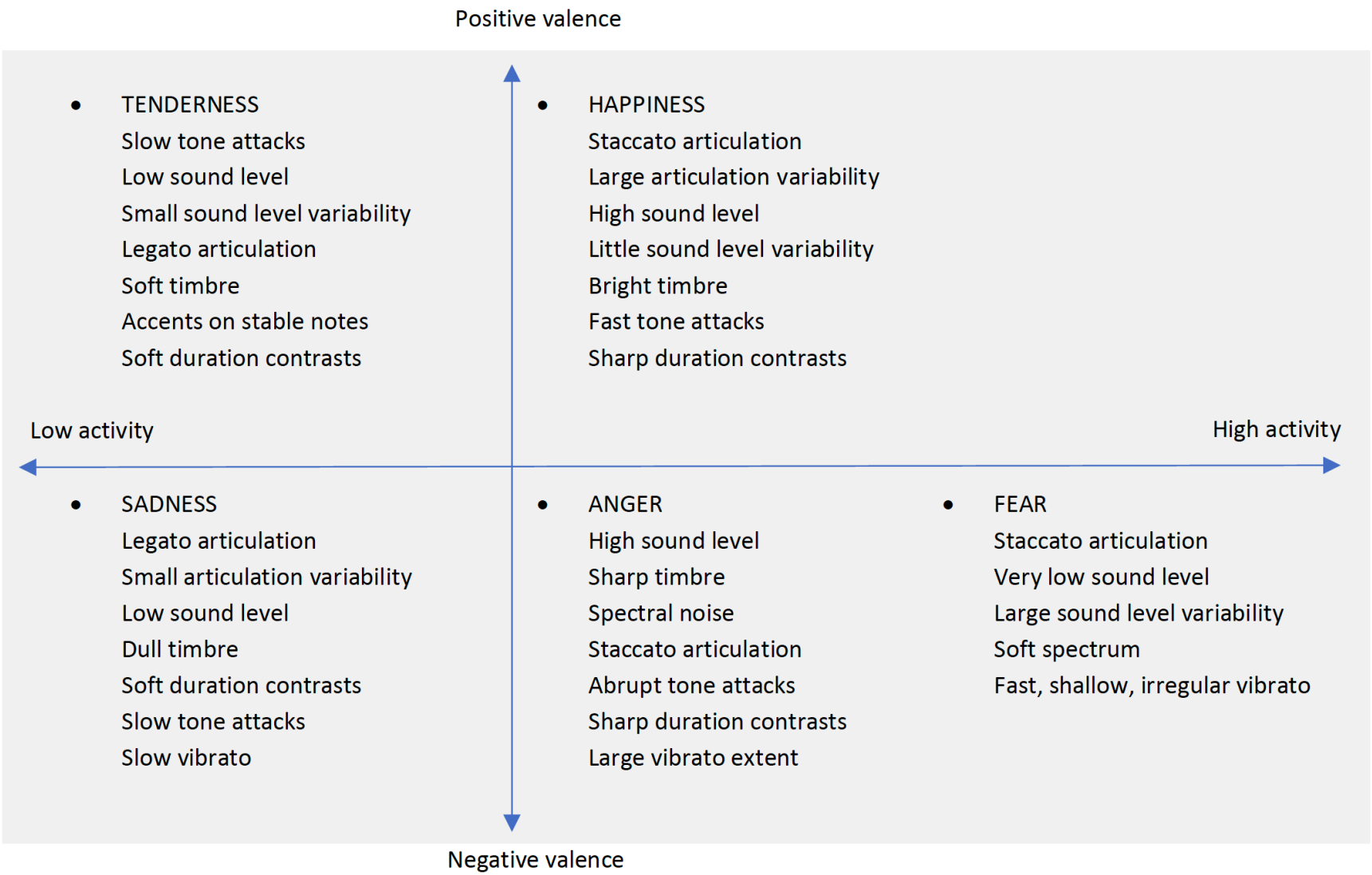


Table reproduced from Juslin & Timmer (2010). *Expression and Communication of Emotion in Music Performance.*

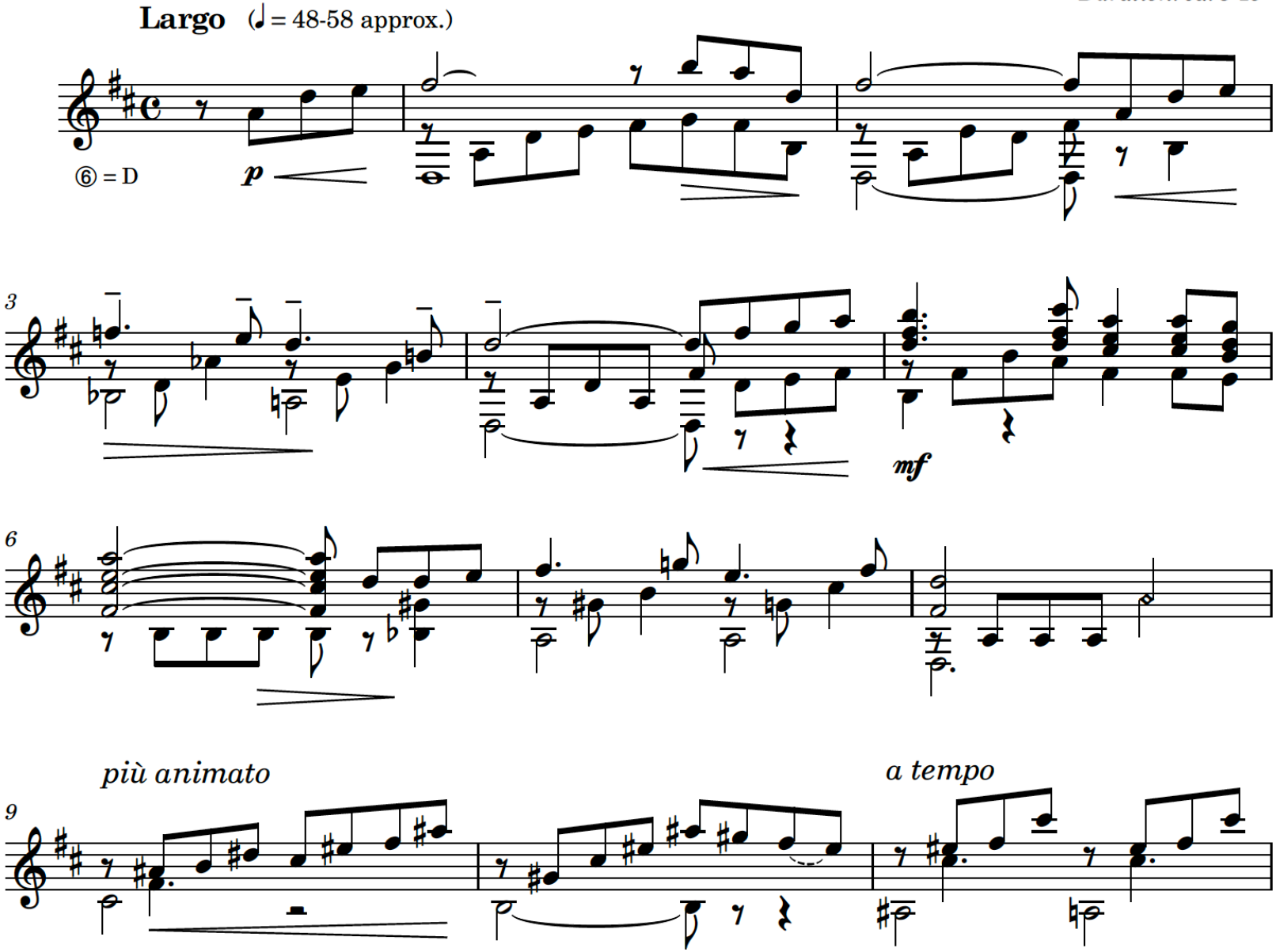
SOME EXAMPLES

Torija
(Elegía)

Edited by Emmanuel Sowicz
(17 May 2020)

Federico Moreno Torroba
Spain 1891–1982

Duration: ca. 3'15



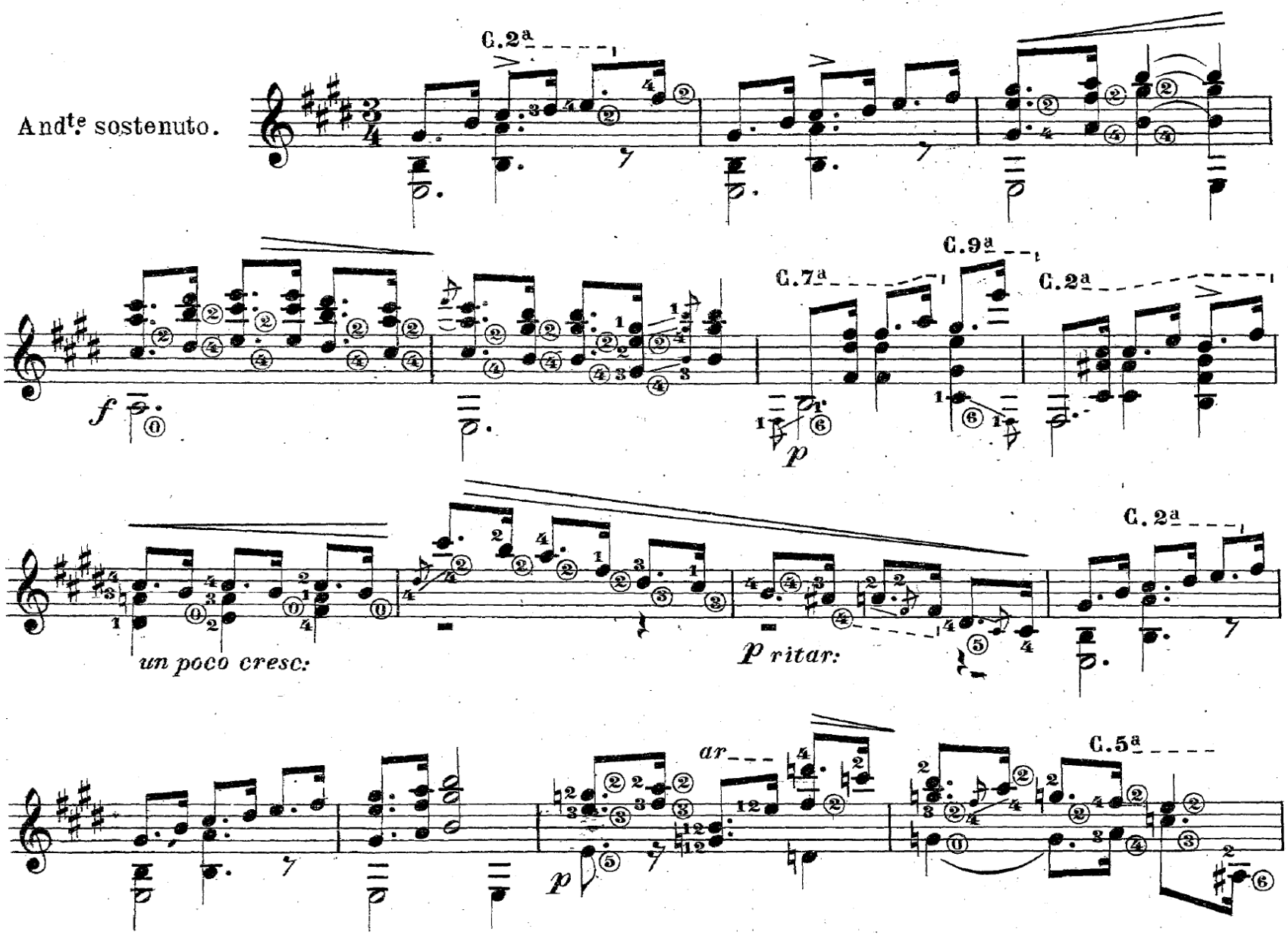
Al ilustre Dr. Walter Leckie

PRELUDIO

Nº 5.

PARA GUITARRA. por FRANCISCO TÁRREGA.

Propiedad. Depositado.



JUST A TOOL, BASED ON COGNITIVE SCIENCE RESEARCH TO SEEK MAXIMUM EFFECT

…NON-PRESCRIPTIVE!

REMEMBER…

REPRODUCIBILITY…

SPECIFIC MUSICAL IDEAS SHOULD HAVE SPECIFIC TECHNICAL CONSEQUENCES

…however you choose to make those decisions

THANK YOU