

Songwriting with adolescents in a Secondary School

*Exploring emotional expression, interpersonal
relationships and identity formation*

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Andante Letra y Música:
Grupo 4º ESO y Nazaret Gómez

Voice

Verse 1 Am G

No - to que se ha - ca - ba - do, que se ni - ño ha ere - ci - do, que o - tra

p

F G Verse 2 Am

co - sa ha co - men - za - do, y que yo no he queri - do. Mea - cuer - do de pe - que - ña, cuan - do

G F G Verse 3

to - doe - ra per - fec - to, que yo e - rau - na prin - ce - sa, y mi vi - da e - rau - na cuen - to. Noe - xi

f

Am G F G

tía pre - ocu - pa - ción, so - la - men - te di - ver - sión, to - doe - ra sa - tis - fac - ción y na - da de - pre - sión.

Chorus C G Am F

¿Don - de que - dó e - se ni - ño que tan - to me gus - ta - ba ne - ce - si - toe - se ca - ri - ño que

C G Am F

to - do el mun - do me da - ha dón - de que - dó e - se ni - ño _____

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Abstract

This research explores how music and music therapy can help in the formation of identity in adolescents, through emotional expression and interpersonal relationships. It was undertaken in a Secondary School with a group of nine adolescents, who have chosen music as an optional subject in their 4th year. The study focuses on 30 sessions conducted over three months. The music therapy project promotes an educational model which increases the personal resources of adolescents. The application of music therapy is performed on a preventive level, with the aim of avoiding imbalances in the social and emotional development of adolescents. The method is based on a humanistic approach, employing some of the fundamental concepts of Gestalt therapy.

The research is approached from a qualitative and phenomenological point of view, and attempts to depict the ongoing process. The results show that songwriting, on the basis of the figures that emerge during the group process, favours the more sincere and emotional expression of adolescents, and thus contributes to constructing their own identity.

Keywords

Music therapy, adolescents, education, identity, group process, songwriting.

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1. Introduction

After several years working with adolescents in Secondary Education as a music teacher, I've realized the need for most teens to have a space where they can express themselves more freely and explore their identity, emotions, doubts, conflicts, etc. This space should be a place where they have the opportunity to learn about themselves and about others through interpersonal relationships.

At the beginning of my career, I found three different aspects fundamental to improving my work:

- Gaining knowledge about group dynamics, in order to handle and understand how they conducted their relationships. I had always worked with groups but had received no training in college about how to work with them.
- Tapping into the potential of music, which was my basic tool, in order to promote emotional and social development.
- Employing music as a way of individual and collective enjoyment, as I had previously done in various sessions of vocal improvisation and experimentation.

This was the motive that led me to seek resources and tools in music therapy and gestalt therapy and to train in both disciplines, which I've attempted to integrate into this project of music and music therapy with high-school adolescents. Hence, my project is aimed at developing the personal resources of adolescents and to contribute to the formation of their identity, strengthening their sense of themselves in a group setting through music therapy.

Marina (2004) speaks of a "pedagogy of personal resources," understood as a method that facilitates the development of skills and attitudes that promote a person's access to happiness. He defends the need for "learning to live," and to coexist with others.

Both Naranjo (2004) and Marina (2005) highlight the "saving" power of the educational task, in order to foster a more humane world and society. They believe that we must start from a person's very beginnings, that is, their infancy, and in order to achieve this, it's essential for them to receive an education that develops the potential and resources of each individual.

Naranjo (2004) proposes an integrative and holistic education, focused on educating the whole person, both their emotional and mental life. He calls for an education that relates to knowledge actively, seeking a balance between theory and practice.

As noted by Garaigordobil (2008), our current educational methods tend to frequently focus primarily on cognitive development, neglecting other important aspects of human beings, such as their emotional or social development.

According to Naranjo (2004), the lack of meaning and connection between the existential situation of adolescents and their education is becoming increasingly evident. This is why an increased noise level can be observed in schools and society as a whole, which may cause individuals to become hyperactive and disconnected from their most intimate desires, since all their energy seems to proceed from their interior toward the exterior.

One of the objectives of this project involving music therapy with adolescents is to encourage self-expression, which in turn encourages the task of identity formation. McFerran (2004), referring to group work with adolescents, proposes the use of musical activities which promote communication between the group members, and emphasizes self-expression as a goal in working with adolescents, in order to facilitate the process of identity formation.

During my previous teaching experience, I observed that something which often interested and motivated my students was to begin with the music they brought with them, treating it as an important element in their manner of expressing their personal identity, as well as trying to compose new lyrics to existing music or to create melodies and improvise musical pieces with the aim of expressing different emotions.

These previous teaching experiences are concrete examples of the theories of Green and Walmsley (n.d.). They suggest that teachers take into account five basic principles for encouraging informal musical learning as an educational strategy:

1. Teaching music that the students identify with, i.e., music they like and that they themselves can choose.
2. Learning to listen to and imitate recordings (playing by ear).
3. Learning together with friends
4. Personal learning without a necessarily perfectly defined structure.
5. Integrated listening activities, performance, improvisation and composition.

I was also able to confirm the potential and power of peer groups for the process of learning about oneself and others through interpersonal relationships. The peer group is a powerful mirror and a good conduit for individual expression. As noted by Yalom (2005), the need to

interact closely with others is a basic biological need. At the adolescent stage, successful peer relationships and self-esteem are closely linked.

Music has a great socializing potential. I think it should be approached from a social perspective, one that stimulates social and emotional development and fosters pro-social attitudes (cooperation, respect for differences, communication, etc). To Zahonero (2007), this social perspective is defined as "doing things with others, and this is its most important meaning: to develop yourself in interaction with others."

According with Peñarrubia (2003, p. 72), "we are poorly educated as regards the collective and the community, and the group is the ideal context for developing community awareness, which involves the respect and acceptance of self and others." The emphasis here is on the power of the group, not only for developing a sense of an individual self, but in order to transform our distinct milieus and social groups, highlighting attitudes such as sincerity, respect, profundity and commitment to the community. This social perspective of education goes beyond individual interests, promoting instead general interests, and aims to offer people a deeper sense of their common nature.

Analyzing all these aspects has led me to focus my research and thoughts on the importance of providing a space for individual growth and holistic development—and not just aimed at conceptual contents—in the context of compulsory education.

This project attempts to answer the question: how can music and music therapy facilitate emotional expression, interpersonal relationships and help adolescents in the formation of their identity within an educational framework?

In order to this, group music therapy was undertaken with adolescents, from a preventive perspective, in which teenagers were given options for expressing themselves in a supportive environment. The aim was to prevent possible difficulties with adjustment and adaptation in the social and emotional development of the adolescents.

Secondly, an analysis of the intervention was carried out in order to identify and describe how music therapy methods can help adolescent identity formation through emotional expression and peer interaction.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Evolution of adolescence

Adolescence is a period of profound change, marked by instability and tentativeness (Garaigordobil, 2008). This stage begins between 11-13, known as preadolescence and ends between 18-20, late adolescence (Garaigordobil, 2008).

In adolescence the individual consolidates their specific knowledge and their general knowledge with regard to the world and their social environment, making adaptations and adjustments which last throughout the life cycle. The process of acquiring technical, communicative and social skills is further developed at this stage. Moreover, teenagers develop their own autonomy from the environment.

Adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood, and is a troubled stage of life, as on the one hand, the teenager faces an internal crisis and on the other hand has to adapt to a social environment which sometimes does not favor this adaptation (Garaigordobil, 2008).

During this period, the adolescent acquires and consolidates their personal and social identity, which implies, among other things, an autonomous moral consciousness, the adoption of significant values, and the development of a concept of self-esteem. Adolescence is also a phase of acquisition of independence, separation from the family and the establishment of new group ties, friendship and sexual relations. This period of vital development is crucial, since it largely shapes the ideals of life which later form the adult personal identity.

Most teenagers share some common experiences and problems: all suffer the physiological and physical changes of puberty and growth associated with adolescence; they all feel the need to establish their own identity; they all need to open a path in life as independent members of society. However, not all face the same environmental demands, and each teenager reacts differently to the various changes they are presented with.

The intensity of the problems and difficulties faced by adolescents, related to the need to adapt to social environment in a time of internal crisis depends on the availability of emotional and instrumental support from others, such as family, peers, friends, or other social entities.

Teenagers with emotional and instrumental support in the context of a relationship will be better able to confront and solve the problems of this period (Garaigordobil, 2008).

- Psychological transformations in adolescence: crisis and reconstruction of personal identity.

For Erikson (1981) adolescence is a key moment in the development of identity, defining the concept of personal identity as distinct differentiation, the individual self to others, to society, reality and values. The adolescent tries to answer the question, Who am I? A healthy teenager would complete the task of identity formation.

Fierro (1985) states that identity is psychosocial in nature and contains cognitive elements as the individual judges himself according to his perception of how others judge him. It is a stage in which the individual searches for identity.

In the context of the identity crisis that is seen in adolescence, teenagers stop idealizing their parents, searching for new lifestyles rejecting what is familiar and showing opposition to authority (parents, teachers...). 'However, studies that have analyzed the factors associated with teenage rebellion (Noller and Callan, 1991) have shown a greater likelihood that this occurs when the authoritarian structure of the family is patriarchal and unequal, the discipline is severe or inconsistent and marriage is unhappy, leading to a lack of respect for parents and, therefore, to rebellion.

The teenager looks for a new identity, and it is normal in this process to feel anxious and confused, to distance oneself from the home, to rebel against authority, and to be contradictory in one's subsequent behavior and one's desire (Garaigordobil, 2008).

In the process of identity formation the 15-year-old adolescent:

- Becomes aware of his own self, shows concern for his own thoughts and feelings and those of others, requires feedback about his personality, wants to be alone, becomes observant.
- Wants to be independent, rejects the home, looks for friends and gangs of his age; free time is very important for him because it allows for personal development.
- His emotions fluctuate, he isolates himself, he needs love but does not show it, gets demoralized by criticism and shows little concern for school.

In short this 15-year-old could be defined as a self in search for privacy (Garaigordobil, 2008).

- Social Transformations in adolescence: significance and evolution of the group during this period.

Wanting to fit into a group is one of the ultimate manifestations of adolescence.

In his search for identity, the adolescent turns to the uniformity of the group in which he wants to find security and esteem. At this stage the group spirit emerges, group members accept the dictates of the group. The group is the necessary transition in the external world to achieve adult individuation.

The group shared experience will provide an excellent frame to ritualize the separation of the primitive family pattern. The group territory is a surrogate family space, where the youngster is provided with a space of freedom beyond the control and dominance of the adult.

In this context, the peer group is a great source of influence for adolescent development. The importance of the group phenomenon in adolescence is due to the search made by the adolescent for a new identity in a period of significant changes in group membership, mainly the family.

According to Graigordóbil (2008), peer interaction offers significant benefits for social and personal development, since it promotes the emergence of conflicts which lead to internal restructuring and promote cognitive development. It also supports the decision making process in order to build awareness of self and others. It promotes the learning situations of social interaction strategies, cooperation and autonomy. Peer interaction encourages the development of self-regulation of behavior.

2.2. Develop a sense of themselves to promote identity formation

Oaklander (2008) affirms the need for children and adolescents to "strengthen the sense of self". To Oaklander, children who have experienced traumas such as the divorce of their parents, block their emotions related to trauma and are not sure how to express them. Because children are basically self-centered and as part of their normal development process take everything personally, they take responsibility and blame for any trauma that occurs. This phenomenon causes further suppression of their emotions, as they do not have a strong enough personality to admit them, much less express them. In addition, children absorb many negative misconceptions about themselves, because they don't use their cognitive ability to discriminate between true and false. These negative messages produce fragmentation, inhibit healthy growth and integration and are the cause of low self-esteem and self-deprecating attitude.

Helping children and adolescents to develop a strong sense of self gives them a feeling of well-being and a positive sense of self as well as the inner strength to express those buried emotions (Oaklander, 2008).

To help children and adolescents to build their sense of self it is essential to provide experiences with lost aspects of self.

The senses, body, intellect and emotions make up the organism: the self. When talking about problems of the self, we generally use words such as low self-esteem or self-concept. Oaklander (2008) uses the term "sense of self" because it seems a more integrative vision than self-esteem. This does not mean having a high opinion of ourselves, but how to be fully aware of ourselves and what means we have to interact with the world.

Webster's Dictionary defines the self as:

1. Identity, nature or characteristics of a person.
2. Identity, personality, individuality of a specific person, a unique person different from others.
3. A person in their best condition.
4. The union of elements (body, emotions, thoughts and sensations) that constitute the identity and individuality of a person.

To achieve a strong, integrated sense of self, we must strengthen the following elements (Oaklander, 2008):

1. The senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell).
2. The body (be aware of everything that the body can do, as well as breathing and voice).
3. Intellect (choose, decide, define the self, recognizing projections).
4. Domain, expertise and independence.
5. Power and control.
6. Use of borders and boundaries.
7. Capacity for play (playfulness, imagination, humor).
8. Attention to negative misconceptions about themselves to achieve integration.
9. Using aggressive energy.
10. The sixth sense (to use intuition and trust yourself).

Through this music therapy program with adolescents, I aim to strengthen the sense of self in adolescents, helping them to express themselves in a free form (their emotions, thoughts,

tastes, needs, fantasies). It is a way of making them aware of what they want in the present moment and to decide among various options presented to them.

In order to do this I will present a case with positive results, to try to illustrate how, through music and music therapy, adolescents can strengthen their self-awareness and in turn, support identity formation.

2.3. Educational approach

2.3.1. Education as a means of promoting personal resources

We have already mentioned in the introduction the need for education that promotes the capabilities and resources of the people José Antonio Marina (2005) speaks about. His idea is based on a "resource theory": it attempts to provide our young people with the means necessary to get ahead in a world with an uncertain future.

If we give our children internal resources to cope with the vicissitudes of life and to develop a personality with resources, we will be giving them one of the best tools so they can live happily, whatever the environment that surrounds them.

Among the key resources Marina (2005) indicates as points for development are: basic security, emotional stability or resilience, wisdom, fortitude, diligence, responsible autonomy, creativity, joy, sociability, compassion, respect and sense of justice.

2.3.2. Education from a psychosocial perspective

When we think about enhancing the human being's resources, the emotional life of the classroom group is a fundamental aspect to investigate and consider. On this emotional life depends the environment in which the phenomenon of education is produced. The classroom-group can be considered as the basic ecosystem of human relations which produces the educational process and development of the individual.

According to the social theory of personality or symbolic interactionism of Mead (1972), it is considered that all the dimensions of individual personality have been constituted in group settings loaded with symbolic meaning for the individual. It is through the experience of social relationships with others, as the individual constructs the representation of his

individuality, his own self. It is therefore, through interaction with others that the individual builds his own identity and sense of self.

This project is framed from this psychosocial perspective of the education, as promoted by Garaigordobil (2008), in which the classroom is considered as a group which articulates a set of socio-emotional relationships, which should be the axis of the educational work which aims at comprehensive training.

This psycho-social perspective aims not only to develop a sense of individual self, but to transcend it in favor of a group consciousness that encourages cooperative relationships and support, openness in communication between its members, respect and acceptance of differences, the creation of emotional ties, interpersonal trust and understanding, and a community and universal consciousness. (Peñarrubia, 2003).

From a psychosocial perspective of youth development, ecological theories of human development are also important (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). This author defines the ecological environment as a set of structured systems on different levels, where each contains the other (individual-family-school-community-culture). All levels depend on each other and therefore require joint participation at various levels and intercommunication between them.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development offers an understanding of the complex and ongoing interaction of people with more or less immediate environments, which integrate the structure and dynamics of social networks and support modes generated in them. Ecological orientation in community intervention has as its aim the interaction of the person and their environment. A person is seen in constant development and this is conceived as a lasting change in how a person perceives his environment and relates to it.

In this project music therapy is a way to foster this connection between young people and the systems to which they belong, and it is also a way to establish connections between these different systems. The school would be an intermediary between the young person and his family, and the community and culture to which they belong. Music furthers the connection between people and the systems to which they belong, because it is a mode of expression that reflects a culture, and is also a reflection of human beings (McFerran, 2010). Songs, for example, reflect core values and information about the culture in which they are created.

2.3.3. The value of integral music education

Gonzalez (2011) presents the value and importance of music in the education of students and why it is so important to study music at school. He emphasizes the role of music as a means to develop creativity, self-expression, critical thinking, problem solving, discipline and teamwork as well as the positive effect it has on other areas of knowledge.

Research on the impact of music education in the development of students shows that music affects different aspects of personality such as emotional and social development.

It affects emotional development because when participating in musical activities involving emotions, expressive behavior and creative imagination are encouraged. For Juslin and Sloboda (2001), the musical experience in our lives has a strong emotional component that connects us with our family, social and cultural environment. A study by North, Hargreaves and O'Neill (2000) investigated the motivation of teenagers to listen to music. Young people said that music helped them to meet their emotional needs, relieve tension and stress, and to express their feelings and emotions. This and other studies suggest that the emotional aspect should be one of the most important aspects to consider in the integral development of students, and it should be included in the curriculum for achieving said goal.

Music affects social development because as a social activity it serves several functions. Thus, individuals who participate in musical activities create a sense of partnership and group identity through personal interaction and music.

It relates to the family group, the inner circle of each individual, whose members can activate or inhibit a proper musical development.

The influence of teachers, classmates and school environment is equally important for the adequate development of children. A recent study suggests that teachers could have a significant success in the teaching of music if they provide opportunities for students to investigate, to imitate and performance young people's favorite music within groups of friends (Green, 2001).

Bresler (1995) speaks of different approaches to integrating the arts into the curriculum, among which are mentioned emotional integration and social integration. In emotional integration, emphasis is put on the emotions that musical experience evokes and the ideals of creativity and self-expression, which teachers recognize are not developed in the academic

curriculum, are incorporated. In social integration, the social function of music for the maintenance of social and personal identity is emphasized.

My involvement with adolescents is based on the emotional and social integration of music in the curriculum, to promote identity formation in young people.

2.4. Functions of music in adolescence

There is no other time in life in which music plays such a central role as in that of a teenager. Music is the favorite leisure activity of adolescents, surpassing even sports (McFerran, 2010). Music is also readily available and portable.

Laiho (2004) describes the psychological functions of music in adolescence, among which he highlights emotional function, identity formation and interpersonal relationships. They represent different areas that are crucial for the development and mental health of the adolescent. According to this author, music is an important resource for helping adolescents due to its unique characteristics. One of its main qualities is the ability to influence mood. This is especially important for teenagers, because their daily experience is often emotionally intense and exhausting with constant mood swings and instability.

Laiho also emphasizes the importance of music in the identification within the peer group. A challenge in adolescence is separation from parents and adjustment of meaningful relationships. Music can reflect the self and relations with the social environment. Music is a framework to form impressions of others, create a context of acceptance among the peer group, and strengthen group cohesion. At the same time, it decreases inhibitions in social situations, makes it easier to get attention and approval, provides topics for discussion, fills the silence and serves as the background to change mood. Experiencing music in a group setting also helps to balance closeness and distance within the peer group.

Music also has the quality to evoke feelings of unity and belonging. Singing, playing or listening to music together is an opportunity to share experiences and feelings. Through these collective emotional experiences one can feel a deep connection with others.

2.4.1. Identity formation and music

As noted in paragraph 2.1, in their transition to adulthood, adolescents progress through a process of self-discovery about who they are and what makes them unique. This process is not

isolated, rather adolescents compare how they see themselves and how others perceive them. The connection between how they perceive themselves and the perception of others is considered crucial to achieving this developmental task. Too much difference between the two perceptions can lead to a confusion of role or identity crisis and increases their isolation (Erikson, 1981).

For Laiho (2004), one of the main reasons for adolescents to use music is related to identity formation. Music can encourage thinking and the consideration of the concept of self and identity, while symbolically it reflects the inner world of the individual. Music speaks to the concerns of adolescents, sexuality, autonomy, individuality, romantic love, family values, dance, identity, drugs, religion, social change, getting drunk, etc.

Music is often used to seek acceptance, since our musical preferences reflect who we are, and let others see us. It also serves to create a personal space and to show rebellion against the dominant adult ideologies.

In the task of identity formation, it is essential self-expression within the peer group (McFerran, 2004). The power to express oneself freely in a peer group favors the formation of identity and self-expression and for McFerran this would be the focus of group work with adolescents.

It is important the clear connection between self-expression and identity formation during adolescence. But this objective depends on a crucial achievement: that of group cohesion.

Northern & Kurland (2001) explain that group cohesion is manifested in the individual group members as a "sense of belonging and attraction to the group." This is important for the group process because cohesive groups meet the needs of belonging and unity of their members.

McFerran (2005) proposes the inclusion of music to work on self-expression in a group setting, through active methods of songwriting and receptive methods of listening to favorite songs.

2.5. Music Therapy and Adolescents

I believe the book of McFerran (2010) *Adolescents, Music and Music Therapy*, an essential tool and reference book to understand the different methods and techniques of music therapy with adolescents. In her book, she explains what she considers fundamental regarding 'how to work with adolescents' and describes the main methods for working with them: song

methodology (divided into pre-existing songs and composition of original songs), and the use of musical improvisation. McFerran produces an exhaustive review of bibliography on music therapy literature and adolescents and discusses the current approaches. She also presents several case examples and illustrative vignettes describing each type of intervention.

Young people's favorite music acts as a mirror and a window of their life experience. This is the starting point, which McFerran (2010) poses in her study on working with adolescents, stating that using the pre-existing relationship between the teenager and their favorite music can be very powerful, while at the same time pleasurable, both for the adolescent and for the music therapist. The pre-existing relationship between the teenager and their music facilitates emotional expression and the connections between the adolescent and the world around them, peers, therapist, etc. - (McFerran, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2010a).

McFerran (2010) speaks of the various models of music therapy with adolescents according to the objectives and needs to be worked on. The author relates each model with a different psychological theoretical framework. She establishes a map of how music therapy can be used with teenagers, based on different approaches, among which the humanistic approach stands out, since she was educated within this movement.

To McFerran, if the intended result is identity formation, the attitude of the therapist would be "flow with it" and the therapeutic intent would be "to offer acceptance" to teenagers. This would be a model of "resource oriented music therapy", within the framework of humanistic psychology. This is the direction that is closest to my goals of identity formation, and is the dominant orientation in this music therapy process. In this, I have used some of the fundamentals of gestalt therapy that belongs to the humanist movement.

Marisa Manchado (2006), in *Musicoterapia gestáltica* reflects on the connections between gestalt therapy and music.

Gestalt is a German word whose rough translation would be emergent figure, "figure that emerges from the ground". Gestalt therapy has been called "the therapy of awareness". Awareness also has connotations of being alert and attentive, as an attitude of wakefulness, not as willful effort (Manchado, 2006).

Attention in music education, perceiving in a relaxed manner, is basic. Without awareness of body, rhythm and breathing there is no possibility of learning "naturally and in a relaxed

way." Relaxed attention is a prerequisite for proper assimilation of musical content (Manchado, 2006).

There are several common work elements in music therapy and gestalt therapy. Both in music therapy and gestalt therapy, are essential listening and attention training, discipline observing the here and now, interpersonal and intrapersonal work, polar elements and spontaneity.

Gestalt Therapy is based on the current valuation of the present (instead of the past or the future), and of the act instead of the symbol. Another important aspect is the assessment of responsibility, understanding that we are responsible for ourselves, with a permanent invitation to the person to take responsibility for what they are doing, feeling, avoiding, denying, willing, inhibiting, etc.

The Gestalt therapist uses his own feelings and moods as therapeutic tools, to realize what is happening in the situation and group field.

The emphasis is on attitude: transparency, honesty, conscience in the present, body-emotion and thought as a holistic value. Value is given to experience as a basic element of therapeutic change or learning, just as in musical learning (Manchado, 2006).

In my music therapy intervention with adolescents, I use the Gestalt approach as a way of being and an attitude towards them, being attentive myself and trying to listen to what is emerging in the process. The aim is for teenagers to expand awareness of themselves, take responsibility and be conscious of what they need or choose to do at the present time.

Of the methods and techniques used in music therapy with adolescents, we focus on those based on song methodology, used for the group of adolescents in this project. In the next section I will examine these methods in more detail, especially the use of the technique of songwriting with adolescents.

2.5.1. Song methodology

As Bruscia (1998) states, songs are ways in which we as human beings explore our emotions. They express who we are and how we feel, they make us come closer to others and accompany us when we are alone. They articulate our beliefs and values and are witnesses to our lives. They reveal our innermost secrets and express our hopes, disappointments, fears

and triumphs. They are like our diaries or life stories. In short, they are the sounds of our personal development.

The work on songs aimed at the adolescent population is divided into two types of activities (McFerran, 2010):

- Use of existing favorite songs.
- Songwriting.

2.5.1.1. Using existing favorite songs

The use of teenagers' favorite songs means entering their home ground and the deep personal feelings and meanings that they have given to their music. This music communicates personal meanings and metaphors that would rarely be expressed to an adult and adolescent peer group outside of this context. The use of favorite songs is particularly powerful in this aspect (McFerran, 2010).

The adolescent may feel listened to and respected with regard to personal and intimate aspects, and can share information and feelings they have not shared with anyone else, through a favorite song. According to Ruud (1980), using the favorite music of adolescents means the performance or expression of their identity to the exterior, and therefore the use of songs as part of therapy is a direct way to engage in the process of identity formation. The "compromise" or bond the adolescent has with their favorite song helps them to break down their habitual defenses and talk about themselves and show themselves to others (McFerran, 2010).

To promote self-awareness, listening to favorite songs is accompanied by some sort of verbal processing, through dialogue or discussion time after listening to the song, which facilitates awareness and growth. The music therapist stimulates these expressions asking about the associations that teenagers make between everyday life and what the song expresses. In this case the activity is based on listening to recorded songs, rather than the interpretation of live songs.

In many cases, adolescents, especially boys, are unable to articulate their responses to music through verbal discussion. Then, a live performance of this song is used as a way to communicate what they cannot put into words. The therapy here is the experience of the musical process, and this supports the development of the therapeutic relationship. The

therapist in this case has a role to offer acceptance, rather than attempting to promote self-awareness through verbal discussion. Here what is emphasized is the therapy that occurs in the music, rather than after the music.

2.5.1.2. Songwriting

Songwriting in music therapy has been defined by Wigram and Baker (2005, p. 16) as "the process of creating, transcribing and/or writing lyrics and music by the client or clients and therapist within a therapeutic relationship to address the client's psychosocial, emotional and cognitive needs".

Songwriting offers a musical framework, which can be structured and flexible at the same time, for the expression of thoughts and feelings.

Wigram and Baker (2005), referring to "songwriting as therapy," say that within groups, songs help develop group cohesion, encouraging social interaction and providing peer support.

According to Roob (1996), songwriting can be used in a group setting as well as individual. The group offers adolescents an opportunity to come together to share and affirm their feelings, socialize within a peer group, get approval from their peers and express feelings in a safe and confidential environment. As parts of the song are written and composed, members of the group describe their experiences and feelings about those experiences. The music therapist serves as group facilitator by making explicit their comments and ideas. Roob notes that songs written in a peer group tend to be of a more humorous tone, but the issues involved are often quite serious.

According to Wigram and Baker (2005), the essence of the art of songwriting in therapy is that the song can capture the identity of the person. This is why the music therapist puts so much emphasis on the importance of their clients creating the song based, as far as possible, on their own ideas, material and musical preference.

Writing songs with adolescents is also similar to the concept of "music as therapy", where what is emphasized is the therapy that occurs in the musical process, rather than the verbal processing which follows. Here, the process and product of writing a song in therapy sessions is the therapeutic intervention. The therapeutic effect is caused by the adolescents' creation, their interpretation and recording of their song. The therapist's role within the music therapy

relationship is to facilitate this process, ensuring that teenagers create a composition that they feel belongs to them and expresses their personal needs, feelings and thoughts (Wigram and Baker, 2005).

Wigram and Baker (2005) relate the different methods and techniques of songwriting, differentiating techniques for writing the lyrics and techniques for creating music. These techniques are used depending on the population and their needs. Among the techniques of lyric creation is the therapeutic creation of lyrics before developing the music; leading a brainstorming session; helping clients to write new lyrics and giving them examples of music to choose from; selecting words from a list; using poems or lyrics the client has previously composed in another situation; the client writes a new poem; role playing and acting through puppetry; gap-filling techniques in familiar songs; a technique of parody of popular songs, using the music, changing the lyrics; collage of songs, using books with songs or a list of songs from the CD and selecting words and phrases from existing songs that have meaning for them; generating lists of rhyming words that rhyme with keywords have been introduced; using lyrics from existing songs; development of home-made lyrics between sessions; inventing a spontaneous story between client and therapist based on the open sentence "Once upon a time ..."; the therapist writes down the words and phrases created spontaneously by the patient; open-ended questions on a subject; direct questions to clarify a patient's issues; questions to choose from or to reply yes or no to; strategic songwriting, in which the therapist composes the song in advance for a specific purpose or a specific patient.

Among the techniques of musical creation are making music using instruments while the therapist supports the client's improvisation; musical sound effects to accompany the lyrics or stories; create music that depicts or describes the emotion or image associated with a word or phrase; use existing melodies or parts of songs that inspire or give structure to the musical composition; a process whereby the music therapist creates the music and the client decides if he wants it that way; improvised melody on a pattern of 2 or 4 chords, creating an atmosphere appropriate to the subject communicated through the songs; to determine the style and tone of the song; transcription of the music made in the session to score; collective techniques that involve the participation of more than one person, using dialogue between two or more participants or question and answer; songs sung in one tone, like a recitative.

2.5.2. Music Therapist's Role

In this project, the music therapist's role is mainly to offer acceptance, and "flow with it" of what is happening in the present moment. The music therapist also seeks to facilitate self-awareness through verbal processing of musical material. This role varies depending on the different degrees of resistance shown by teenagers when verbalizing their perceptions, emotions, experiences and thoughts.

2.6. Qualitative research criteria

Research method

The project is based on a humanistic approach, focusing on identity formation through music and music therapy in the peer group. Due to the nature of the phenomenon, it requires a qualitative research method, which does not begin with a method or specific design, and is then imposed on the phenomenon. Instead of this, it starts by focusing on the phenomenon, approaching it in an exploratory way, and then describing how the phenomenon will reveal itself in its own way (Wheeler, 2005). The qualitative study emerges through a process of discovery.

Qualitative research is also a personal process, and the entire study can be viewed as a personal creation of the researcher (Wheeler, 2005).

This is an exploratory and explanatory study with the focus on the processes of emotional expression, interpersonal relationships and identity formation in the music therapy process.

This research is close to the methods and objectives of action research in educational practice, in which participants reflect on the educational process itself, in order to improve and learn from experience.

Action research is characterized by an orientation towards improving the quality of education, and to guide teachers, the key players, as teacher-researchers (Zahonero, 2009). The researcher-teacher tries to help resolve problems and improve educational practice.

We can speak of a triangulation method, given that for this research the following data are analyzed: the music therapist's diary journal, the participants' diaries, the video-audio recordings of the sessions, and the products of the activities (music and song lyrics). In research, triangulation methods are based on the use of multiple sources of information and independent measures compared in the search for understanding reality.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Background

I found numerous examples of literature in English demonstrating the effect of music therapy with adolescents. Much of it speaks of aggressive adolescents (Rickson & Watkins, 2003), emotionally disturbed adolescents (McFerran, 2010; Haines, 1989; Roob, 1996) or adolescents at risk (McFerran, 2010; Brooks, 1989; Henderson, 1983), others of community music therapy with adolescents with different problems (McFerran, 2010; Ansdell, 1995), etc.

Rickson & Watkins (2003) conducted a pilot study to see whether music therapy was effective in promoting pro-social behavior in aggressive boys, who had learning, social and emotional problems. Research is carried out in a special residential school. The results suggest that the music therapy program, which promotes autonomy and creativity, can help adolescents to interact more appropriately with others in a residential environment, but can also lead to more disruptive behaviour in the school class. They also conclude that adolescents with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder can reap greater benefits from more structured programs and smaller groups.

Keen (2005) conducted a study in which he defended the benefits of using music as a therapeutic tool to encourage teenagers who have experienced trauma. The author argues in favor of the use of music to break down the communication barriers that often occur when teenagers do not have a solid base of communication. He uses pre-test and post-test data to measure the effectiveness of using music in his private clinical practice. He claims that techniques such as listening and discussion about a song, writing lyrics, composing music and performing it, have proved very useful in facilitating self-expression, projecting thoughts and feelings in a discussion, improving self-awareness and encouraging verbalization, offering a pleasant and safe environment, facilitating relaxation and reducing stress and anxiety. He concludes that music used deliberately and carefully, has proved a useful tool in the therapeutic process because of its non-verbal, creative and emotional qualities.

Gold, Voracek & Wigram (2004) investigated the effectiveness of music therapy in children and adolescents with psychopathology, and analyzed whether the efficiency of music therapy is influenced by the type of pathology, patient age, the music therapy focus and the type of result. The analysis shows that music therapy has a significant positive effect, with clinical findings consistent and statistically significant. The authors conclude that music therapy is an effective intervention in children and adolescents with psychopathology. Music therapy produces a clinically relevant effect and may be recommended for clinical use. Music therapy for children and adolescents seems to be more effective when combining different approaches to music therapy.

In a subsequent study, Gold, Wigram & Voracek (2007) investigated the relationship between the therapeutic techniques used with children and adolescents and the therapeutic changes that occur. The main finding was that children and adolescents in music therapy change more when specific music therapy techniques are used (such as verbal improvisation and reflection of the music), and other less specific music therapy techniques (such as free play) are not used. The most obvious explanation given by the authors is that the musical interaction can provide some unique opportunities for therapeutic change that are not inherent in play activities. The findings indicate the importance of being aware of the strengths and limitations specific to a method of therapy. They conclude that more research is needed on the specific components of the music therapy intervention.

A central issue in the adolescent population is the theme of identity. Music therapy allows the adolescent to establish a relationship with themselves and develop a positive sense of self, which increases their ability to interact with both peers and adults (McFerran, 2010).

McFerran (2005), in an article on how the use of songs with teenagers underlines the value of using music in group work with adolescents and highlights the ability of music to facilitate authentic self-expression, and to promote cohesion objective group. The author believes that self-expression is the central objective or goal to develop in group work with adolescents. For her it is valuable that adolescents are encouraged to communicate honestly within a group forum because of the task of identity formation.

McFerran (2005) argues that artistic expression can play an important role because nonverbal communication is suitable for those who have difficulty expressing themselves in words, and songs can bridge the gap between artistic metaphor and language.

Through the use of current pop-rock songs in the sessions, you can set a mode of communication between the adolescent and adult, who does not judge the lyrics or the songs chosen by the boy or girl. The music therapist permits in this way that the songs serve as expression through their lyrics, rhythms and the feelings transmitted by the music as well as through the attitude, the way of dressing, grooming, etc. of the singers (Tervo, 1985, 1991).

Tervo (2001), based on 20 years of clinical experience of music therapy with adolescents, says that music, particularly rock music, can give young people the opportunity to express themselves, to be in touch, and to share together the feelings of rage, anger, pain, nostalgia and psychological disintegration. At the same time the author believes that music helps adolescents to experience proximity and isolation, and to explore their emotions and sexual fantasies.

Percussion instruments, songwriting, listening to music and singing as a group are safe techniques that can help the adolescent to learn a way of appropriate self-expression (Brooks, 1989). In a more profound work, the music therapist can use role-play along with music. In this way the music therapist allows the teenager to leave their usual role as a teenager and become their favorite singer, an adult with whom they are having problems, or one of their peers. Interpreting the lyrics of songs both existing and newly created gives the teenager the opportunity to find more socially acceptable ways of expressing rage, anger and extreme frustration. This type of activity is great for peer interaction, for the sense of self and for communication (Brooks, 1989).

Referring to the main technique used in this music therapy project with adolescents, songwriting, Wigram and Baker (2005) point out that music therapy literature has plentiful examples of the use of songwriting as therapy, and there are few research papers describing the method and the results of this technique in treatment.

In my literature review I found many articles about using songwriting as a technique with teenagers, both individually and in a group context. These refer to different types of people such as desperate and depressed adolescents (Goldstein, 1990), adolescents who have suffered abuse (Lindberg, 1995), adolescents at risk (Tyson 2002, 2004), adolescents who have

experienced trauma (Roob, 1996), etc. The songwriting technique is used primarily as a way to facilitate group cohesion, emotional expression and identity formation.

With regard to songwriting and identity formation we find the research carried out by McFerran, Baker, Patton & Sawyer (2006). These authors carried out a retrospective study, analyzing the lyrics of songs written by adolescents with anorexia nervosa, to identify common themes expressed through songwriting. They analyze the lyrics of 17 songs written by 15 girls who had been part of the music therapy program at a hospital in Melbourne, and had written at least one lyric during a music therapy session.

To analyze the issues they established six categories identified by literature and clinical experience. The topics are divided into: relationships, identity, aspirations, reference to the illness and the impact it has on their lives, emotional awareness and access to support. The results show that the theme of "identity" is the most widely used, together with the sub-theme of exploring new behaviors and they suggest that interventions with songwriting can support the processing of important therapeutic issues in adolescents with anorexia nervosa.

Within the educational framework, the literature speaks of projects with adolescents with special needs, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, developmental delay, etc. (McFerran, 2010, Montello & Cones, 1998).

There is a project that speaks of a high school intervention to prevent adjustment difficulties in Korean adolescent girls (Kim et al, 2006). This pilot study attempts to analyze the effectiveness of a school intervention using music as a component of group psychotherapy for healthy teenage girls. The study was conducted with 35 adolescents who received a group music therapy program. The techniques used included listening to music and group singing, changing tempo and melody in a piece of music, songwriting, and music mixed with body movement. The musical material used was selected from what was considered popular music among Korean teenage girls. They concluded that the participants obtained several beneficial results that can serve as protective factors to prevent possible disruptions in social and emotional development.

Another project that explores music therapy with adolescents in an educational framework and from a preventive approach is to Nöker-Ribaupierre & Wöfl (2010). This is a pilot study that takes place in Munich, in two boarding schools and aims to prevent violence in the context of the growing immigrant adolescent population in German schools, which is forced

to deal with cultural differences and language difficulties. They start with the assumption that through music, one offers a thematic framework which can regulate affection and aggression, resolve conflicts, avoid and resist feared situations and deal constructively with aggression. The authors believe that working creatively on specific issues promotes mutual respect, acceptance of individual differences and social integration, particularly in classes with teenagers from different cultures.

Nöker-Ribaupierre & Wöfl focus on two interrelated aspects: music and improvisation as a means of cooperation, self-regulation and emotional regulation as a means of preventing violence. The program aims to provide children and adolescents the opportunity to actively make music with instruments that are easy to play in the group context of the class. This serves as a means of expressing their mental state and tension. They also involve teachers in the program so it aims to improve the relationship between them and their students. The final results of the research are not presented, since the pilot project is still ongoing when the authors write the article, although they emphasize the great potential in using music for therapeutic means when it is conveniently prepared and applied as a preventive and healing tool for children and adolescents.

Also in the educational setting, I found very interesting the experience of McFerran and Hunt (2008). They use music in schools to promote healthy management of pain and loss. The study describes three research projects that use two different research approaches to investigate the benefits of music therapy as support for adolescents who suffer the loss of a loved one. The methods offered as a means of expression for the adolescents are musical improvisation and songwriting. The first study uses a phenomenological approach to data analysis, and the other two use the principles of formal action research in their design.

The authors state that schools are increasingly offering the social services that had previously been carried out by the church, large families and other sources of support. They believe that today, schools are the easiest place for teenagers to get support, and therefore schools require community help to meet the many expectations on them, apart from teaching.

The starting point for the first project was to provide music therapy groups within the school and each successive project sought to improve the way this service was offered. The first project demonstrated that adolescents who had lost a loved one, wanted to have some control over the research project, in response to the loss of control that had previously experienced in losing a loved one. The second project identified that teenagers could only have control within the school community if the team of teachers supported them. The third project

concluded that, even with the support of the school community, the adolescents' first priority was to address their own issues of grief and loss, asking for much less comprehension from the school community about their pain and loss.

McFerran, Roberts & O'Grady (2010) conducted another study on the potential of using music therapy with bereaved adolescents, collecting qualitative and quantitative data and analyzing them. They based it on the experiences mentioned above, in which the school was used as a place to learn to manage pain, and the proven success that music therapy had to this effect (McFerran & Hunt, 2008).

The Australian Government requested this research to explore the potential of music therapy with the afflicted adolescent population with a view to using this type of intervention as a preventive health intervention. The researchers believe that gathering data from qualitative and quantitative sources could improve the interpretation of their findings.

They locate a school in Melbourne which has a psychosocial support program, to carry out their research. The program involves 16 adolescents. Among the music therapy techniques offered to the adolescents are the songwriting, free improvisation with percussion instruments, or listening to familiar songs followed by a discussion of their meaning. The results show that the central theme that emerged was "having permission for pain." Another five sub-themes reflect the changes they consider as beneficial: the move from being stuck to advancing; going from being repressed to emotional expression; going from being stressed to being relaxed; going from being isolated to being connected; and going from having to keep a situation secret to sharing it.

The authors conclude that the results which express descriptions of emotional relief show the connection between music and emotions. The participants state that the music group is a way of expressing their emotions. The pre-existing relationship between the young people and their music serves as a platform for emotional expression and connection that is used within a format of group and therapeutic support (McFerran, Robert & O'Grady, 2010).

Spanish literature in the field of music therapy and an educational framework is very limited. The work of Zahonero Rovira (2007) stands out. The author has done several projects with students in a Secondary School, recorded in her doctoral thesis "La influencia de la Musicoterapia en el Clima de Convivencia de los Institutos de Educacion Secundaria" (2006) ("The Influence of Music Therapy on Coexistence in Secondary Schools"). The author supports the inclusion of music therapy programs at school, as is done in other countries like the USA, Finland and the United Kingdom, where they conduct pioneering experiments in

music therapy in which music therapy support is provided to adolescents within the school setting and she cites anecdotal interventions that are beginning to be made in Secondary Schools in the Community of Madrid.

Zahonero illustrates the music therapy intervention in school, with a study on the implications of music therapy in improving coexistence in a secondary school of the Community of Madrid. The program is implemented throughout the school year to a group of 14 special needs teenagers in the second year of Secondary Education, in which music therapy is introduced as a Curricular Adaptation to the Subject of Music. The personal educational needs of adolescents includes sociolinguistic integration, problems of absenteeism resulting from broken homes, neglect, medical conditions, school maladjustment, learning difficulties and marked curricular gaps, and emotional and behavioral problems, as reflected in very disruptive behavior in the school environment. Their activities are mainly based on improvisation, and are based on the personal experiences of adolescents with regard to sound and music.

Zahonero concludes that music therapy leads to classroom integration, improved relations among group members, increased self-esteem, increased self-confidence, which are reflected in many cases in better academic performance. Both the students and the people around them (faculty, parents) rated the experiment as being very positive and special.

Zahonero (2009) also stresses the importance of reflection in the learning process for qualitative research in education. She proposes a teaching practice based on a continuous reflection process in order to learn from this practice to improve learning, as in action research.

The Spanish author Garaigordobil (2008) proposes a psychological intervention for adolescents in school, which is close to the objectives of this project, and focuses on personality development and education on human rights. It is carried out through various activities such as games, artwork, role play, group discussions, etc., instead of music therapy. Although it is not a focus from a music therapy perspective, this intervention is close to the targets developed in this project. The evaluation of the results of the program highlights the positive impact this has had, both on personal variables and social development.

4. Clinical Method

4.1. Population

The program takes place in a Secondary School in Rivas-Vaciamadrid, a town near Madrid, with a group of adolescents aged 15-16 in 4th grade.

Adolescents were selected from those who have chosen music as an option, and the selection criteria was their willingness to study music and compatibility with the timetable of other elective courses offered by the center.

The program is presented to students as a way to acquire a better understanding of themselves and to facilitate their expression through musical activities based on listening and interpreting favorite songs and songwriting, as well as musical improvisation.

This initial framework is important so that they know and understand what we intend and is a way to create a structure needed to develop the process further (Yalom, 2005).

At the beginning the adolescents were given a consent form for video-audio recording of the sessions, to be signed by the parents or guardians, informing them that the videos would be used strictly for professional reasons in areas of review, assessment, supervision and research (Appendix 1).

Although initially, the group consisted of 12 teenagers, two of them (one boy and one girl) abandoned the program in early November, due to timetable inconsistency at the center. Another student left the high school in December due to a change of family residence.

It is noteworthy that none of the teenagers wanted to leave the group and their departure was motivated by the above causes.

The fact that three teenagers left the group during the first quarter led to a change in group dynamics because two of the teenagers who left the group were male, and gender distribution was more balanced in the beginning (there were 8 girls and 4 boys).

The sessions were in a group. The group consisted of nine teenagers, seven girls and two boys. During the first quarter of the year (October to December) the course syllabus was based on the history of jazz and pop-rock. During the first quarter, students also performed improvisational musical activities, and they brought favorite songs to the classroom, which we listened to or played, we spent two of the three weekly sessions on this. They also prepared a mini concert of three Christmas songs which they performed in the Christmas concert.

Thus students already have a relationship prior to the start of the program in the second quarter (January to March).

The research is carried out in the second quarter of the school year, with 30 sessions with a frequency of three weekly sessions of 50 minutes.

4.2. Objectives and program features

In this music therapy project in a high school I plan to use music as a tool to:

- Encourage free and genuine self-expression in a group setting, including emotional expression.
- Strengthen the sense of self among adolescents, promoting their self-knowledge and the identity formation process.
- Use the music and specially the songwriting technique to favor identity formation.
- Promote interaction with peers and promote social development.

Through observation and analysis of the results I will try to answer the question "How can music and music therapy facilitate emotional expression and interpersonal relationships, supporting the identity formation of adolescents in an educational setting?".

4.3. Music therapy methods and techniques

The main music therapy methods used are song methods, especially the method of songwriting. We have also used free musical improvisation.

4.4. Structure of sessions

- Initial verbal round, once we are sitting in a circle. A common way of making contact are my open ended questions, like: "How are you today?".
- Open opportunity to present the favorite song from one of the members to the rest of the group, to proceed to hear this or continue with another activity. Thus the structure of the session is flexible and allows them to participate in the form taken by the meeting, taking decisions and responsibility about what they want to do at the present moment.

- Usually talk about the lyrics of the song and what it means for them. I encourage them with questions like: why do you like this song?, what does it mean to you?, what do you think when you listen to it?, is there anyone in the group who is experiencing what is happening in the song?, to what extent is this happening to you?
- Follow the process that can be variable: the creation of an original song, the performance of a pre-existing song or creating music together. I ask them: do you prefer to start with the song or play instruments?, do you want to hear the song again?, shall we sing?, who wants to mark the rhythm with an instrument?, who wants to sing with others?, who wants to sing a solo?, what instruments would you choose to accompany it?
- Another technique that I offer is musical improvisation, asking them to express their current mood with instruments. This improvisation is usually done as a group.
- At the end, there's a verbal processing of group members about what has happened, how they have felt, if their mood has changed since the start of the session, etc.
- After the meeting, each member reflects on what happened in their diary.

5. Data collection instruments

5.1. The recording sessions diary of the music therapist

One method of data collection has been the therapist diary, recording what happened after each session. It describes the issues, group dynamics and how the therapist feels after the session (feelings, thoughts or concerns, and anything else you notice at the meeting and any significant thing that happened in the session). This tool is used to reflect on the process and collect the group's needs and perceptions of the therapist. It is a daily evaluation method and a reference for supervision.

5.2. The Adolescents' Diaries

Teenagers answered the following questions in their diaries after each session:

1. How did you feel during the session?
2. What have you learned about yourself in the session?; has there been any change?; have you noticed any change in yourself?
3. What have you learned on the subject (music)?
4. What did you notice about the group or another person in the group?
5. What was the highlight of the session and why?

The adolescents' diary is a data collection tool that performs two distinct functions. On the one hand it serves as a record of qualitative data, in which adolescents express themselves freely, spontaneously and uniquely. On the other hand, it is a tool that allows adolescents to internalize the process, stopping to realize what happens, process and reflect on what they perceive about themselves and the group. It can also be a means of expressing things they dare not say in the group in front of everyone else.

5.3. Audio and video recordings

Audio and video recording is an essential tool for reflection on the music therapy process. Most of the musical improvisations are recorded in audio, and some sessions are also recorded on video. Like the diaries, the recording serves several functions: it serves for registration and material support, which allows me to listen between sessions to see what has

happened or transcribe the music they have created to keep working on that sound material in the following sessions. It also enables teenagers to make an exercise of reflection, listening to the material they have produced, both individually and in groups. It's like a mirror into which they can look and see themselves reflected.

5.4. The products of the activities: songs (sheet music and lyrics).

The lyrics of favorite songs that adolescents bring are recorded so that we create a group compilation including all of their songs. This allows us to go back and retake some of the songs from their sound history as a group at any time, and they see themselves reflected in their music at the end of the process.

The lyrics of the songs that teenagers have composed have also been collected as meaningful data.

The transcript of the song music that teenagers have created is other data that I've registered in the process.

6. Results

Experience report: use of existing songs and songwriting techniques with a group of adolescents¹.

*'Without a song, the day would never end;
without a song, a man ain't got a friend;
without a song, the road would never bend,
without a song' (Elvis Presley, 1971)*

Elvis Presley symbolizes the birth of a musical culture, rock & roll, which for the first time in history, marks a generation of young people who want to differentiate themselves from their parents. Music starts to be their mode of identity, the lyrics of which deal with the issues and concerns of adolescents.

In the first quarter of the course, content is based on international pop rock and jazz history. These contents are related to the topic of this study, since the favorite songs they bring in and the songs they compose from songwriting, belong to this style of music.

6.1. Initial exploratory and pre-contact stage: using existing popular songs and introduction to songwriting

Before the introduction of songwriting, I think it is essential to create an atmosphere of trust and an environment where teenagers feel safe. They need time to explore the different modes of expression and need to feel free to express themselves. Similarly, this phase serves to create a common group language or group culture (Yalom, 2005).

It is also a stage in which adolescents are faced with embarrassment. Being able to recognize their embarrassment and remain within it during this phase, whilst being supported by the attitude of acceptance of the therapist, means that little by little they start expressing themselves in a more freely and confidently way. They also become aware of this.

¹ The names of the adolescents in the transcription have been changed.

Example of my diary Session 8:

"... they talk about shyness, what makes them embarrassed. Iker says he is embarrassed about opening up to friends ... Laura turns red. It has to do with the camera, because it provokes fear in them and a feeling of being observed. Some of them sit so their faces cannot be seen ... Mercedes says that when they are nervous they laugh. Celso says he has realized it is like in the movie "Rhythm is I" they saw last year in music class, in which it is said that when adolescents don't know what to do they laugh...I think they are getting to grips with their embarrassmen".

Celso daily example of the Session 8:

".. with regard to myself I learned what I've already known for a long time, I get very embarrassed. I also realized that I have a deeper voice ... "

My role at this moment is to be available and to listen, in addition to making proposals to encourage free expression and the group relationship.

As music therapist, in this initial attempt I also try to create a structure, a secure frame, to get into shape the self-knowledge objectives I propose.

In the first phase of the process, to which I have devoted about 15 sessions, we use favorite songs. I asked each member to bring in a song that was meaningful to them. I told them that we could work with that song for two or three sessions, depending on what they needed.

Favorite songs are combined with the methods of free musical improvisation. We also carried out songwriting with the simple technique of substitution of lyrics to a pre-existing music, which does not pose too much of a challenge for adolescents.

List of favorite songs of the group and topics covered

- "California Girls" (Kate Perry): frivolity, sexuality, easy life, summer, boy-girl ratio.
- "Himno del Sevilla" (El Arrebato): football, group membership, feelings of loyalty to a community.
- "Hold my hand" (Michael Jackson & Akon): friendship, support, fellowship.
- "Bongo bong" (Manu Chao): migration to the city, feeling of being lost, a situation of being out of place, frustration.
- "A veces" (Los aldeanos y Nena Daconte): longing for a loved one.
- "Cumplir un año menos" (La Oreja de Van Gogh): longing for a lost love, memories.

- "Cooler than me" (Mike Posner): vanity, frivolity, scale of values, joy.
- "Una luz que se apaga" (Radio Macande): farewell, longing for someone who is absent, death of a loved one.
- "Antes que cuente diez" (Fito y Fitipaldis): resilience to life experiences, attitude to life when faced with challenges, life learning, finiteness of life.
- "La luna me sabe a poco" (Marea): love, sense of strength and exceeding the limits, insecurity.
- "Hit the Road, Jack" (Ray Charles): being angry at a partner, setting limits, ending a relationship.
- "Na na na" (My Chemical Romance): drugs, love, uncertain future, critical to the system, aggressiveness.
- "Caricias en tu espalda" (Despistados): love, affection, sexuality.
- "Hey soul sister" (Train): love, the feeling of brotherhood of souls.
- "Dynamite" (Taio Cruz): love of life, celebration of life, dancing, moving, animated, holiday.
- "The elephant song" (Moulin Rouge OST): true love, boy girl relationship, the relationship between love and sex.
- "All you need is love" (The Beatles): universal love.
- "Venecia" (Hombres G): humor, sense of lightheartedness, joy, going on trips together.

Initial songwriting phase:

- Rap about the institute and what getting up early means, the demands of teachers, examinations (brainstorming technique).
- Use an existing melody of a song brought in by a female member of the group (*California girls*, Kate Perry). They do it in groups of three. The theme is varied. Some are humorous and others are superficial and aggressive in content.
- Change the lyrics of a preexisting song brought in by Iker. In the sessions, I've noticed that Iker has a hard time showing his true personality and talking about himself. In fact, he is the latest to bring in a song and at first did not want to do it, until he was the only one left and I said "the next day it's your turn" This is the hymn of a football team (*Himno del Sevilla*). We created the lyrics as group. They were about a gentleman, with whom he identified, and the relationship with his mother and his father.

After this experience with the group of adolescents, I found that the songwriting technique can be one of the key methods for promoting identity formation of teenagers through music.

I think the use of existing favorite songs and original songwriting can be complementary, and through my experience I have found that the use of existing songs can serve as a preliminary phase for the composition of new songs.

Starting directly with songwriting is a challenge that teenagers can consider impossible and too complex. Thus I think to start with existing songs is a way of exploring different styles, rhythms, harmonies, groups, letters,..., which teenagers like, so they can begin to define themselves and see which things they like and which they do not.

The songs are analyzed and we explore how they are composed. This is at the same time a significant way of learning music that can motivate the teenager to write their own songs in their favorite style of music.

Moving from existing songs to new and original songs is a progressive and secure approach, since we are not starting from scratch or in a vacuum. We can use an existing rhythm, a style, a chord progression or even a given melody to compose our own song.

Early in the process, resistance and distrust of talking about themselves, expressing their emotions was palpable.

Example of my diary Session 5:

"Today we started doing improvisation as a warm-up. The instruction is to pay attention to the body and bodily sensations. First the verbal part and then improvising.

Alicia says she has stomach problems and that at the beginning she was nervous and felt as if her intestines were twisting around. Now she feels better.

Celso also talks of nerves. Then we improvise with the instruction to listen to each other.

When they finish Mercedes says she believes this was the first time she really felt like they were listening to each other. I think they really were listening, and I feel positive that she says this, because many times she has not had much implication or participation in the group, lagging behind. I think perhaps this was the first time Mercedes was listening.

Mercedes says she feels relieved. Both Iker and Sonia wanted the improvisation to finish".

Gradually the group was gaining in confidence and spontaneity, and was beginning to establish an atmosphere of communication on a more emotional level, which was for me more authentic. This is reflected in the lyrics of the songs they compose later.

Sandra says in her diary: *"...in this class I have learned that the more we get rid of the fear of being silly and being ourselves, the more we express ourselves, both physically and mentally, and this increases our knowledge... I hope that the class continues like this..."*.

Silvia says: *"...with regard to those who form the group, every day I realize that I know them a little better, and that little by little we're coming together as one big family..."* .

Most of the adolescents were very active and brought in more than one song, except Iker, who brought only one.

In interpreting favorite songs, teenagers carry out a fun musical activity as a group. Often they themselves pointed out in their diaries and in their comments on the sessions that they got a lot of enjoyment out of singing their favorite songs as a group and then listening to them. They saw it as a form of union, especially when the songs were liked by the majority.

Alicia says in her diary with regard to singing a favorite song together: *"...we agreed to do it ... we all had a good time and many people have got over their stage fright ... for me this has been the most important and fun moment of the whole session."*

Sonia says: *"...the best moment for me was when we sang together..."*

Here is an example of using a favorite song, session 11, in which Mercedes brought the song "Hold my hand" from Michael Jackson and Akon, which had a catchy rhythm and melody, but at the same time was simple. According to the students, the meaning of love and friendship, support, feeling happy and sad at the same time, was reflected in how they got together and enjoyed singing that song as a group. I think the emotions expressed through that song were present in the group feeling of unity, support and friendship.

Hold my hand (Michael Jackson-Akon)

Intro: C G Am F x 4

C G Am F

This life don't last forever, (Hold my hand)

C G Am F

So tell me what we're waiting for, (Hold my hand)

C G Am F
Better off being together, (Hold my hand)

C G Am F
Being miserable alone, (Hold my hand)

Bridge:

C G
Cause I been there before and you've been there before,

Am F
But together we can be alright. (alright) (yeah)

C G
Cause when it gets dark and when it gets cold

Am F
we hold Each other till we see the sunlight.

Chorus:

C G Am F
So if you just hold my hand, baby, I promise that I'll do

C G Am F
all I can, things will get better if you just

C G Am F
hold my hand, Nothing can come between us if you just

C G Am F
hold, hold my, hold, hold my, hold , hold my hand.

C G Am F
The nights are gettin' darker , (Hold my hand)

C G Am F
And there's no peace inside, (Hold my hand)

C G Am F
So why make our lives harder, (Hold my hand)

C G Am F
By fighting love tonight, (So hold...)

Bridge

Chorus

C G
I can tell that you're tired of being lonely (yeah)

Am F
Take my hand don't let go, baby, hold me (yeah)

C G
Talk to me an let me be your one and only (hold my hand)

Am F
Cause I can make it alright till the morning. (hold my hand)

Chorus

The comments from the teenagers' diaries about this session:

Mercedes: *"...I've noticed that when we all like the song and sing it, play it together we can all have a good time..."*.

Celso : *"...listening to the songs we've brought in are the highlights of the session for me ... I learned how to play the song Hold my hand in a series of chords..."*.

Sonia: *"...I felt good, and very at ease. I think it's because we sang a song that I like, then I felt very happy and active..."*.

Pilar: *"...today I learned that when someone brings a song that most people like, more people get involved..."*.

Silvia : *"...I like making new rhythms for the songs, learning to experience what sounds right and what sounds wrong, and learning to set rythms at will, and thus give them a more personal touch. The highlight of the session was when we sang together with the accompaniment of piano and guitar..."*.

When the songs were not so popular among all members, mutual respect was present, but they participated less in singing. In my role as guide to the process I made explicit on several occasions the importance of listening and showing respect by accepting all the issues that the different members of the group were bringing in, even when the songs were not to everyone's taste. This was an opportunity to reinforce the importance of mutual respect and learning about different people and styles.

6.2. Contact phase and creative adjustment. Composition of an original song. Emerging figure: childhood

In the second phase of the process, I register as a key moment the composition of a song within the group, entitled "*Infancia: ¿Dónde quedó ese niño?*" ("*Childhood: What happened to that child?*"). This song results from making full contact with an emerging figure in the process, that is childhood.

The composition of this song with totally original lyrics and music marked a turning point in the development of the group process, and in the way they expressed themselves and began to appear more spontaneous and free, more connected with what was happening to them personally.

I will stop at this point which I consider a "creative adjustment" in the Gestalt sense. This moment is for me a turning point in the group process. We will carefully observe how, through this technique, these aspects of our initial music therapy question are favoured: How can music facilitate emotional expression and interpersonal relationships, supporting identity formation?

Within the gestalt therapy theory, the field concept is based on the idea that the meeting of several people creates a whole, a field of relationships, interactions and energy, a common language, which would be equivalent to collective identity as a group. It is the concept in which figure-ground dynamics occurs.

The therapeutic process in the gestalt sense is the emergence of a shape or form, a gestalt. When this figure takes on a clear outline, then the work of mobilizing the gestalt or fixed figure is generated (Delacroix, 2008). The group backdrop would be the frame where significant forms emerge: the way we are or the way we do things. The backdrop contains the repetition, drives ancient mechanisms –the incomplete or fixed gestalts– to the foreground so that they can become complete. Thus, self-regulation occurs in the field.

In the free group improvisation we were doing in the sessions, I noticed that songs from their childhood appeared on several occasions ("*The lion king*", "*The little mermaid*", "*Los payasos de la tele*", "*Heidi*", etc.). Once, when I asked them to give a title to the free musical improvisation just completed, one of the teenagers called it "Childhood memories" and the rest nodded.

Example of my diary Session 15:

"Today Susana and Alicia are absent. They are not very motivated at the start of the session and do not want to do anything much. No one has brought in a song. In view of this, I propose to sing a song that we heard the previous day in a musical (40 El Musical) we had seen on a school trip. It's "Chica de Ayer" Nacha Pop. It doesn't motivate them and they are not keen to do so. I say we can sing a song about another subject but they cannot agree. About half-way through the session we do some improvisation. The instruction is to let out what they have inside, with voice, instruments or body.

They begin to sing songs from Disney "The lion king", "The little mermaid" ...etc. Someone entitles it "Memories of Childhood".

They are always aware of the camera, whether it is off or on.

I see they enjoy themselves a lot when they sing children's songs. The energy has changed and now they are participative and motivated.

Children's songs are a recurring theme. They are the emerging figure. I decide to use this to work on in the next session".

According to Bruscia (1999), within the Alvin model of improvisation, singing traditional or folk songs is an active musical improvisation technique important to the group. This is because joining the group around a common heritage or tradition, awakens memories, associations and provides opportunities for a lyrics review.

I believe these moments of free improvisation, in which they remember children's songs, to be similar to moments of play because of the pleasure and enjoyment they produce, letting the students get carried away by the situation. At the same time, they are creative moments, in which communication between group members takes place at different levels, including a symbolic level, different from spoken language.

In the diaries about these sessions, several of them describe improvisation with children's songs as the highlight of the session.

From their diaries about this session:

Sonia : *"...for me the highlight was when we all began to sing Disney songs we all knew, because it was an emotional moment that has united us all so much, because it reminded us when we were kids..."*

Laura: *"...I felt at ease, calm, happy to remember childhood. I learned that I miss childhood... the moment I most enjoyed was when we sang Disney songs..."*

This seems to me very symbolic and I think they are trying to express something with this "repetition." As a therapist I deal with something I see, which is in the field, and here it is the fact that they repeat children's songs. Therefore, I try to make contact with this phenomenon happening in the field, and what this might mean for them.

I write in my journal: *"I notice that when they improvise children's songs they are freer and I perceive them to be fully engaged and involved in the activity, all of them wanting to sing and listen to the person who proposes a topic. I guess these songs have a significant emotional load for them. They are really remembering their sound history, that of their childhood"*.

In the next session I decide to explore this meaning further. We spend the session exploring how their childhood was. I encourage them to think about how they were when they were children, both what they remember and recognize in themselves and what their parents and others told them. I ask them to get into pairs and share these thoughts with their partner. The teenagers participate and express animatedly their memories of childhood, its salient features. Once they have shared their perceptions of childhood in pairs they come back in a circle and some of them tell the whole group what they were like as children. I invite them to reflect on how they feel different now with regard to their childhood, what things have stayed the same and how things have changed.

As homework for the next session I ask them to write what they would say to that child they used to be in order to create the lyrics of a song.

Thus I am trying to foster contact functions, and teenagers make contact with the emerging figure. This encourages creative adjustment and therefore growth and maturity.

In the next session Pilar brings some written lyrics, with the words she would say to the girl she once was. Usually I consider Pilar to be more timid than other group members. She is the only one who has written the lyrics to her "child".

The words she has written are in the form of song lyrics with several verses and a chorus*:

INFANCIA (¿Dónde quedó ese niño?) *These are the original lyrics. See below for a translation.

Noto que se ha acabado
que ese niño ha crecido
que otra cosa ha comenzado
y que yo no he querido.

Me acuerdo de pequeña,
cuando todo era perfecto
que yo era una princesa
y mi vida era un cuento.

No existía preocupación
solamente diversión
todo era satisfacción
y nada depresión.

Estribillo:

¿Dónde quedó ese niño?
Que tanto me gustaba
Necesito ese cariño
Que todo el mundo me daba
¿dónde quedó ese niño?

Queda claro que hay un momento
en el que necesitas ayuda
tienes ese recuerdo,
que parece que todo lo cura.

En el parque por las tardes
pasabas las horas muertas
diciendo que aunque lo dejes
pasearás por las aceras.

Estribillo:

¿Dónde quedó ese niño?
Que tanto me gustaba
necesito ese cariño
que todo el mundo me daba
¿dónde quedó ese niño?

Y aunque no lo diga en alto,
echo de menos ese niño,
que decía que era el amo,
y que no era un chiquillo.

Eso era en el pasado,
pero ahora yo digo:
“Ni antes ni ahora soy el amo
porque aún tengo ese niño,
que aunque en creí perdido el pasado,
nunca acabará en el olvido”

Estribillo:

¿Dónde quedó ese niño?
Que tanto me gustaba
Necesito ese cariño
Que todo el mundo me daba
¿dónde quedó ese niño?

CHILDHOOD (What happened to that child?) *Translation.

I notice that it's over
that child has grown
something else has started
and I did not want it so.

I remember as a child,
when everything was perfect
I was a princess
and my life was a fairytale.

There were no concerns
just fun
everything was satisfaction
and no depression.

Chorus:

What happened to that child?
I liked so much
I need that affection
Everyone gave me
What happened to that child?

Clearly there is a time
when you need help
you have that memory,
that seems to cure everything

In the park in the evenings
you idled away your time
saying that even if you left it
you would go for a stroll along the streets.

Chorus:

What happened to that child?
I liked so much
I need that affection
Everyone gave me
What happened to that child?

And although I don't say it aloud,
I miss that child,
who said he was the master,
and that he wasn't a little boy.
That was in the past,
but now I say:
“Neither before nor now am I the master
because I still have that child
who I thought was lost in the past
I will never forget him”.

Chorus:

What happened to that child?
I liked so much
I need that affection
Everyone gave me
What happened to that child?

To me the lyrics transmit a feeling of sadness and melancholy for that lost childhood. I'm surprised by the sincerity with which she expresses the feeling of loss, and the clarity with which she explains how this child has been dethroned from his childhood paradise. I think that speaks of something quite profound.

I believe this is a universal feeling and is talking about the process of mourning for the infant stage we left behind us, which we can all suffer at some point in our adolescence. This may be reflected in the phrase: *"noto que se ha acabado, que ese niño ha crecido, que otra cosa ha comenzado, y que yo no he querido"*. ("I notice that it's over, that child is grown, something else has started, and I did not want it so").

Adolescence is characterized by an internal crisis due to losses that young people must confront. For Aberasturi and Knobel (1984) the teenager goes through three key stages of grieving:

1. Grieving for the lost child's body.
2. Grieving for the child's role and identity that forces them to reject dependence and accept responsibilities which are often unknown. This may be reflected in the phrase: *"Me acuerdo de pequeña, cuando todo era perfecto, que yo era una princesa, y mi vida era un cuento. No existía preocupación solamente diversión..."*. ("I remember as a child, when everything was perfect, I was a princess, and my life was a fairytale. There were no concerns only fun...").
3. Grieving for the parents of their childhood who they persistently try to retain in their personality, looking for the shelter and protection they provided. See: *"¿Dónde quedó ese niño? Que tanto me gustaba, necesito ese cariño que todo el mundo me daba..."*. ("Where is that child? I loved so much, I need the affection that everyone gave me ...").

According to Garaigordobil (2008) these periods of grieving are true losses of personality which lead the adolescent to the instability that defines them, the product of the evolving situation.

To begin the next session, I ask Pilar to read the lyrics and we discuss what they mean to her. She says they talk about a time when things were easier and she had no responsibilities, her family always showed their affection, and not so much was required in her studies. That day there is a great silence. The others listen intently. I feel we have something important and

meaningful to them. Someone also says something similar is happening to them. Then I propose that we should create the music for these lyrics. They all nod with great interest.

At that moment I am led by my intuition. I think the message of the song is very powerful and expresses a sentiment with which everyone can identify. I get the feeling that Pilar might have something in mind as to how she wants it to sound. She has a beautiful voice and has participated in singing several times and this is a potential that I think could be developed.

I turn to the piano and ask Pilar: Do you have any idea of how you want this song to sound? What about the melody? Have you thought of something?

She says "it could be something like this," and intones the first two sentences of the song with quite a clear melody. I ask her to repeat, while I take the audio recorder, to record the tune. Thus, it is also registered for the following session, and I can listen to it and transcribe it after the session.

Figure 1: Original melody.

Voice

No - to que se ha ca ba do, quee se ni ño ha cre ci do, queo tra
co sa ha co men za do y que yo no he que ri do. Mea cuer do de pe que ña, cuan do
to doe ra per fec to, que yo e rau na prin ce sa y mi vi da e raun cuen to.

Regarding how to proceed with the composition I often wonder whether the simplest way would be to take an existing melody and create a harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment or on the other hand start with some chords or a particular harmony to create a melody. I think this is a personal thing and it depends on each person and the various situations from which a song arises as to whether they decide to do it one way or another. In this project I have used both forms of writing with adolescents, but this time I opted for the melody that she had in

mind to create a harmonic accompaniment on the piano since she had a pretty good idea of the melody.

We spent a few minutes looking for the chords that can accompany this melody. Another girl we'll call Alicia, who plays a little guitar, looks for the chords that can accompany it. After several attempts we see clearly it should start in a minor key with a few descending chords and we test the Am - G - F - G.

The structure starts to take shape. These chords are repeated like a wheel for the first and second stanzas. While we see how it sounds, Alicia and Miriam try to help Pilar define her melody. Miriam thinks it could be similar to another song she knows and Pilar agrees to listen to her. Others express their opinion and when Miriam finishes singing her version, they decide they prefer Pilar's melody. And then we continue and repeat once again what we have until now.

The rest of the group, who have been listening carefully and are attentive to what is coming, begin now to create an accompaniment for the song once the harmonic framework, the slow tempo and a 4/4 compass are established. I ask them to choose an instrument to complement and support what we are doing.

Silvia and Iker choose a metallophone, Laura and Sonia choose a snare drum and a hit hat cymbals respectively. Mercedes grabs a tambourine and a drumstick to complement the rhythm. Celso is doubtful and tries several small percussion instruments (rattles, shakers). He decides on the egg-shaped shakers.

We go back to what we have so far. I ask them to look for some motif to complement the existing melody. We repeat several times and they improvise and look for something. Silvia finds a motif on the metallophone she likes and I ask her to repeat it. I suggest using it in modo ostinato. Iker finds a repetitive motif, similar to Silvia's.

Figure 2: Example of metallophone ostinato, Silvia.



For their part, the three girls responsible for creating the rhythm and drums find a rhythmic pattern they like. After repeating the same harmony for the first few bars several times, I suggest a harmonic change from minor to major in the chorus. They agree and the harmony changes in the chorus and other consecutive verses to C - G - Am - Fm.

When analyzing the song subsequently created, I realize it is a very familiar structure to them, because we played it before in a previous song: *Hold my hand* by Akon and Michael Jackson, which Mercedes had brought in and they had enjoyed themselves very much and had been very close. They are also the same chords of *No Woman No Cry* by Bob Marley.

Once we have established a basic structure, with a melody, a harmonic field, a little rhythm and ostinato motifs that complement the music, we have the basis to continue creating. We repeat our composition a couple of times and improvise at the end of the piece, leaving the space open for whatever may come.

In this session, the teenagers are fully engaged and involved in the creation of music and each group member is responsible for their part. Everyone has a role or roles assigned. Before finishing the session I ask them to record the parts separately to register them so as not to lose the work. Aware that their creation is not finished, and that very rich material has come out of the session, I try to collect and save it to work on in subsequent sessions.

It has been a very good session. When the bell rings I praise them for the good job they've done and I say that I really like what they have done, which is absolutely true.

My attitude was to go with the flow of what was emerging while simultaneously following a creative impulse that was trying to tune into the emotional atmosphere of the song. I was trying to be engaged and listening to everything that was coming up while at the same time involving all members of the group. The idea of having a collective creation that everyone felt they were part of was reflected in the adolescents' comments about how they were feeling. One student said: *"Today's class was cool !"* and *"I love how the song is going"*.

Extract of my diary Session 17:

"It was a very special session. Today we've been composing Pilar's song. I was amazed at how well it flowed and how engaged, respectful and collaborative the adolescents were. I felt we were making real contact. I felt very at ease and confident with the situation, while excited about the composition, and very engaged. They were happy and proud of what they did. I felt it was a special and important moment. "

Comments from the teenagers' diaries about feeling comfortable, relaxed, and doing something for the first time:

Alicia: *"...this class has made me feel very calm. We did something new and different that I had never done before, and that gave me motivation to keep writing and giving ideas for the song... Throughout the session I noticed a sense of coordination... I had never felt with other people... it was like taking something out that was inside me, all those memories of my childhood and releasing them was unique. I didn't feel like putting the guitar down when the bell rang ... the song is an original and emotive subject which I will always remember, but I think some of the metallophones should be removed because the sound is very sharp, and it would be good to put some wood in the bass .. "*

Silvia: *"...I felt very at ease, because composing relaxes me, it puts me in a good mood, I am happy when I participate in the creation of a song... if I concentrate on creating a rhythm, then I feel great, it's comforting to know that you have participated in the creation of a song and that you've made a good contribution... I've learned that with some lyrics for reference we can create a thousand rhythms and we feel very inspired and start creating... In the group I think we had a great atmosphere, relaxed but energetic. We worked together very well and I think we were all very happy... I think the highlight of the session was when we started to create music for Pilar's song... I do identify with the song Pilar has written, I identify with certain things... I felt sad, I recalled the time when I was little and that makes me feel happy ... there are times when I miss the love and attention of my parents. .. I need my parents more than I thought ... "*

Miriam: *"...today we have used the lyrics of a song that Pilar brought in... we have put a melody to the lyrics, using instruments... The result, for me, was quite a beautiful I felt very good... I think the song's lyrics clearly reflect her feelings... "*

Laura: *"...what I liked best is when we played instruments and we were all playing and giving ideas... "*

Sonia: *"...what I liked most was when we sang Pilar's song, which turned out very well..."*

Mercedes writes in her diary: *"...I have learned that when a person writes a song and writes what they feel, it also makes others express things they don't often think, as is the case of Pilar, we sang her song..."*

This comment reflects the importance for the group to express what everyone feels through this song. The emerging figure is in the field, and is expressed through Pilar. This emerging figure is childhood and memories and feelings that they have kept from their childhood. The fact that this song is meaningful to them is because of something that is present in the field

and emerges as a phenomenon in the group process, it emerges as a figure from the undifferentiated ground. It has formed a good "gestalt" or figure, and is reflected in the feeling of the entire group as being meaningful to them, and they have made real contact with what is present, with what exists.

On the other hand the creative work as a group is particularly unifying. Everyone is on his own task, and in a common task at the same time. They listen to each other, they complement each other. They respect turns. It is not necessary to ask them to be quiet since they themselves are self-regulating in their interventions. They give each other Ideas. They rely on what each member is doing and they give opinions to each other about what they like and dislike about the part that involves everyone. We make common decisions (What do you like best about this rhythm or that one? or Do you think this melody is better than another?; Shall I use a glockenspiel or a metallophone?; I prefer the rhythm we used at the beginning...). In short, we create an environment conducive to making shared music.

In their diaries they express the pleasure produced through the collaboration of the whole group for this common task:

Alicia: "...today we composed another piece of the song. I liked it, I managed to feel the same way as the other day. When Pilar asked me for help, we quickly solved the problem of intonation, and we cooperated again. When she asked me for help I felt important in the sense that being able to help in music has strengthened me and made me feel very at ease because I realized that she values me as a partner and member of the group..."

Upon hearing the recording of the song I wrote down in my diary some of words, as reflections about the process: *"Melancholy, strength, order, silence, empathy, respect, gentleness, development, communication, dialogue, intention, lasting, commitment"*.

I think all these words define quite well this great moment of genuine expression in the group process, which resulted in this song about childhood. This is an example of how music can serve to create a group, fostering unity, cohesion, dialogue, communication, respect and confidence in a group space.

The way in which silence is present is to me an indication that there is listening and communication among group members. The way they listen to each other has changed since the beginning of the process, when their music was louder and in discussions they all spoke at once. That can be perceived by comparing the recordings of the sessions.

¿Dónde quedó ese niño?

Letra y Música:
Grupo 4º ESO y Nazaret Gómez

Andante

Verse 1 *Am*

Voice

No - to que se ha - ca - ba - do, que - se ni - ño ha cre - ci - do, que - tra

p

F *G* Verse 2 *Am*

co - sa ha co - men - za - do, y que yo no he que - ri - do. Mea - cuer - do de pe - que - ña, cuan - do

G *F* *G* Verse 3

to - doe - ra per - fec - to, que yo e - rau - na prin - ce - sa, y mi vi - da e - ra un cuen - to. Noe - xi -

f

Am *G* *F* *G*

tía preo - cu - pa - ción, so - la - men - te di - ver - sión, to - doe - ra sa - tis - fac - ción y na - da de - pre - sión.

Chorus *C* *G* *Am* *F*

¿Don - de que - dó e - se ni - ño que tan - to me gus - ta - ba ne - ce - si - toe - se ca - ri - ño que

C *G* *Am* *F*

to - do el mun - do me da - ba dón - de que - dó e - se ni - ño _____

Verse 4

Queda claro que hay un momento
en el que necesitas ayuda,
tienes ese recuerdo
que parece que todo lo cura.

Verse 5

En el parque por las tardes,
pasabas las horas muertas,
diciendo que aunque lo dejes,
pasearás por las aceras.

Chorus

Verse 6

Y aunque no lo diga en alto,
echo de menos ese niño
que decía que era el amo
y que no era un chiquillo.

Verse 7

Eso era en el pasado,
pero ahora yo digo:
(recitative)
"Ni antes ni ahora soy el amo
porque yo aún tengo ese niño,
que aunque creí perdido en el pasado,
nunca acabará en el olvido".

Chorus y fin.

Figure 3: Song Childhood: What happened to that child? (final version)

Through this activity we are promoting identity formation.

With the expression of their emotions, the teenagers are defining themselves, they are expressing inner feelings of melancholy and longing for the easiest time of their lives when they had no responsibilities and concerns. Pilar is expressing her need for affection and attention. The adolescent usually does not know how to express this and though "they do not say it out loud" they have a very great need to feel loved and valued by others (*"Necesito ese cariño que todo el mundo me daba"*), (*"I need that affection everyone gave me"*). I've noticed that on occasions there is a trace of sadness in the way Pilar expresses herself with the instruments and in her eyes. She does not tend to speak much to the rest of the group.

In a previous activity in which I asked each one of them to identify themselves with an animal, Pilar said a *"kiwi bird"* and described it as a *"round beast, which gives affection because no one loves it."*

If we compare this song with lyrics from one of the first songs written at the beginning of the process by Pilar, we can see reflected the shift from a superficial, more defensive content to something more genuine and connected to her emotional needs. As an example, the following song written by Pilar with two classmates at the beginning of the group process in the first quarter:

**These are the original lyrics. See below for a translation.*

YA NO MÁS (Con la música de *California Girls*, Kate Perry)

Nosotras somos las mejores del mundo entero,
Hoy, voy a hacer, algo que os va a gustar a todos,
Nada, nos va a parar, nosotras vamos a disfrutar.

Tu que es lo que te crees, te vamos a aplastar como una hormiguita,
Ya no aguanto esto más, conmigo no juegas más, oh oh oh oh oh.

Ahora ven aquí si te atreves tú,
Ven aquí y lo comprobarás,
Nosotras somos las que mandamos aquí, oh oh oh oh oh.
Representamos al mundo entero,
todos nos van a querer besar,
porque el ritmo es sólo nuestro, oh oh oh oh oh.

**Translation:*

NO MORE NOW (With the music of *California Girls*, Kate Perry)

We are the best in the world,
Today, I'll do something you'll all like,
Nothing will stop us, we're going to enjoy ourselves.

Who do you think you are, we're going to crush you like an ant,
I cannot stand this anymore, don't mess around with me anymore, oh oh oh oh oh.

Now come here if you dare,
Come here and you'll see,
We are the bosses around here, oh oh oh oh oh.
We represent the whole world,
Everyone will want to kiss us,
because the rhythm is only ours, oh oh oh oh oh.

Finally, in the adolescents' final assessment, it strikes me that all the teenagers reflect that for them it has been a process in which they have "lost their embarrassment" and have increasingly expressed themselves more freely and spontaneously. This is an important fact if we consider the goal of identity formation.

Embarrassment and sense of shame hides self-identity, since it prevents them from being themselves. It has to do with messages related to the social norm, the "shoulds", the internalized preconceptions limit their spontaneity and freedom.

The teenagers comments in relation to the question *"Do you think this has helped you to know yourself better? What have you learned throughout the process?"*.

Celso: *"...I managed to open up more to people and not to distrust them so much..."*.

Laura: *"...it has been really useful, I'm not so embarrassed as in the beginning, I express myself better..."*.

Iker: *"...I learned that I was more embarrassed than I thought I was"*.

Alicia: *"I have learned to feel at ease in a class group and to make more positive criticism"*.

Mercedes: *"Now I have discovered many things I'd like to do, and for example, that I shouldn't be so embarrassed"*.

Miriam: *"...yes, it has been useful, above all the songwriting because when I wrote them I learned things about me I didn't know ..."*.

Sonia: *"I have learned to stop feeling embarrassed in front of others and see it as something natural"*.

Pilar: *"...with this I have learned that I can give a lot, and I gained a lot of confidence, as well as not being embarrassed any more..."*.

Based on the above comments I ask "Which activity allowed you to express yourself more freely?". Most agreed that songwriting was the activity that best enabled them to express themselves. Sonia, Alicia and Celso define songwriting as the activity that has allowed them to express themselves more freely; Miriam and Silvia indicate both songwriting and improvisation; Pilar and Laura say songwriting and singing favorite songs; Iker says improvisation and Mercedes, singing favorite songs. Therefore, 7 out of 9 adolescents indicate songwriting as an activity that has allowed them to express themselves more freely.

7. Conclusions

It is important to point out that the music therapist is simultaneously the observer and researcher of the process, and the person who guides the group process, not as an impartial external observer, but being fully involved in the process itself. In this sense, we should also mention the short time between process development and research.

To assess this project one should take into account that music therapy and its utilities, are unknown to the wider education community, and that as a rule it is not included in the formal syllabus or in the educational psychology support departments, or within music departments. The fact that the music therapy program is given within the subject of music, and therefore forms part of the school timetable, means that it has to be adapted to fit the syllabus as does its evaluation. This is a pilot program, which needs to meet initial requirements to be carried out successfully. These needs are linked to the number of students that can form the group, which cannot be large, and their own predisposition so that the project is beneficial for them. Nevertheless, the importance and significance of including these types of programs in schools have become apparent, as they facilitate interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, emotional expression, identity development, and ultimately the taste and motivation to learn and use music as a tool of expression.

The initial support of the project by the management team was essential to be able to carry it out. I believe it would be very beneficial in other schools to include this possibility of personal and group development in their programming.

It is strongly recommended that opportunities for research and experimentation should be fostered in institutions where the professor-teacher-therapist could participate in working groups and / or discussion in a way that would enhance the experience and motivation for dynamic changes in school education. In this sense I fully agree with Zahonero (2009) about the importance of reflection as a learning medium and the improvement of our educational, therapeutic and investigative practice in conjunction with action research methods. The simple fact of qualitative research experiments like this can lead to the experiment becoming widespread and can bring about change and improvements in this process.

One of the major discussion points, which often arises when it comes to the inclusion of music therapy in the educational context is the delimitation or difference between what is

therapeutic and educational, and the appropriateness or otherwise of introducing a program like this in schools. As seen in the bibliographical review, several authors stress the need to give schools resources to support young people, previously delegated to other institutions like the church, or other sources of support. Today the challenge for schools is to be able to meet the demands of society in this regard. I share the idea of McFerran & Hunt (2008) that schools today are the most accessible places for teenagers to get support, and therefore require community help to meet the expectations that fall on them.

The general characteristics of the students of this school indicate that they belong to middle class families of 4, in which both parents work. This means that many of the students are alone both at lunchtime and during the evening. Students complain of the few leisure activities they can do in the town, and the school itself provides few extracurricular activities. In recent years, moreover, there has been a considerable increase in pupils with special educational needs such as immigrants or those in socially deprived circumstances.

Therefore, I consider it to be highly beneficial to include music therapy programs as support whether they are preventive interventions for imbalances in development, as with this project, or whether they have a therapeutic function for adolescents with special needs.

Through the results of this research we see clearly the benefits brought to adolescents from having a space where they are encouraged to communicate honestly within a group forum with the aim of self and identity formation, and the ability of music to facilitate authentic self-expression. This project has allowed them to be more themselves and therefore know themselves better, which is a way to develop their own resources. These benefits of group work related to a task that meets the interests, motivations and concerns of adolescents, contribute to the attitude of the therapist. The attitude of listening and attention directed to the present moment, offering acceptance, encourages teenagers to get in touch with their needs and express them through what happens in the sessions, and thus produces a creative adjustment, and therefore growth. This attitude not only creates a better climate in the group, but strengthens relationships and promotes the formation of identity.

Songwriting is presented as a particularly powerful method of music therapy in identity formation because it allows young people to express themselves freely through the lyrics, and encourages group work around a theme or emerging figure common to the whole group like the experience and memories of the childhood they have just left behind, and the processes of

grieving for lost childhood. As Baker and Wigram point out (2005), the essence of the songwriting technique to facilitate the task of identity formation, is that the song can capture a person's identity, given that teenagers create the song based on their own ideas, feelings, concerns and musical preferences. Their identity is reflected not only through the lyrics and music of the song, but also in how they perform the songs.

I consider relevant in this process the therapeutic value of working on grieving for recently lost childhood and to expose hidden feelings and emotions that are not expressed normally in their environment, which favors the ability to make a good transition between childhood and adolescence.

The identity formation process involves the integration of the various parts of the person, some of which seem to contradict each other. Our identity is gradually constructed by the synthesis of the answers we give to the questions: Who am I?, What do I want and what don't I want?, What should I do and what shouldn't I do?, What can I do and what can't I do?

We give the answers during childhood in close correspondence with the messages, prohibitions, authorizations and forecasts that our parents or other important adults convey. As they grow up, the adolescent will acquire progressively greater autonomy over the questions about their own identity (Vopel, 1995). The images of themselves built so far on the model of parental figures have to be checked, the severity of their own conscience has to be tempered, and new impulses and desires must be taken into consideration.

By paying attention to childhood itself, the adolescent rethinks their beliefs about themselves and their own image, in addition to observing the changes between this newly abandoned infant stage and new teenage state. It is a way to assimilate and build one's own identity.

What the adolescent must reach can be defined as confidence in their own ability to integrate and self-regulate. The adolescent must develop a sufficient sense of confidence so that they consent to join in a satisfactory manner heterogeneous aspects of their identity.

I hope that many more studies are carried out and that they coincide with my conclusions. In this way music therapy support programs for adolescents could be included in school curriculums, given the importance that music seems to have at this evolutionary stage and the relevant function it can have in the task of identity formation.

8. Appendix: record authorization.

4° Year Music

EXPRESS CONSENT OF VIDEO / AUDIO RECORDING

Mr. with DNI (National Identity Card).....
(parent or guardian of the person authorized), and on behalf
of.....
(name of authorized person)

I consent that the music sessions by

Ms.....Nazaret Gómez Roca.....(name of the teacher-music therapist), will be recorded and watched in order to supervise, evaluate and research the creative and musical group process.

Ms.....Nazaret Gómez Roca.....with DNI 33.335.562Y.....I agree to use the data recorded preserving the most that is possible the privacy of the person, using restrictively and professionally the videos in review, assessment, supervision and research areas.

Recordings will be protected by the following ethic code:

- It couldn't be used the whole video/audio session but only those parts that can be valued.
- The videos will be used for internal analysis (supervision).
- The video/audio recordings shall only be carried out within the music room and during the class session.
- The video/audio recordings will be made by the teacher- music therapist.
- The teacher-music therapist will store the video/audio information in a safe place.
- The person authorizing the recording has the right to request for erasing or destroying the material at any time, for what they must write to the teacher.

Signature (parent or guardian of the person authorized)

Signature (teacher-music therapist)

In....., date.....

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