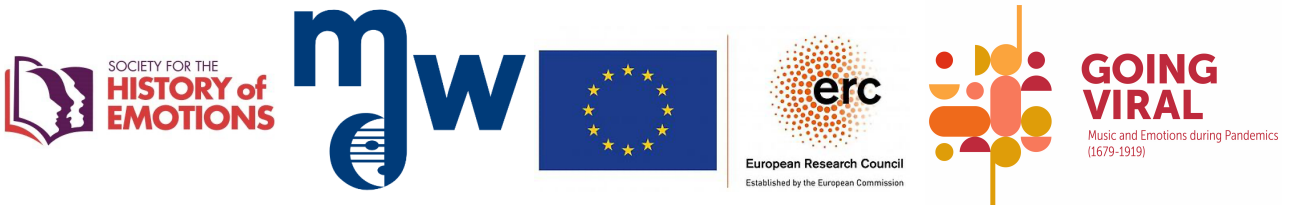


Call for Papers

EMOTIONS IN ADVERSITY: Disease, War, Crisis

Sixth Biennial Conference of the Society for the History of Emotions (SHE)
mdw–University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Austria)
2–4 June 2027

Sponsored by the ERC project GOING VIRAL: Music and Emotions during Pandemics (1679–1919), SHE, and the European Chapter for the History of Emotions (ECHOES)



Rather than focussing explicitly on negative emotions, this conference centres negative contexts to explore the emotional repertoires of adversity. Diseases, wars, and political, economic and cultural crises form a topical backdrop to historical investigations into the mobilisation of fear, rage, hate and disgust as well as unexpected instances of courage, love, hope and joy in times and places defined by calamity, catastrophe, and hostility. We welcome proposals that challenge, or even disrupt, assumptions about the emotional causes and consequences of adversity, conflict and ill health, particularly in relation to the dynamics of collective experience – whether consonant or dissonant – across a variety of different scales (local, national, global).

This conference also serves as the concluding event of the ERC project GOING VIRAL: Music and Emotions during Pandemics (1679–1919). Emerging from the project as its core, the conference will integrate a series of specially designed panels that revolve around the project's central themes – music, sound and emotions, and their imbrication in disease contexts – while situating them within a broader historical, theoretical, and interdisciplinary framework.

In line with the project's overarching aims, we are especially interested in proposals that examine music and sound in contexts of adversity, as well as the wide spectrum of historical sources that extend beyond language, such as architecture, space, material culture, painting, photography, and more. We particularly welcome contributions that take theoretical, methodological, and interdisciplinary risks in order to integrate emotional, sensory, cognitive, and embodied dimensions into the cultural and political varieties of historical experience.

Possible Themes

- Music and/or sound and their emotional dimensions in adverse contexts
- Pandemic emotions and the experience of disease
- Battlefield emotions and the emotional experience of war
- Political mobilisation of collective emotions in crisis
- Instruments of mass emotional influence (music, sound, art, media, objects)
- Emotional contagion and the fracture of collective experience
- Contextual dynamics of subjective experience
- Emotions out of place and time
- Embodied, enactive, embedded, and extended emotions
- Emotions beyond language

Submission Guidelines

We invite proposals for three-person panels and individual papers (20 minutes). For whole panels, please submit an abstract for the whole panel of no more than 400 words, with individual paper titles and brief biographical notes for each speaker. For individual papers, please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words, with a brief biographical note. Submissions should be sent to SHE2027@mdw.ac.at by 30 September 2026. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by 15 December 2026.

Student Keynote Competition

We are pleased to announce a special competition for graduate and doctoral students. The selected candidate will deliver a student keynote lecture at the conference. To apply, please submit an extended abstract (500 words) outlining your proposed lecture, along with your CV. The winner will receive full conference registration and a contribution towards travel and accommodation costs. Limited additional funding may be available for student presenters. Please indicate in your submission if you wish to be considered for financial support.

Keynote Speakers

- Prof. Emerita [Joanna Bourke](#), OBE, FBA, Birkbeck, University of London
- Prof. Dr [Evelyn Buyken](#), University of Siegen
- Prof. Dr [Bettina Hitzer](#), Otto von Guericke Universität Magdeburg

Practical Information

The conference will be held **in person** at the mdw–University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. Keynote lectures will also be broadcast online for a wider audience. For more information on the conference or the GOING VIRAL project, please visit <https://goingviral.hypotheses.org/> or <https://societyhistoryemotions.com/>.

Organisers

Prof. Dr Marie Louise Herzfeld-Schild, mdw–University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna
Dr Rob Boddice, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki
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