

Why does music move us? Reading Passage

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Roger Higoeld is perplexed as to how the amalgam of sound waves we call music can have such an impact.

A. Sound, at its most elemental, is a pressure wave propagating through air. So how can the combination of sound waves we call music become, as Tolstoy put it, "the shorthand of emotion"? Or, to rephrase the question, how can mechanical vibrations have such a major impact?

B. The author of *The Music Instinct*, Philip Ball, contends that the key is not in the notes themselves, but in our own imaginations. At a recent session I co-organized with him at the Royal Institution, he highlighted the extent to which contemporary popular music takes as much concentration as classical composers such as Bach and Beethoven.

C. Regardless of one's musical preferences, the brain must work hard. The astounding harmonics-packed richness of a note played on a piano or flute will suddenly collapse in your head, allowing you to perceive only a single note rather than a forest of Overtones, due to your mind's incredible talent for pattern recognition.

D. My acquaintance stated that people are hardwired to seek order and that music facilitates the recognition of these patterns. We are packed with a variety of mental shortcuts to assist us to interpret the world around us. These rules represent the neurological mechanisms that enable us to classify and comprehend musical sounds.

E. Medical imaging has demonstrated that the questioned brain activity does not occur in isolation. Different musical aspects stimulate distinct parts of the brain. The temporal lobe

processes melody and pitch, the hippocampus retrieves musical memories, and 'rhythm-processing circuits' are recruited to conduct motor responses.

F.Curiously, when the brain encounters nonsensical sentences, it emits the same signal of confusion that it emits when the grammar of music sounds incorrect or when chords in a piece of music do not complement one another. The octave, the gap in which one note is exactly twice as high in frequency as the one preceding it, occupies a special position, according to research examining our responses to musical patterns.

G.However, Harvard University's Steven Pinker describes music as "auditory cheesecake," therefore the essential question is whether or not the human brain is designed to process it. According to him, the pleasure that our brains derive from sounds is completely accidental. The hearing system evolved to process a variety of stimuli.

H.The unfortunate truth may be that we simply do not know. We do know, however, that our upbringing has a substantial effect on how we develop a taste for music. A few years ago, Philip Ball discovered that music appears to have a national character, most likely due to the rhythms and cadences of the numerous languages spoken in each situation. Composers in the English tradition frequently employ rhythms and interludes that mirror the English tendency to vary pitch and duration in speech more than the French. According to this criterion, Elgar is frequently utilized as background music for important national pageants, as he is considered by some to be the most "English" composer.

I.As with acoustics, the convention is the determining element for what is considered harmonic. The elderly believe that contemporary music contains dissonant, startling tones that are unpleasant to listen to. However, musical discord has always existed. Both Beethoven and Chopin are unworthy of serious consideration. It is contingent upon the existing norms of the time. In the Middle Ages, what we now consider consonant was considered dissonant. Historically, the augmented fourth was referred to as "Diabolus in musica" because of its

demonic nature. Even now, it has a disturbing effect on us, which may explain its prevalence in heavy metal.

J. Near the end of my interview with Philip Ball, I asked if the good effects of music on the brain could be utilized. This was the perfect chance for him to examine the so-called "Mozart effect," the belief that early exposure to classical music helps infants acquire an appreciation and respect for information. According to a 1996 study, rock music for infants is more beneficial to their brain development than classical music. The impact of the music on the mood of the children was more significant than the music itself.

K. According to Ball, we all have a natural inclination to make the world more musical. It's difficult to claim "I am not musical," even if that's how you feel whenever you're dragged along to sing karaoke. Only a small portion of the general population may be described as being completely tone-deaf.

Why does music move us reading questions

Questions 1 - 6

Complete each sentence with the correct ending A-I from the box below. Write the correct letter A-I in boxes 1-6 on your answer sheet.

1. The perception of mechanical vibrations
2. enjoying popular music
3. Identifying patterns
4. Listening to the music we prefer.
5. The songs are non-sensical
6. Taking in some octave-discordant tunes

- A.**Is intrinsic and facilitates the brain's ability to simplify complex musical combinations.
- B.**Is a skill that few individuals possess.
- C.**Can have a very profound effect on humans.
- D.**Stimulates our temporal lobe.
- E.**Has a distinct effect on the majority of listeners.
- F.**Engages the hippocampus.
- G.**Is more difficult than most people believe.
- H.**Depends on the type of music you enjoy the most.
- I.**Have the same impact as reading incomprehensible sentences.

Questions 7-9

7. These rules represent the _____ that allows us to categorize and understand musical sounds.
8. However, Steven Pinker of Harvard University characterizes music as _____, therefore the fundamental question is whether or not the human brain is suited to process it.
9. Philip Ball noticed a few years ago that music appears to have a national identity, most likely as a result of the _____ of the many languages spoken in each circumstance.

Question 10-13

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the Reading Passage? In boxes 10-13 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE - if the statement agrees with the information.

FALSE - if the statement contradicts the information.

NOT GIVEN - if there is no information on this.

10. Older individuals prefer classical music over popular music.
11. In heavy metal music, the effect of a particular note is recognized.

12. Philip Ball emphasizes the importance of youngsters listening to classical music and the benefits it provides.

13. People who are not particularly musically inclined are likely to be drawn to karaoke.