

The Impact of Music

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The outline of a twelve part lecture series designed for, and presented within, the Music Faculty of the University of Melbourne as part of its 'breadth' subject offerings.

Making music is a universal and essential aspect of human life. Through making music together we learn to be and to enjoy being social animals. We experience the pleasure of collaboration and apply it with positive expectations in the rest of our lives.

From the first moment that we encounter another human (some would say from before), we are surrounded by music. It shapes our lives, expresses and affects our moods, our energy, our memories, our values, our identities, our relationships, and our health.

Everyone with an interest in affecting the behaviour of their fellows has included music in their quiver: religious and political movements, educators and the advertising industry. All have recognised the power that music has to affect us.

This twelve part series explores the many ways in which humans use and are affected by music.

Theme	Title	Segue IN	Topics	Segue OUT
Introduction	<i>Music makes the world go round</i>	The power of music	What music 'is'; what its value to human development may be	Are we human without music
Survival	<i>Made to be Musical: the biological imperative</i>	We are what we are because of the music	What we know about the neural and physiological impacts; how they make us feel; various speculations about why it makes us feel the way it does. Evolution, adaptation & exaptation; biology & culture; phylogeny and ontogeny; music as mental & physical activity; neurotransmitters & the brain's reward system; neuroplasticity & growing synaptic pathways; movement & food	Being social improves our survival chances
Sociability	<i>All Together Now: the rhythm of life</i>	There's a better chance of staying alive if you're with a mob	The entwining of music and social behaviour Connection, collaboration & 'groupishness'; multi-level selection & mirror neurons; shared intentionality; social cohesion & bonding; ritual & consolidating tradition; the reward side of the social contract	Social fluency requires good timing
Time	<i>Marking Time: navigating the fourth dimension</i>	Knowing the time will get you places	Rhythm & entrainment Patterns, prediction, expectation & anticipation; measuring time; the groove, syncopative frisson; memory; learning of & through music	Embodying patterns induces trance
Ecstasy	<i>Naturally High: at one with the music</i>	When you're in the groove, you're somewhere else	Bliss, peaks, trance and blinding white light Spirituality & transcendence, jouissance; worship & celebration	In a blissful state one often imagines one knows what it all means
Truth	<i>Can't Argue With the Music: the medium is the message</i>	I'm so high, I can see for miles	Insight, values, identity & culture Illumination, revelation & ineffability; harmony & balance; biological basis of values; making meaning, memes, honest signals, messages, language, & communication	One can be struck dumb when faced with meaning

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Awe	<i>The World is Sound: listen to the universe</i>	The 'wow' factor	Framing chaos; beauty, creativity & the buzzing cosmos Aesthetics, the religious impulse, art, imagination & vibrations	Vibrations feed our bodies
Feelings	<i>The Music In You: stairway to heaven</i>	The buzz that fills us	Emotions, feelings & mood The affective medium; induction v perception; relaxation, energy & motivation; fear & courage, joy & grief, pain & pleasure; intention & resonance	How we feel impacts on our wellbeing
Healing	<i>Feeling Fine: sonic rehabilitation</i>	We're getting better all the time	Health & wellbeing Therapy & rehabilitation; maintaining health; eudaimonia & salutogenesis	Expression is the inevitable consequence of robust health
Expression	<i>Sound It Out: the rebel yell</i>	When you're on top of the world, all you want to do is sing about it	Release & outburst; the echo factor Letting it out doesn't (necessarily) mean one has a message	Occupying public space
Performance	<i>Just Do It</i>	Look at me, listen to me	Music in our world now Making & showing off, public behaviour, improvisation, active listening, commerce & commodification	How to reclaim music's key functions
Conclusion	<i>Use it</i>	The power of music	What uses you make of music; what contribution you might personally make to the reclamation project	Go forth and musify

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