

Performance, science, and society

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The evaluation of music and musicality is of growing interest to scientists. Various technologies, particularly functional brain imaging, have increased our understanding of the perception of music, pitch, and rhythm, and research into the physiology of performance and the physics of acoustics are now important academic disciplines. There is now awareness that inspiration, intuition, and emotion are as important to the exploration of neuroscience as they are to composing and performing. Music is an art that gets closest to the basis of our humanity and opens windows of perception in unique and varied ways. This is why music is so important in human experience—from Shostakovich reflecting on death in intensive care at the end of his Fifteenth Symphony, to the Prince ludicrously elevated from his melancholy in Prokofiev's *March of the Love for Three Oranges*. And this aspect of music, its ability to manipulate our mind, has been used in various ways—from musak in supermarkets, to the pipes at Culloden or the drums and trumpets of soldiers marching into battle, from Furtwangler conducting Wagner in front of the Nazi faithful, to Puccini at a football match. This paper examines some of the relationships between music, science, and society.

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