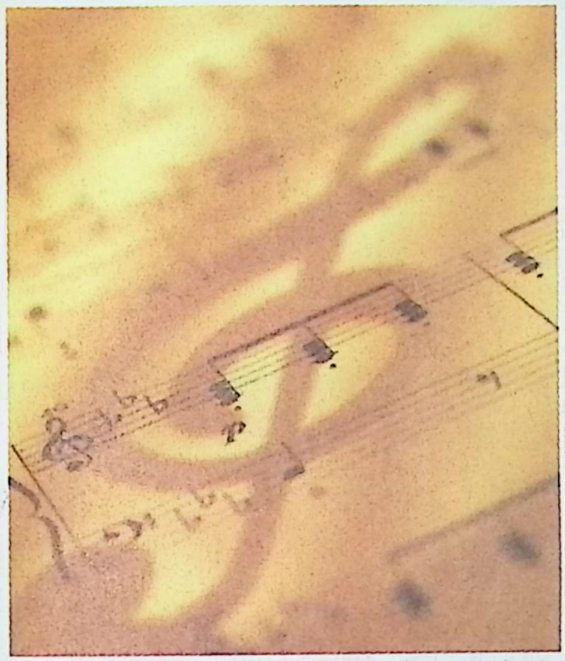


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Creating simplicity
How music fools the ear

What makes music beautiful? The best compositions transcend culture and time -- but what is the commonality which underscores their appeal?

New research published in BioMed Central's open access journal *BMC Research Notes* suggests that the brain simplifies complex patterns, much in the same way that 'lossless' music compression formats reduce audio files, by removing redundant data and identifying patterns.

Dr Nicholas Hudson used 'lossless' music compression programs to mimic the brain's ability to condense audio information. Dr Nicholas Hudson writes, "Enduring musical masterpieces, despite apparent complexity, possess high compressibility" and that it is this compressibility that we respond to. So whether you are a diehard classicist or a pop diva it seems that we chose the music we prefer, not by simply listening to it, but by calculating its compressibility.

Babies are born to dance, new research shows

Researchers have discovered that infants respond to the rhythm and tempo of music and find it more engaging than speech.

The findings, based on the study of infants aged between five months and two years old, suggest that babies may be born with a predisposition to move rhythmically in response to music.

The research was conducted by Dr Marcel Zentner, from the University of York's Department of Psychology, and Dr Tuomas Eerola of the University of Jyvaskyla, Finland.

Dr Zentner writes, "Our research suggests that it is the beat rather than other features of the music, such as the melody, that produces the response in infants."

"We also found that the better the children were able to synchronize their movements with the music the more they smiled.

