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Taking Songs to Heart: An Investigation into Musical Appreciation

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Recommended Citation

Lockhart, Anna Kate; Febles, Eric A.; Draine, Valeria; and Pendasulo, Kaitlin, "Taking Songs to Heart: An Investigation into Musical Appreciation" (2023). *Science University Research Symposium (SURS)*. 149. <https://repository.belmont.edu/surs/149>

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Taking Songs to Heart: An Investigation into Musical Appreciation

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NEU 4100.01: Neuropsychology of Emotions

Dr. Carole Scherling

15 November 2023

Abstract

Music cross-culturally occupies a central part of day-to-day living (Trehub et al., 2015). Research has demonstrated music's consistent ability to modulate emotional states, through the investigation of properties like tempo and key (Res, 2011; Bella, 2001; Jongwan., 2018; Schellenberg, 2010). Heartbeat is a steady rhythm that each human alive and well experiences daily, and heart rate, specifically the resting heart rate, has been suggested to set a baseline rhythm that may influence perception of musical valence (Koelsch & Jancke, 2015). The current study aims to investigate this hypothesis by establishing a resting heart rate level and modulating the speed of musical excerpts in both major and minor keys to be either increased or decreased by 5bpm. Forty-two participants listened to a randomized playlist presenting 6 musical pieces, with two of resting heart rate tempo, two of increased tempo and two of decreased tempo, each condition presenting one major and one minor key piece. For each piece, participants utilized a 7-point Likert scale to judge their emotional experience (high rating indicates a more positive judgement). Results are currently being analyzed. The work conducted in the current study reflects models represented by the previous work and is intended to further explore musical qualities and effects on emotional perception of music.