

A Psychological Theory of the Musically Sublime

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on the OSU main campus in Hughes Hall, Room 109

Most music listening is enjoyable. However, on occasion, the experience of listening to music evokes transcendent feelings: the music may give you goose bumps, bring tears to your eyes, make you feel “choked up,” or “take your breath away.” Yet these sublime behaviors form a rather peculiar group: Why would music cause you to stop breathing, feel a constriction in the back of your throat, ooze fluid from your eyes, or make your hair stand on end? This lecture provides an accessible review of pertinent physiological, behavioral, and music analytic research, and offers an explanation of where these responses come from, and why they are so enjoyable.

David Huron is Arts and Humanities Distinguished Professor in the School of Music at the Ohio State University and is also affiliated with the OSU Center for Cognitive and Brain Sciences. Huron is best known for his research in music perception, cognition, and emotion. Over the course of his career, he has produced 170 scholarly publications, including several books, and given over 400 lectures and presentations in 25 countries, including 28 keynote conference addresses. Dr. Huron has been the Ernest Bloch Visiting Lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley, the Donald Wort Lecturer at the University of Cambridge, and the Astor Lecturer at Oxford. In 2002 he received the Outstanding Publication Award from the Society for Music Theory, and in 2007 he received the Wallace Berry Book Award. In 2017 he received the Society for Music Perception and Cognition's lifetime Achievement Award.