

Can You Feel the Music?

Music underlines many forms of communication, including entertainment. A movie, for example, without music to set the atmosphere, would never have the same impact as one with music. The soundtrack sets the tone and suggests the mood of each scene.

Elton John's award winning song "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?" helped make Walt Disney's *The Lion King* the top-selling video of 1995, winning it a Grammy Award for best original song. The music in the film played an instrumental role in the success of the production.

The movie was an international success, being translated into 32 languages worldwide. Note, however, that while the words may have been translated into many languages, the music stayed the same. The music communicated the emotion of the story to people of every language, tradition, belief, and age.

Isn't music a powerful influence?

You will hear music in shops to attract prospective customers, music on the radio to entertain millions of listeners, music in advertising to sell products, and music in private homes to set the mood for relaxation or partying.

What would a romantic evening between two people in love be without the right type of music to set the mood? Would you play a military march during dinner with your loved one? Would you sing a lullaby to mobilize an angry mob?

And music can effect more than the listener. Take a look at these statistics about musicians:

Musicians are more twitchy than violin strings, says a report from the British Performing Arts Trust. It found that two out of three musicians suffered rapid heart beat, sweating hands, muscle tension, trembling, shaking, loss of concentration and breathing problems. They are also anxious, depressed and suffer from joint pain, deafness and 'disobedient fingers.' One in five are on permanent medication (© The Telegraph London).¹

The Science of Music

Scientific and medical research helps us understand how music can so profoundly affect us physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Music can be used as a treatment for mentally handicapped and schizophrenic patients. Neurologist Dr. Oliver Sacks describes one patient of his, whose symptoms of intense excitement and uncontrollable movement were treated by music:

*By far the best treatment of her crisis was music, the effects of which were almost uncanny. One minute would see Miss D compressed, clenched and blocked, or jerking, ticking and jabbering like a sort of human bomb; the next, with the sound of music from a wireless or gramophone, the complete disappearance of all these obstructive, explosive phenomena and their replacement by a blissful ease and flow of movement as Miss D suddenly freed of her **automatisms**, smilingly "conducted" the music, arose and danced to it.²*

[Read more about music therapy](#)

Music can also have powerful negative effects, as Dr. Neil Nedley tells us:

A study of 121 Midwestern high school students' music preference indicated that 75 percent of the girls who preferred heavy metal music had considered suicide compared with 35 percent of the girls who preferred other types of music. Nearly 50 percent of the boys who preferred heavy metal had considered suicide compared to with 15 percent of the boys who listened to "non-metal" music.³

Music affects emotions. It can move us to be more happy, content, peaceful, joyful, and gentle or it can move us to be more irate, angry, or sad.

With music having such a profound effect on our day to day lives, would it not be wise to understand this communication tool more fully, so we can make good decisions in choosing music that will help us get to wherever we want to go?



Elton John.

Source: [Richard Mushet on Wikimedia Commons](#).

