

Editor's note

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In the past decade, researchers have been exploring and expanding our conception of music. This exploration has taken several forms. First, researchers are recognizing that music is not merely an auditory phenomenon but can be conceived as a multimodal system of expression in which visual signals associated with live performance operate aesthetically along side the acoustic dimension of music. Second, music can be productively compared with language, an idea that is explored in Aniruddh Patel's remarkable book, "Music, Language, and the Brain" (2008, Oxford University Press). Third, the significance of cross-cultural research is increasingly being recognized. Music takes various forms and functions in diverse ways across cultures. What does this diversity tell us about music cognition? Fourth, music is inseparable from our emotional lives, and different attributes of sound constrain our affective interpretations and experiences of music in essential ways.

The current issue examines all of these core themes. The issue begins with a tremendous review article by Michael Schutz on visual aspects of music, which draws together current evidence and theory on multimodal aspects of music. The three target (research) articles then address other research themes. Lauren Collister and David Huron compare word intelligibility in spoken and sung phrases; Michael Schutz, David Huron, Kristopher Keeton, and Greg Loewer explore emotional communication in music; and Emilia Gómez & Perfecto Herrera report a comparative analysis of music recordings from Western and non-Western musical traditions. We also include two insightful commentaries on current and past target articles.

Andrew Geeves, Wayne Christensen, John Sutton, and Doris McIlwain next provide an extremely thoughtful essay in which they critically examine Roger Chaffin, Gabriela Imreh & Mary Crawford's book on music performance (*Practicing Perfection: Memory and Piano Performance*. New York: Laurence Erlbaum Associates, 2002). The authors go well beyond the scope of a book review, including discussions of Chaffin's many articles on music and memory and raising theoretical and philosophical issues that clarify and expand our understanding of the mental cues that guide expert musical performance. Finally, Josh McDermott provides a valuable commentary on some of the highlights from the 2008 Neurosciences of Music conference, recently held in Montreal, Canada.