

Consonance & Dissonance:

Consonance: A combination of two (or more) tones of different frequencies that results in a musically *pleasing* sound. Why???

Dissonance: A combination of two (or more) tones of different frequencies that results in a musically *displeasing* sound. Why???

⇒ *n.b.* Perception of sounds is also wired into (different of) our emotional centers!!! Why??/How did this happen???

The Greek scholar Pythagoras discovered & studied the phenomenon of consonance & dissonance, using an instrument called a monochord (see below) – a simple 1-stringed instrument with a movable bridge, dividing the string of length L into two segments, x and $L-x$. Thus, the two string segments can have any desired ratio, $R \equiv x/(L-x)$.

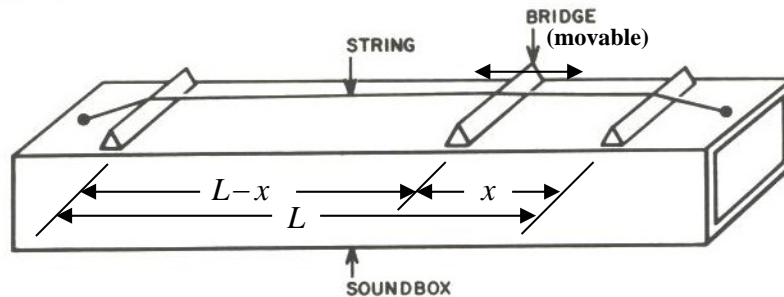


FIG. 1. The monochord.

When the monochord is played, both string segments vibrate simultaneously. Since the two segments of the string have a common tension, T , and the mass per unit length, $\mu = M/L$ is the same on both sides of the string, then the speed of propagation of waves on each of the two segments of the string is the same, $v = \sqrt{T/\mu}$, and therefore on the x -segment of string, the wavelength (of the fundamental) is $\lambda_x = 2x = v/f_x$ and on the $(L-x)$ segment of the string, we have $\lambda_{L-x} = 2(L-x) = v/f_{L-x}$. Thus, the two frequencies associated with the two vibrating string segments x and $L-x$ on either side of the movable bridge are:

$$f_x = \frac{v}{2x}$$

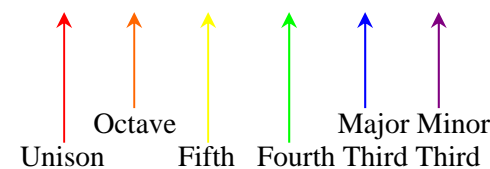
$$f_{L-x} = \frac{v}{2(L-x)}$$

Thus, the ratio of the lengths of the two string segments R is also the {inverse} ratio of the two frequencies associated with the vibrating string segments on either side of the bridge:

$$R = \frac{x}{L-x} = \frac{v/2f_x}{v/2f_{L-x}} = \frac{f_{L-x}}{f_x}$$

Consonance occurs when the lengths (frequencies) of the two string segments are in very special/unique **integer** ratios, R (and/or $1/R$), respectively of:

$$R = \frac{x}{L-x} = \frac{f_x}{f_{L-x}} = 1:1, 1:2, 2:3, 3:4, 4:5, 5:6, \dots$$

$$1/R = \frac{L-x}{x} = \frac{f_{L-x}}{f_x} = 1:1, 2:1, 3:2, 4:3, 5:4, 6:5, \dots$$


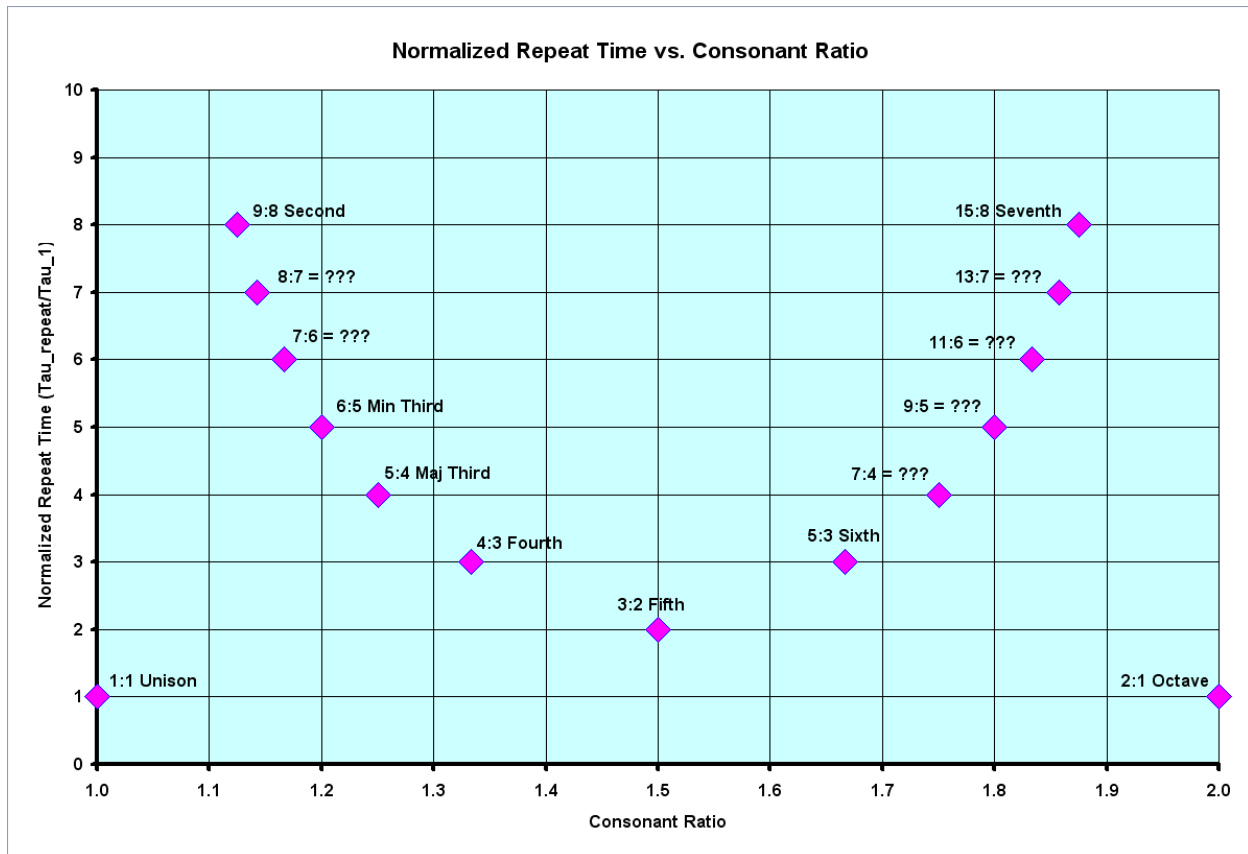
Unison
Octave
Fifth
Fourth
Major Third
Minor Third

These **integer** frequency ratios relate **directly** to two notes played in unison, octave, fifth, fourth, major/minor thirds and second of the **just diatonic musical scale** – (see below)!

Dissonance occurs when the length of string segments (*i.e.* frequency ratios) are **far** from/are **not** integers.

When two (or more) musical tones are consonant, the **phase relation** of the higher frequency relative to the lower frequency is **time-independent**. The resulting overall waveform is **stationary/time-stable**, with a **repeat time** of the waveform that is relatively short – $\min\{m:n\}$ where $1/R = m/n$ {see figure on next page}.

The phase-stability of the waveform for a consonant sound makes it particularly easy for the human ear/brain to recognize (analyze). Also, note that the harmonic(s) of the higher frequency tone – *e.g.* major 3rd or fifth, tend to line up/coincide with the harmonics of the lower frequency tone! (Quadratic) non-linear responses present in the human ear/brain generate/create sum & difference frequencies, $(f_{L-x} + f_x)$ and $|f_{L-x} - f_x|$ that also perfectly/exactly line up with the harmonics of the two tones, and again which have a time-independent/stationary phase relation relative to the fundamental of the lowest tone! The human ear/brain thus perceives consonant tones as very special and unique!



When two (or more) musical tones are dissonant, the *phase relation* of higher frequency relative to the lower frequency is ***not*** time-independent (time stable). The resulting overall waveform is also not stationary/time-stable. This waveform is ***not*** as easy for the human ear/brain to recognize (analyze).

For dissonant tones, the harmonic(s) of the higher frequency tone do ***not*** perfectly/exactly line up with the harmonics of the original lower frequency and/or higher frequency tones. Additionally, quadratic non-linear responses present in the human ear/brain generate/create sum & difference frequencies, *e.g.* $(f_{L-x} + f_x)$ and $|f_{L-x} - f_x|$ that do ***not*** perfectly/exactly line up with the harmonics of these two original tones, and again the generated sum/difference do ***not*** have a time-independent/stationary phase relation relative to the fundamental of the lowest and/or higher original tones!

Because there is a continuum of possible non-integer frequency ratios, with the above properties, the human ear/brain perceives dissonant tones as non-special, non-unique and (much more) brain-intensive/difficult to perceive/analyze such sounds.

From recent fMRI studies, we now know that the human brain has in fact ***two*** separate centers for processing sounds as consonant *vs.* dissonant – which in turn are wired into to different emotional centers of our brains – thus explaining why we (anthropo-centrally) experience “pleasure” at hearing consonant sounds *vs.* “displeasure” at hearing dissonant sounds [1], since our own human singing voices are inherently consonant in nature (*i.e.* have integer-related harmonics).

Is this solely the explanation for why our brains have ***separate*** processing for discriminating between these two types of sounds, experiencing pleasure for {human-like} consonant sounds *vs.* displeasure {non-humanlike} dissonant sounds?

Note that dissonant sounds – complex sound waveforms with non-integer-related harmonic content can arise *e.g.* from non-everyday sounds in the environment, such as a rock slide or avalanche, gales/high winds, or a tornado, *etc.* as well as human and/or animal sounds that are more of negative or threatening nature...*e.g.* groans, cries, shrieks, growls, howls, roars, *etc.*...thus, the differing human response to sounds perceived as consonant *vs.* dissonant may possibly have arisen from this as well.

See/hear the Physics 406 consonance/dissonance demo! Please see/read/think about the information contained in additional Physics 406 lecture notes on consonance & dissonance!

Musical Scales:

Anthropocentric in origin – *i.e.* we humans (as are other animals...) are primarily interested in the sounds that our ***own*** species make... Thus, the musical scale(s) that we have developed in our culture(s) over the millennia are ***not*** disconnected from the fact that complex sounds associated with the singing human voice have integer-related harmonic content, due to our vocal cords vibrating as a 1-D mechanical system, and associated consonance/dissonance phenomena...

Nevertheless, there are many kinds of musical scales! We’ll see why! First, remind ourselves of the notes *e.g.* on the keyboard of piano:

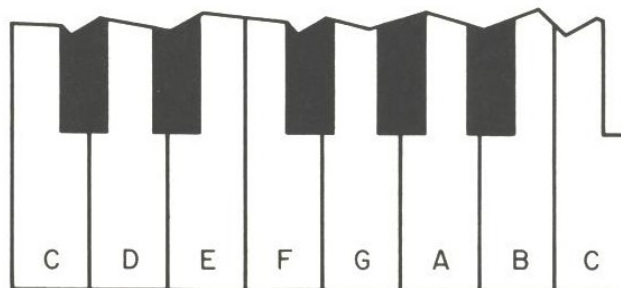


FIG. 2. A portion of the piano keyboard.

A.) Pentatonic (5-Note) Scale:

This is the “simplest” musical scale. Use the octave, 4th and 5th as **consonant** intervals (as expressed by their respective frequency ratios) to build up the so-called pentatonic/5-note scale:

1. Start with the note C, with frequency f . This is the note low-C.
2. The octave is another C with frequency $2f$. This is the note high-C.
3. Go down a 5th from high-C (= going up a 4th from low-C).
This is the note F, with frequency $\frac{4}{3}f$.
4. Go up a 5th from low-C (= going down a 4th from high-C).
This is the note G, with frequency $\frac{3}{2}f$.
5. Go down a 4th from G (= going up a 5th from G and then down an octave).
This is the note D, with frequency $\frac{3}{4} \cdot \frac{3}{2}f = \frac{9}{8}f$.
6. Go up a 5th from D. This is the note A, with frequency $\frac{3}{2} \cdot \frac{9}{8}f = \frac{27}{16}f$.

The 5-Note Pentatonic Scale:

Note:	C	D	F	G	A	C
Frequency:	f	$\frac{9}{8}f$	$\frac{4}{3}f$	$\frac{3}{2}f$	$\frac{27}{16}f$	$2f$

FIG. 3. A pentatonic scale.

Relative Ratio (to fundamental):	1	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{4}{3}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{27}{16}$	2
Interval (Frequency Ratio):		$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{32}{27}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{32}{27}$

B.) Pythagorean (7-Note) Scale:

The pentatonic 5-note scale has 2 notes missing (E & B), so we continue:

7. Go down a 4th from A. This is the note E, with frequency $\frac{3}{4} \cdot \frac{27}{16}f = \frac{81}{64}f$.
8. Go up a 5th from E. This is the note B, with frequency $\frac{3}{2} \cdot \frac{81}{64}f = \frac{243}{128}f$.

The 7-Note Pythagorean Scale:

Note:	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Frequency:	1	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{81}{64}$	$\frac{4}{3}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{27}{16}$	$\frac{243}{128}$	2
Interval:		$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{256}{243}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{256}{243}$

FIG. 4. The Pythagorean scale.

Note that:

- The adjacent note pairs (E & F) and (B & C) have smaller musical intervals than (C & D), (D & E), (F & G), (G & A), and (A & B).
- Compare the interval (*i.e.* frequency ratio) of:
 $\frac{9}{8} = 1.125$, which is known as a **Pythagorean wholetone**,
to that of:
 $\frac{256}{243} = 1.053$, which is known as a **Pythagorean diatonic semitone**.
- The seven notes of the Pythagorean scale correspond to the seven white keys on the piano.

What about the black keys of the piano?

9. Go down a 4th from B. This is the note F[#], with frequency $\frac{3}{4} \bullet \frac{243}{128} f = \frac{729}{512} f$.

**The interval (frequency ratio): F[#] - G = $\frac{3/2}{729/512} = \frac{256}{243} = 1.053$,
which is a Pythagorean diatonic semitone.**

**The interval (frequency ratio): F - F[#] = $\frac{729/512}{4/3} = \frac{2187}{2048} = 1.068$,
which is known as a Pythagorean **chromatic** semitone.**

Thus, there are two different sizes of semitones:

**Pythagorean Wholetone = $\frac{9}{8} = 1.125$
Pythagorean Diatonic Semitone = $\frac{256}{243} = 1.0534979$
Pythagorean Chromatic Semitone = $\frac{2187}{2048} = 1.0678711$**

The Chromatic Semitone is slightly larger than the Diatonic Semitone!

**10. Go up a 5th from F[#]. This is the note B[#], with frequency $\frac{3}{2} \bullet \frac{729}{512} f = \frac{2187}{1024} f$.
 $> 2f$ (= high C)!**

This key doesn't exist on the piano! B[#] is the enharmonic equivalent to C, but it is not the note C in the Pythagorean musical scale!

We have more problems – start with F and use the circle of fifths to generate the notes of the black keys on a piano: F-C-G-D-A-E-B-F[#]-C[#]-G[#]-D[#]-A[#]-E[#]

The key E[#] doesn't exist on the piano! E[#] is the enharmonic equivalent to F, but it is not the note F in the Pythagorean musical scale! The frequency ratio of E[#]:F is $\{[\frac{3}{2}]^{12} \times [\frac{1}{2}]^7\}:1 = 531441:524288 = 1.01364..$ *i.e.* E[#] is higher than F by this amount!

This interval (frequency ratio) is also the same as that between the Pythagorean chromatic semitone and the Pythagorean diatonic semitone, *i.e.* $\frac{2187}{2048} / \frac{256}{243} = 1.01364$, which is known as the **Pythagorean comma.**

C.) Cents:

All musical scale(s) have fundamental problems, as seen from above. That’s just the reality of the way things are – causes problems playing music in different keys!

Create an interpolated musical scale, known as the tempered scale with 12 equally-spaced semitones for 12 notes of this musical scale – divide up the octave into 1200 cents. Then define 100 cents as = 1 tempered semitone. Then one octave = 12 tempered semitones.

D.) Meantone Tuning:

Pythagorean major 3^{rds} are too sharp! Flatten them slightly.
 Pythagorean minor 3^{rds} are too flat! Sharpen them slightly.

See p. 141-3 in *Acoust. Found. of Music* for details of how this is accomplished.

E.) The Just Scale:

Major triad – add major third (4:5) to minor third (5:6) – creates 3 notes with interval (frequency ratio) 4:5:6!

F	A	C					
		C	E	G			
				G	B	D	
$\frac{2}{3}$	$\frac{5}{6}$	1	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{15}{8}$	$\frac{9}{4}$	

FIG. 7. Building the just scale.

F.) The Just Diatonic Scale:

Note:	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Frequency:	1	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{5}{4}$	$\frac{4}{3}$	$\frac{3}{2}$	$\frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{15}{8}$	2
Interval:		$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{10}{9}$	$\frac{16}{15}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{10}{9}$	$\frac{9}{8}$	$\frac{16}{15}$

FIG. 8. The just diatonic scale.

G. The Tempered Scale:

Make all intervals the same for the 12 notes. Create an interpolated musical scale, known as the tempered scale with 12 equally-spaced semitones for the 12 notes of this musical scale – then divide up the octave into 1200 cents. Thus, 100 cents = 1 tempered semitone, and one octave = 12 tempered semitones. Not a “perfect” musical scale by any means, but the main advantage is can then play a given piece of music in any key, without it sounding “worse” in one key than another.

We can mathematically define the semitone in the tempered scale as:

$a = (2)^{1/12} = 1.05946$. Then one cent, $1\phi = (2)^{1/1200} = 1.000577$ in the tempered scale. Each note is built up from previous note by adding one power of the semitone, a , as shown in the figure below:

	D \flat	E \flat		G \flat	A \flat	B \flat			
	C \sharp	D \sharp		F \sharp	G \sharp	A \sharp			
C		D	E	F	G	A	B	C	
	a	a^3		a^6	a^8	a^{10}			
1	a^2	a^4	a^5	a^7	a^9	a^{11}	a^{12}		
	1.059	1.189		1.414	1.587	1.782			
1.000	1.122	1.260	1.335	1.498	1.682	1.888	2.000		

FIG. 10. The tempered scale.

The 2nd note D is obtained from C by a^2 , the twelfth (*i.e.* octave) high-C note is obtained from the low-C by a factor of a^{12} , etc.

H.) Location of Frets on the Fretboard of a Guitar (Tempered Scale):

For the tempered semitone, $a = (2)^{1/12} = 1.05946$, then for a scale length L :

For the first 12 frets on the fretboard (first octave), where $n = \text{fret \# (1-12)}$:

$$\text{Fret Location}_{n\text{-th fret}} = L/2^{\frac{n}{12}}$$

For frets 13-24 on the fretboard (2nd octave), where $n = \text{fret \# (13-24)}$:

$$\text{Fret Location}_{n\text{-th fret}} = \frac{1}{2}L/2^{\frac{n}{12}}$$

For frets 25-36 on the fretboard (3rd octave), where $n = \text{fret \# (25-36)}$:

$$\text{Fret Location}_{n\text{-th fret}} = \frac{1}{4}L/2^{\frac{n}{12}}$$

I.) Other Octave Divisions:

It is certainly possible to divide up the octave into finer divisions than just 12 semitones. Here are some other (reasonable) possibilities!

One could divide the octave up into arbitrarily small intervals, but the human ear's ability to discern/distinguish such fine intervals becomes increasingly difficult!

TABLE I

OCTAVE DIVISION (M)	NUMBER OF SMALL DIVISIONS (m)	CENTS	CLOSEST JUST INTERVAL	CENTS DEVIATION FROM CLOSEST JUST INTERVAL
19	2	126	Diatonic semitone (112 cents)	+14
	3	190	Small whole tone (182 cents)	+8
	5	316	Minor third (316 cents)	0
	6	379	Major third (386 cents)	-7
	11	695	Fifth (702 cents)	-7
31	3	116	Diatonic semitone	+4
	5	194	Small whole tone	+12
	8	310	Minor third	-6
	10	387	Major third	+1
	18	697	Fifth	-5
53	5	113	Diatonic semitone	+1
	8	181	Small whole tone	-1
	9	204	Large whole tone	0
	14	317	Minor third	+1
	17	385	Major third	-1
	31	702	Fifth	0

The earliest-known musical instruments – *e.g.* a {griffon vulture} bone flute – recently found in a cave near Hohle Fels (SW Germany) in 2008 – see pix below – was carbon-dated to be > 35 K yrs old!



An exact copy of this flute was made (via laser scan \Rightarrow 3-D printing), which was given to professional musician, who, after learning how to play it, was able to play “Amazing Grace” on it (key of D - uses the 7 white notes on piano) and the German National Anthem – (uses both the white and the black notes on piano) !!!

\Rightarrow Evidence for 12-note natural/“consonant” musical scale in existence at that time, ~ 30,000 years before the Greeks !!!

\Rightarrow Presumably this flute was also not a prototype !!!

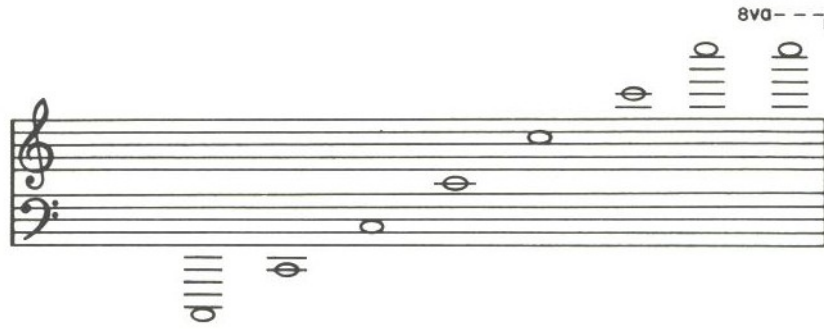
See/listen to link: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2013/feb/15/ice-age-flute>

Also see/listen to YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xn5ZygWxKmw>

TABLE II
Frequencies of notes in the tempered scale

C ₀	16.352	C ₃	130.81	C ₆	1046.5
	17.324		138.59		1108.7
D ₀	18.354	D ₃	146.83	D ₆	1174.7
	19.445		155.56		1244.5
E ₀	20.602	E ₃	164.81	E ₆	1318.5
F ₀	21.827	F ₃	174.61	F ₆	1396.9
	23.125		185.00		1480.0
G ₀	24.500	G ₃	196.00	G ₆	1568.0
	25.957		207.65		1661.2
A ₀	27.500	A ₃	220.00	A ₆	1760.0
	29.135		233.08		1864.7
B ₀	30.868	B ₃	246.94	B ₆	1975.5
C ₁	32.703	C ₄	261.63	C ₇	2093.0
	34.648		277.18		2217.5
D ₁	36.708	D ₄	293.66	D ₇	2349.3
	38.891		311.13		2489.0
E ₁	41.203	E ₄	329.63	E ₇	2637.0
F ₁	43.654	F ₄	349.23	F ₇	2793.8
	46.249		369.99		2960.0
G ₁	48.999	G ₄	392.00	G ₇	3136.0
	51.913		415.30		3322.4
A ₁	55.000	A ₄	440.00	A ₇	3520.0
	58.270		466.16		3729.3
B ₁	61.735	B ₄	493.88	B ₇	3951.1
C ₂	65.406	C ₅	523.25	C ₈	4186.0
	69.296		554.37		4434.9
D ₂	73.416	D ₅	587.33	D ₈	4698.6
	77.782		622.25		4978.0
E ₂	82.407	E ₅	659.26	E ₈	5274.0
F ₂	87.307	F ₅	698.46	F ₈	5587.7
	92.499		739.99		5919.9
G ₂	97.999	G ₅	783.99	G ₈	6271.9
	103.83		830.61		6644.9
A ₂	110.00	A ₅	880.00	A ₈	7040.0
	116.54		932.33		7458.6
B ₂	123.47	B ₅	987.77	B ₈	7902.1

J.) Octave Notation:



U.S.A. STD:	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	C ₄	C ₅	C ₆	C ₇	C ₈
HELMHOLTZ:	C ₁	C	c	c'	c''	c'''	c''''	c ^v
PIANO:	C ₄	C ₁₆	C ₂₈	C ₄₀	C ₅₂	C ₆₄	C ₇₆	C ₈₈
ORGAN:	CCC	CC	C	c ¹	c ²	c ³	c ⁴	

FIG. 11. The octave notation recommended by the U.S.A. Standards Association, together with some others that have been used.

K.) Playing Ranges of Musical Instruments:

TABLE III
Playing ranges of musical instruments—concert pitch

	LOWER LIMIT	APPROXIMATE UPPER LIMIT
Violin	G ₃	E ₇
Viola	C ₃	C ₆
Violoncello	C ₂	E ₅
Double bass	E ₁	B ₃
Flute	C ₄	C ₇
Oboe	B ₃	F ₆
English horn	E ₃	B ₅
Clarinet (B ₃)	D ₃	B ₆
Bass clarinet (B ₂)	D ₂	F ₅
Bassoon	B ₁	E ₅
Contrabassoon	B ₀	E ₃
Horn (double, F and B ₃)	B ₁	F ₅
Trumpet (B ₃)	E ₃	B ₅
Trombone (tenor)	E ₂	B ₄
Trombone (bass)	B ₁	B ₄
Timpani (28" and 25")	F ₂	F ₃
Harp	B ₀ (C ₁)	G ₇

Why does playing music/listening to music affect our emotions?

No question about it – music communicates emotional information – happiness, joy, excitement, sorrow, fear, ... to us humans. Why/how?

Some fraction of the higher-order processing centers of auditory information are wired into various the emotional centers of our brain – directly affecting our emotional state – happy/sad/fear/exhuberance/anticipation.... Why???

The human voice {along with visual information – *e.g.* body language} convey emotional information in speech/music communication from one person to another – enabling other humans to better understand the state of that person at that time.

Interestingly enough – the intervals and harmonic content of sad and/or stressed/subdued speech contains an excess of intervals/harmonics which are minor and/or more dissonant-sounding than happy/exhuberant and/or excited speech, which contains an excess of intervals/harmonics which are major and/or more consonant-sounding:

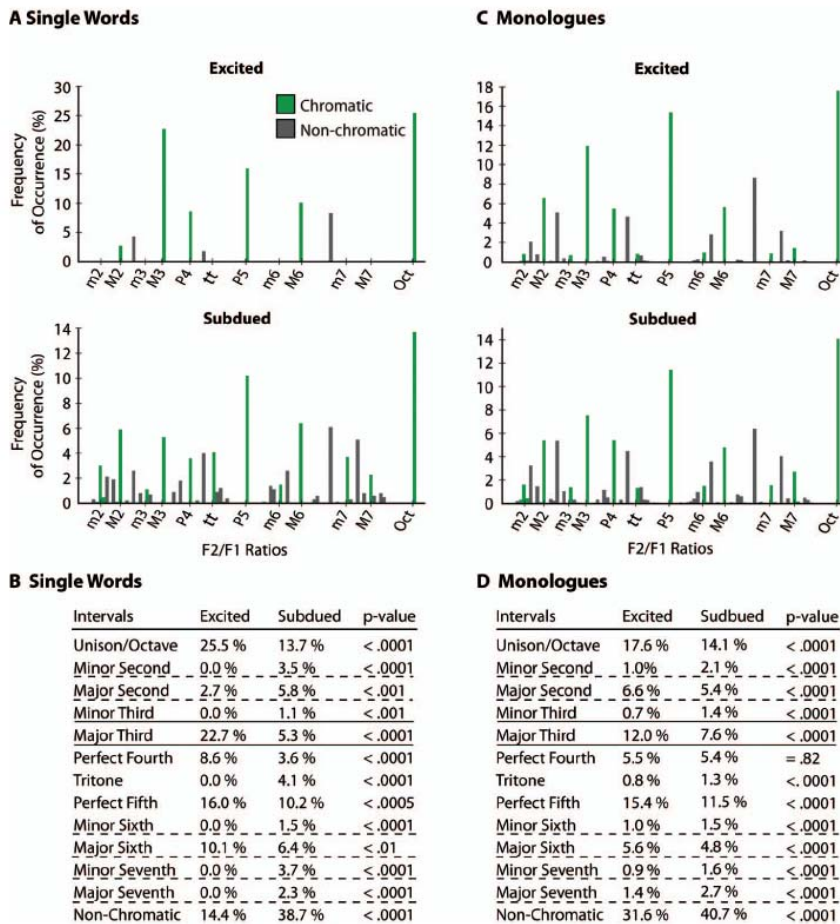


FIG. 5. Comparison of the ratios of the first two formants in excited and subdued speech derived from analyses of the single word and monologue databases. Ratios have been collapsed into a single octave such that they range from 1 to 2. (A) The distribution of formant ratios in excited and subdued speech from the single word database; green bars indicate ratios within 1% of chromatic interval ratios (see Table 1A); gray bars indicate ratios that did not meet this criterion. (B) The percentage of formant ratios corresponding to each chromatic interval in (A) for excited and subdued speech. (C) The same as (A), but for the monolog data. (D) The same as (B), but for the monolog data in (C). p -values for each interval were calculated using the chi-squared test for independence, with expected values equal to the mean number of occurrences of an interval ratio across excited and subdued speech. Intervals empirically determined to distinguish major and minor music are underlined (dashed-lines indicate intervals with less marked contributions).

TABLE IV. Frequency of occurrence of chromatic intervals in major and minor Western classical and Finnish folk music. (A) Tonic intervals; defined as the number of semitones between a melody note and its tonic. (B) Melodic intervals; defined as the number of semitones between adjacent melody notes. The preponderance of small intervals in (B) is in agreement with previous studies (Vos and Troost, 1989). The intervals that distinguish major and minor music are underlined (dashed-lines indicate intervals with less marked contributions).

Major melodies			Minor melodies		
Intervals	Classical (%)	Folk (%)	Intervals	Classical (%)	Folk (%)
(A) Tonic intervals					
Unison/octave	19.9	20.4	Unison/octave	19.4	19.1
Minor second	0.4	0.1	Minor second	0.6	0.2
Major second	12.8	15.9	Major second	13.0	19.6
Minor third	0.8	0.0	Minor third	15.8	15.6
Major third	18.2	16.8	Major third	0.7	0.2
Perfect fourth	10.6	9.5	Perfect fourth	10.5	10.1
Tritone	1.1	0.4	Tritone	1.7	0.2
Perfect fifth	19.1	19.6	Perfect fifth	20.3	19.9
Minor sixth	0.4	0.0	Minor sixth	7.9	1.6
Major sixth	8.4	8.9	Major sixth	1.3	2.9
Minor seventh	0.6	0.2	Minor seventh	3.4	7.5
Major seventh	7.7	8.1	Major seventh	5.4	3.1
(B) Melodic intervals					
Unison	10.7	24.9	Unison	11.4	24.0
Minor second	20.8	13.3	Minor second	28.2	19.1
Major second	36.1	29.9	Major second	27.6	27.6
Minor third	9.4	11.6	Minor third	10.4	12.1
Major third	6.9	8.6	Major third	5.4	6.2
Perfect fourth	7.6	7.4	Perfect fourth	7.2	7.1
Tritone	0.4	0.2	Tritone	1.1	0.0
Perfect fifth	2.7	2.0	Perfect fifth	3.2	2.5
Minor sixth	1.1	0.6	Minor sixth	1.8	0.8
Major sixth	1.3	0.9	Major sixth	1.2	0.1
Minor seventh	0.4	0.3	Minor seventh	0.4	0.1
Major seventh	0.1	0.0	Major seventh	0.2	0.0
Octave	1.3	0.3	Octave	1.2	0.2
Larger	1.0	0.0	Larger	0.9	0.0

TABLE I. Western musical scales (also called modes). (A) The 12 intervals of the chromatic scale showing the abbreviations used, the corresponding number of semitones, and the ratio of the fundamental frequency of the upper tone to the fundamental frequency of the lower tone in just intonation tuning. (B) The seven diatonic scales/modes. As a result of their relative popularity, the Ionian and the Aeolian modes are typically referred to today as the major and minor scales, respectively. Although the Ionian and Aeolian modes and the scales they represent have been preeminent in Western music since the late 16th century, some of the other scales/modes continue to be used today. For example, the Dorian mode is used in plainchant and some folk music, the Phrygian mode is used in flamenco music, and the Mixolydian mode is used in some jazz. The Locrian and Lydian are rarely used because the dissonant tritone takes the place of the fifth and fourth scale degrees, respectively.

(A) Chromatic scale			(B) Diatonic scales						
Interval Name	Semitones	Frequency ratio	“MAJOR” Ionian	Dorian	Phrygian	Lydian	Mixolydian	“MINOR” Aeolian	Locrian
Unison (Uni)	0	1:1	M2	M2	m2	M2	M2	M2	m2
Minor second (m2)	1	16:15	M3	m3	m3	M3	M3	m3	m3
Major second (M2)	2	9:8	P4	P4	P4	tt	P4	P4	P4
Minor third (m3)	3	6:5	P5	P5	P5	P5	P5	P5	tt
Major third (M3)	4	5:4	M6	M6	m6	M6	M6	m6	m6
Perfect fourth (P4)	5	4:3	M7	m7	m7	M7	m7	m7	m7
Tritone (tt)	6	7:5	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
Perfect fifth (P5)	7	3:2							
Minor sixth (m6)	8	8:5							
Major sixth (M6)	9	5:3							
Minor seventh (m7)	10	9:5							
Major seventh (M7)	11	15:8							
Octave (Oct)	12	2:1							

Above figure & tables from “Major and Minor Music Compared to Excited and Subdued Speech”, D. Bowling, *et al.*, J. Acoust. Soc. Am. 127, p. 491-503, 2010.

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