

Natural Musical Abilities

We have previously reported on research that shows that human beings are born with a natural language ability. We are not only born with a hunger to learn language, we are also born with certain expectations about what language is. This fact can only serve as a witness to the Creator and His genius.

Now research into how infants respond to music has shown that we are also born with a readiness to learn the basics of what music should sound like. Western major and minor scales follow a certain mathematical pattern. However, the Javanese pelog scale is based on much more complex mathematical relationships. Those who have grown up with Western musical patterns find that music written in the pelog system sounds weird to their ears. When does this sense that tells us that certain mathematical patterns of notes don't fit together develop?

To find out, researchers tested adults and six-month-olds. Adults can easily identify notes that don't seem to fit in a string. The infants had been trained to look at a speaker when a note was not in tune. When they were right, they were rewarded by watching the actions of an animated toy. Infants that had been trained in both Western and pelog scales did better at identifying mistuned pelog notes than untrained adults.

Music is a gift of God. We find music used and referred to from early in Genesis to the end of the Book of Revelation. The greatest use we can make of music is in praise of our Creator.

Ephesians 5:19-20

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"

Prayer: I thank You, Lord, for the gift of music. It makes our hearts glad and gives us yet another way to witness to You and worship You. Help Your people always make use of music. Amen.

REF.: "Infants tune in to the sounds of music." Science News, v. 138.