

Is Music Neutral?

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NO. . .

In fact, music influences and manipulates us more than we know.

Note. This material does not even "scratch the surface" of the enormous amount of material I have found - with little effort, on the effects of music. It is also worth mentioning that most of the following material is *not* from a Christian perspective.

And when we refer to music, we are referring to the *score or composition*. And not the *lyrics*.

Music effects the human body in subtle, but powerful ways.

A well established fact is the human body and mind can be controlled and altered with music. Many scientific and medical studies have proved conclusively the tremendous effects of music upon the human physiology and anatomy. Music is used to lower blood pressure, treat mental illness, depression, mental retardation, insomnia and many others.

Musicologist Julius Portnoy found that not only can music, "change metabolism, affect muscular energy, raise or lower blood pressure, and influence digestion," but "It may be able to do all these things more successfully ... **than any other stimulants that produce those changes in our bodies.**" (Tame, David, *The Secret Power of Music*, p. 138).

Clinical researchers at the U.C.L.A. School of Nursing in Los Angeles, and at Georgia Baptist Medical Center in Atlanta, found that premature babies gained weight faster and were able to use oxygen more efficiently when they listened to soothing music.

At Baltimore's St. Agnes Hospital, classical music was provided in the critical-care units. "Half an hour of music produced the same effect as ten milligrams of Valium," says Dr. Raymond Bahr, head of the coronary-care unit.

The great pianist and composer of the 1800's, Frederic Chopin, at the age of ten, was often summoned to play for the Grand Duke Constantine, governor of Poland. The Duke had recurring seizures of madness which could seemingly be controlled only by Chopin's music. When the little boy played, the seizures abated and the governor could resume his normal activities, only to send for Chopin again when the musical medicine wore off.

How does music help? Some studies show it can lower blood pressure, basal-metabolism and respiration rates, thus lessening physiological responses to stress. Other studies suggest music may help increase production of endorphins (natural pain relievers) and S-

IgA (Salivary immunoglobulin A). S-IgA speeds healing, reduces the danger of infections, and controls the heart rate. Studies indicate both hemispheres of the brain are involved in processing music. Dr. Sacks explains, "The neurological basis of musical responses is robust and may even survive damage to both hemispheres" ("Music's Surprising Power to Heal," 8/92 Reader's Digest).

"To the question, 'Does music affect man's physical body?' modern research applies in the clear affirmative. **There is scarcely a single function of the body which cannot be affected by musical tones.** The roots of the auditory nerves are more widely distributed and possess more extensive connections than those of any other nerves in the body. Investigation has shown that music affects digestion, internal secretions, circulation, nutrition and respiration. Even neural networks of the brain have been found to be sensitive to harmonic principles" (Tame, David, *The Secret Power of Music*, p. 136).

Music can also be dangerous to the body.

Dr. Adam Knieste, a musicologist who studies the effects of music upon people noted:

"It's really a powerful drug. Music can POISON you, lift your spirits, or MAKE YOU SICK without knowing why." (Family Weekly Magazine, January 30, 1983, p. 12, article by David Chagall)

Rock music can literally kill.

The view that music is amoral or neutral with no inherent power to effect is completely proven false by extensive research performed on plant life. *Rock music, with it's hard driving beat, played to plants will kill the plants - while soothing classical music causes the plants to grow twice as fast.*

"Paradoxical as it may seem, music's effect upon the more primitive vegetable kingdom is one of the most convincing methods of all for proving that music does affect life, including human life. For experiments conducted with humans, and even, to some extent, with animals, have the extra factor of the mind to contend with. This means that while men or animals may be demonstrated to have been affected by tones, the effect may not have been a direct or objective one. Rather, the effect upon the body may have been caused by the mind's subjective reaction to the music heard. In the case of plant-music research, however, psychological factors cannot really be said to be present. **If music can be shown to affect plants, then such effects have to be due to the objective influence of the tones directly upon the cells and processes of the life-form."**

"An intensive series of studies carried out by Dorothy Retallack of Denver, Colorado, demonstrated the effects of different kinds of music on a variety of household plants. The experiments were controlled under strict scientific

conditions, and the plants were kept within large closed cabinets on wheels in which light, temperature and air were automatically regulated. Three hours a day of acid rock, played through a loudspeaker at the side of the cabinet, was found to stunt and damage squash plants, philodendrons and corn in under four weeks. Mrs Retallack played the music of the two different Denver radio stations to two groups of petunias. The radio stations were KIMN (a rock station) and KLIR (a semiclassical station). The Denver Post reported:

“The petunias listening to KIMN refused to bloom. Those on KLIR developed six beautiful blooms. By the end of the second week, the KIMN petunias were **LEANING AWAY** from the radio and showing very erratic growth. The petunia blooms hearing KLIR were all leaning **TOWARD THE SOUND. Within a month all plants exposed to rock music DIED.**

In another experiment, conducted over three weeks, Dorothy Retallack played the music of Led Zeppelin and Vanilla Fudge to one group of beans, squash (marrow), corn, morning glory and coleus; she also played contemporary avant-garde atonal music to a second group; and, as a control, played nothing to a third group. Within ten days, the plants exposed to Led Zeppelin and Vanilla Fudge were all **LEANING AWAY FROM THE SPEAKER**. After three weeks they were stunted and **DYING**. The beans exposed to the 'new music' leaned 15 degrees from the speaker and were found to have middle-sized roots. The plants left in silence had the longest roots and grew the highest. **Further, it was discovered that plants to which placid, devotional music was played not only grew two inches taller than plants left in silence, but also leaned TOWARDS THE SPEAKER.** (Tame, David *The Secret Power of Music*, p. 142 - 144)

All the plants that were next to the rock music - **LEANED AWAY FROM THE SPEAKERS** - trying to get away from the music! And to show that it was not just the noise itself - the plants next to the classical music - **LEANED TOWARD THE SPEAKERS** - actually trying to get closer to the music.

In the end - ALL the plants next to the rock music - DIED!

Do you still think music is neutral?

Rock music, not the lyrics - JUST THE MUSIC, has been scientifically proven to literally KILL!

And some Christians actually believe that the giver of **LIFE** - the Lord Jesus Christ is the author and god of "rock and roll"! The One that made the plants and LIFE itself, is the author of a killer - Rock music! *What could be more ridiculous!*

Jesus Christ said in John 10:10, ". . . *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to KILL, and to destroy: I am come that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly.*"

John 14:6, says "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and **the LIFE**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*"

And Christian rocker Larry Norman expects you to take him seriously when he falsely claims

"rock music comes from God through the church".

(Hart, Lowell *Satan's Music Exposed*, Salem Kirban Inc., 1980 p.20)

Christian rock band Petra has the gall to sing "God Gave Rock and Roll to You".

If you love the sound
And don't forget the source
 ...
 you can love the rock
 and let it free your soul
 God gave Rock and roll to you
Gave Rock and Roll to you
Put it in the soul of everyone

Is music neutral - Absolutely Not!

Music by the arrangement of rhythms, tones and harmonics can have deadly effects!
 David Tame writes in *The Secret Power of Music*:

"In conclusion, we can say that insofar as the physical body is concerned, the notion that music has no effect upon man, or that all music is harmless, **is absolutely in error.**" (Tame, David *The Secret Power of Music*, p.141).

Rock music can literally cook an egg!

Drs. Earl W. Flosdorf and Leslie A. Chambers found in a series of experiments that shrill sounds projected into a liquid media coagulated proteins. A recent teenage fad was that of taking soft eggs to rock concerts and placing them at the foot of the stage. **Midway through the concert the eggs could be eaten hard-boiled as a result of the music.** Amazingly few rock fans wondered what that same music might do to their bodies. (Larson, Bob *The Day Music Died*, p.116)

If music is neutral - how is it that certain music can literally break glass!

Bob Larson writes in *The Day Music Died*:

Perhaps you have seen the demonstration of **the breaking of a glass** by synchronizing high frequency vibrations with the vibrations of the chemical combination of the molecules in the glass. This in a word picture is what may happen physiologically to the human body when dancing frantically to rock music. (Larson, Bob *The Day Music Died*, p.124)

Music has a profound effect upon the mind. . .

One of the most frightening display of the awesome power of music upon the human brain occurred in the conversion of Patty Hearst. In February, 1974, Patty Hearst was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army. But shortly after the kidnapping, Patty is helping the SLA rob banks. You wonder how they converted her? Dr. William Sargant, Britain's foremost expert on brainwashing examined Patty Hearst. Here's his alarming conclusion from *Newsweek* magazine, February 16, 1976, (p. 24):

". . .she was an unwilling victim of a "**FORCED CONVERSION**" or **brainwashing**. According to Sargant, a person whose nervous system is under constant pressure can "inhibit" and "exhibit paradoxical brain activity - bad becomes good and vice versa." And that, Sargant argues, is precisely what happened to Patty. . . Her nervous system was kept at maximum stress by the continual playing of loud **ROCK MUSIC**."(*Newsweek*, February 16, 1976 p.24)

Not the LYRICS! Not the WORDS! But simply the MUSIC!

"Music is used everywhere to condition the human mind. It can be just as powerful as a drug and much more dangerous, because nobody takes musical manipulation very seriously." (Family Weekly, January 30, 1983, p. 15)

". . .music is more than a language. It is the language of languages. It can be said that of all the arts, there is. . . none other that more powerfully moves and changes the consciousness." (Tame, David *The Secret Power of Music*, p.151)

Dr. Howard Hanson, of the of the famous Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, and one of the greatest authorities on music, stated:

*"Music is a curiously subtle art with innumerable, varying emotional connotations. It is made up of many ingredients and according to the proportions of those components, it can be soothing or invigorating, ennobling or vulgarizing, philosophical or orgiastic. It has **POWERS FOR EVIL as well as for good.**"* (The American Journal of Psychiatry, vol. 99, p.317)

But isn't music just notes and chords, etc.? How can notes be "bad" or "good"?

Tim Fisher, former music professor, and founder of Sacred Music Services, gives this excellent analogy in his book, *The Battle for Christian Music*:

"Perhaps some of you are asking yourselves the question, But how can a musical note be inherently good or bad? Aren't notes just a matter of pitch variation, tonal vibration, compressions and decompressions of air? Those are fair questions, Let's look at this more closely. Years ago I heard a tape of a man who was defending the neutrality of music in a public service. He walked over to the piano and played a C major chord. Then, he asked the audience if it was a good C major chord or an

evil C major chord. After some scattered laughter, he said `See, there's no such thing as good or evil music,' He made a rather obvious mistake, however, in his reasoning: a C major chord isn't music! It is a building block of music-and there's a big difference."

"Take the English language, for example. If I write the letter 'e' is that a good 'e' or a bad 'e'? Neither. As a building block of the English language it is a neutral entity. However, I as a creative writer can put that letter in conjunction with other letters and communicate something like ...

Prais**e** the Lord...

or

I hat**e** God.

"In both of the above usages I have taken neutral letters and put them together to communicate something to you. **However, what I have communicated is definitely not neutral, and my intent is clearly conveyed.**" (Fisher, Tim *The Battle for Christian Music*, pp 60-61)

Lowell Hart in his book, *Satan's Music Exposed*, writes of the following experiment:

"The unsuspecting "guinea-pigs" were a teenage boy and girl. They had never met previously and were completely unaware of any strange happenings. Unfortunately for them, as they sat getting acquainted in a cozy "private" room with soft music playing in the background, their reactions were being observed and recorded. When classical music and soft ballads were piped into the room they talked and were friendly, but somewhat aloof. **When pop music and jazz were played they quickly developed a much "friendlier" attitude and began to hold hands and put their arms around each other. When the music changed back to classical and ballads they would again become more formal and reserved. If the music would swing back to the jazz and pop music "their formality would give way to familiarity."** (Hart, Lowell *Satan's Music Exposed*, p.63)

Highly-respected, Professor Alan Bloom, professor of social thought at the University of Chicago, who has also taught at Yale, the University of Paris, the University of Toronto, Cornell and many other schools, writes in his best-selling book, *The Closing of the American Mind*:

"Nothing is more singular about this generation than its **ADDICTION to music**. . . It is their passion; nothing else excites them as it does; they cannot take seriously anything alien to music. . . I suspect that the rock addiction, particularly in the absence of strong counter attractions, has an **effect similar to that of drugs.**" (Bloom, Alan *The Closing of the American Mind*, pp 68...81)

Another "proof" of the effects of music on a person is the billion dollar industry called Muzak or "moodsongs". Muzak is the "mood music" that is piped into stores, airports, doctor offices, et. al. in order to "create an atmosphere". The book, *Elevator Music* by Joseph Lanza, tells the history of Muzak and other moodsongs. Lanza describes an episode at the Hilton in Las Vegas when rock music was used as the "moodsong". And because of the rock music customers experienced petit mal seizures! Lanza writes, "A doctor friend, a psychiatrist, later told me **that kind of pulsation might create problems.** I've gone into markets, telling them they are killing their business with high-speed rock." (Lanza, Joseph *Elevator Music*, p.142)

Lanza also states, "Some background music has been known to induce musicogenic epilepsy, triggering **a chemical brain reaction that elicits thoughts of suicide or murder.** . . .doctors had documented seventy-six similar cases." (Lanza, Joseph *Elevator Music*, p.194)

Lanza also makes this startling statement:

*". . . music designed to soothe can be **altered to TORMENT,** . . ."*
(Lanza, Joseph *Elevator Music*, p.196)

It's worth noting, that we are not talking about "lyrics" but simply the instrumental music.

Rock music has been proven to obstruct the brain's ability to think!

In 1978, a California music therapist, investigating the effects of rock music on teenagers, administered to 240 school children aged 10-18 an emotional stability test during which rock . was being played. The results were then examined by a psychologist who was unaware of the experiment. **He concluded that the test had been given in a mental institution.**(Hart, Lowell *Satan's Music Exposed*, p.101)

Is this one of the reasons, since the 1960's, when rock music began "taking over", our education system has been a disaster? Despite spending billions and billions of tax payers dollars on our education system - we can no longer teach the average young person even simple reading and arithmetic!

The Bible clearly teaches music is NOT neutral!

Anyone who has read 1 Samuel 16, knows that music is not neutral. Even back during the time of Saul (around 1079 B.C.) they knew the power of music. When the "evil spirit from the Lord" began troubling Saul - it wasn't a doctor or soothsayer they called - **but a musician!** David! **They knew music had inherent powers! They knew music wasn't neutral!**

14 But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* before thee, **to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.**

17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me.

18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD *is* with him. . .

23 And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, **that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.**

Who that has ever read 2 Chronicles 5 could ever believe that the Lord thought music was neutral? At the sound of music - the glory of God was so strong the priests could not even stand **"for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God."**

13 It came even to pass, **as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD;** and when they lifted up *their* voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying*, For *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: **that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD;**

14 So that the priests could not stand to minister **by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.** (2 Chronicles 5:13-14)

The Apostle Paul clearly, taught in 1 Corinthians 14 that certain sounds, *by themselves*, had meaning and are not neutral.

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, **except they give a distinction in the sounds,** how shall it **be known** what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an **uncertain sound**, who shall prepare himself to the battle? (1 Corinthians 14:7-8)

Let their be no doubt. . .

Music is not neutral. Has never been neutral. Nor ever will be neutral.

Anyone who suggests music is neutral, goes against all known disciplines of science, musicology, academics, medicine, physiology and the word of God.

"Like human nature itself, music CANNOT POSSIBLY BE NEUTRAL in its spiritual direction ... ultimately all uses of tone and all musical lyrics can be

classified according to their spiritual direction, upward or downward. ... To put it plainly, music tends to be of **either the darkness or of the light**. (Tame, David *The Secret Power of Music*, 1984 p.187).

Neil Postman, professor of communication arts and sciences at New York University and a highly respected critic, educator, sociologist, and communication theorist who has written more than fifteen books. states point-blank, in his book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*:

"To maintain that technology [music] is neutral. . . is. . . stupidity plain and simple." (Postman, Neil *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, p. 157)

Dr. Schoen, writes in *The Psychology of Music*:

"Music is the most powerful stimulus known among the perceptive senses. **The medical, psychiatric and other evidence for the non-neutrality of music is so overwhelming that it frankly amazes me that anyone should seriously say otherwise.**"

Tim Fisher writes in *The Battle for Christian Music*:

"It is almost impossible to overstate the absurdity of the claim that music is neutral, amoral, or void of communication by itself. . . Those who have looked beyond the current music publications know that no one has ever taken the position that music is neutral except for Christians in the last twenty-five years who are trying to justify bringing rock into the church."(Fisher, Tim *The Battle for Christian Music*, pp.52...56)

Dr Alfred B. Smith, author of many hymns and choruses including the chorus, "For God So Loved The World" and editor of Living Hymns states:

"Some would have us believe that all music is a-moral and that it is only the words that make it Christian or not. **I beg to differ with this philosophy!** . . . music in itself is a language which can capture and control the very thoughts and actions of an individual, a crowd, or a nation. **It is the fountainhead for good or for evil!** As one must be discerning in the device of their friends and their food for a happy and healthy life ... so we must be careful and prayerful in the music we chose to listen to or sing." (Hart, Lowell *Satan's Music Exposed*, foreword)

In his famous work *Laws*, Plato could have been writing about Christians and their foolish insistence that music is neutral in order to justify their love for wicked rock music.

"Through foolishness they, the people, DECEIVED THEMSELVES into thinking that there was no right or wrong in music that it was to be judged

good or bad by the pleasure it gave." (Plato, *Laws* as quoted by Tame, David *The Secret Power of Music*, p. 189)

It's important to note, that musicologist, David Tame, who shows no sign of being a Christian, makes these alarming statements:

"More than any other form of the misuse of sound, it is rock with which we must deal today. ... It is a global phenomenon; a pounding, pounding destructive beat which is heard from America and Western Europe to Africa and Asia. Its effect upon the soul is to make nigh-impossible the true inner silence and peace necessary for the contemplation of eternal verities. ... **How necessary is it in this age for some to have the courage to be the ones who are `different', and TO SEPARATE themselves out from the pack who long ago sold their lives and personalities to this sound.** . . I adamantly believe that rock in all its forms is a critical problem which our civilization must get to grips. . . **if it wishes long to survive"** (Tame, David *The Secret Power of Music*, 1984 p. 204).

IS MUSIC NEUTRAL? NO

Not according to EVERY serious scientific, medical, physiological and psychiatric research known.

Not according to EVERY serious musicologist.

Not according to the word of God.