

## Editor's Note: Durham Undergraduate Research in Music & Science Volume 8

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It is our pleasure to present the 8th annual volume of *Durham Undergraduate Research in Music & Science (DURMS)*. This year's collection once again demonstrates the intellectual curiosity, methodological rigour, and creativity that characterise Durham's growing research culture in music psychology and related fields. The ten articles featured here represent an impressive diversity of topics—from emotion perception and musical structure to cognition, wellbeing, and technology—reflecting the continuing breadth and interdisciplinary vitality of music science.

Several papers in this volume revisit classic questions in musical emotion with innovative designs. Anthony Sutch and Luca Whittle both explore the temporal limits of emotion recognition in film music, using gating paradigms to examine how rapidly listeners can detect affective qualities in very brief excerpts. Sutch demonstrates that emotions such as tension and happiness can be detected at remarkably short durations, while Whittle extends this work by systematically analysing the accuracy of emotion recognition across contrasting cues and durations.

Dana Al Tajer offers a distinctive contribution through *The Sound of Fear*, which examines how musical features in horror media shape emotional and physiological responses, highlighting the complex interplay between expectation, tension, and aesthetic pleasure. Two further contributions investigate timbre, harmony, and audio perception. Edmund Huang contributes two complementary studies: *The Differentiability of Audio Quality and Texture* explores perceptual sensitivity to sonic texture, while *The Asymmetrical Effects on the Perception of Mixed Emotions through the Highlighting of Enclosed Chords in Major and Minor Ninth Chords* investigates harmonic determinants of emotional ambiguity in complex chordal structures. Together, these papers demonstrate the continuing expansion of empirical research into sound perception beyond melody and rhythm.

Cognitive and expertise-based mechanisms are addressed in two papers by Jett Alton. The first, *Musical Expertise on Working Memory*, compares musicians and non-musicians in tasks involving tonal sequence recall across different rates and lengths. The findings illuminate how training supports chunking and segmentation strategies under cognitive load. In his second paper, *Living Off-Grid*, Alton investigates how rhythmic quantisation influences perceived groove in hip-hop, offering a perceptually grounded perspective on human-machine interaction in rhythm production.

Emotional regulation and psychological wellbeing emerge as a further unifying theme. Irobosa Osagie's *Do Music-Evoked Thoughts Vary Depending on Genre?* explores how genre influences the associations and thought patterns elicited by music listening, contributing to understanding of music's cognitive and narrative affordances. Nina Passler's *Music-Induced Emotion revisits the Geneva Emotional Music Scale (GEMS) framework*, comparing experimenter-selected and self-selected musical stimuli, and finding that self-chosen music evokes stronger affective responses regardless of musical training. Finally, Summi Ng's *How Mentally Well and Unwell International Students in the UK Use Music Listening for Emotional Regulation* offers a compelling applied study of music and wellbeing, illustrating how students draw on listening behaviours to manage stress and emotion in cross-cultural contexts.

Collectively, these articles illustrate the remarkable methodological and thematic range of undergraduate research in music psychology—from perceptual thresholds to affective experience, from laboratory paradigms to real-world applications. We extend our sincere thanks and congratulations to all student authors for their diligence and creativity in producing such thoughtful, well-executed work.

We also wish to acknowledge with gratitude the vital contributions of our PhD Editorial Assistants—Nashra Ahmad, Connor Kirts, Chara Steliou, Hazel van der Walle, Katie Vishwanath, and Giselle Lee—who have provided careful reviewing, editing, and mentorship throughout the preparation of this volume.

Finally, this year's volume marks a milestone of shared leadership: Dr Caroline Curwen and Aliya Edwards served as joint editors of *DURMS Volume 8*, continuing the journal's commitment to fostering excellence in student-led research within the Music and Science community at Durham.