

WHY ROCK STAYS OUT OF WORSHIP

THE BIG BEAT

THREE FOUNDATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR WORSHIP IN SCRIPTURE

- ▶ Holiness
- ▶ Priority
- ▶ Purpose

QUESTIONS WE WILL ANSWER

- ▶ What do the professionals and rockers say about the Big Beat?
- ▶ Why the Big Beat?
- ▶ Does Rock really affect me?
- ▶ Why can't Rock and worship mix?
- ▶ Do we have Biblical grounds to say Rock should stay out of worship?

“TOO OFTEN PEOPLE THINK ‘I LIKE THIS, THEREFORE IT’S GOOD. I DON’T LIKE THIS, THEREFORE IT IS BAD.’ AND I DON’T MAKE THAT MISTAKE AT ALL. AND I FEEL LIKE, THERE’S NO REAL MESSAGE... I’M HAVING A GOOD TIME, AND YOU’RE INVITED.”

David Lee Roth (Rocker)

FROM “THE TRUTH ABOUT ROCK” - THE PETERS BROTHERS

TO CIRCUS MAGAZINE, “NOW EVERYONE IS AS PERVERTED AS I AM,
SO I CAN COME ON SING AND BE AS SICK AND NORMAL AS I
USUALLY AM.”

Gene Simmons (Rocker)

FROM “THE TRUTH ABOUT ROCK” - THE PETERS BROTHERS

IN ROLLING STONES MAGAZINE, "I FIGURE THE ONLY THING TO DO WAS TO SWIPE THEIR KIDS. I STILL THINK IT'S THE ONLY THING TO DO. BY SAYING THAT, I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT KIDNAPPING, I'M JUST TALKING ABOUT CHANGING YOUNG PEOPLE'S VALUE SYSTEMS, WHICH REMOVES THEM FROM THEIR PARENTS' WORLD VERY EFFECTIVELY."

David Crosby (Rocker)

FROM "THE TRUTH ABOUT ROCK" - THE PETERS BROTHERS

“BECAUSE MUSIC IS A SPIRITUAL THING OF ITS OWN YOU CAN HYPNOTIZE PEOPLE WITH MUSIC. AND WHEN YOU GET PEOPLE AT THE WEAKEST POINT YOU CAN PREACH INTO THE SUB-CONSCIOUS WHAT WE WANT TO SAY.”

Jimi Hendrix (Rocker)

FROM “THE TRUTH ABOUT ROCK” - THE PETERS BROTHERS

**1. THE BEAT IS THE DRIVING
FORCE BEHIND ROCK MUSIC**

WHAT IS A “ROCK BEAT”?

- ▶ “[A] strong accent on one of the normally unaccented beats of the bar, used especially in jazz and popular music” (Oxford Languages Dictionary).
- ▶ “[A] steady pronounced rhythm stressing the second and fourth beats of a four-beat measure” (Merriam-Webster).



WHAT IS A “ROCK BEAT”?

- ▶ Fundamentally, it is emphasis on the weak beats in music.

- ▶ 1 - **2** - 3 - 4

- ▶

WHY THE ROCK BEAT?

- ▶ **"The backbeat is essential to the music, much like the heartbeat is to the body. Undoubtedly, the backbeat is the make-or-break element of the rhythm. Music will feel monotonous and flat if the backbeat is weak and unstable. But when the backbeat music is consistent, it establishes a groove in the song, moving the listeners emotionally and physically."** (Jan Branicki–Rocker)
- ▶ **"Our brain is wired to get excited while listening to lively, on-the-beat tracks, and the backbeat does just that. It captivates the listeners and connects them to the dynamic rhythm and flow of the music"** (ibid).

WHY THE ROCK BEAT?

- ▶ “Without the backbeat [in the] music, the energy will be missing, and the music will feel dull and lifeless. **Hence backbeat is the backbone of the music** that provides a vigorous rhythm and groove to the song...” (ibid).
- ▶ “The backbeat **creates a driving force** that **makes listeners want** to move and dance — setting it apart from other popular rhythmic styles” (Dustin Miraglia [pro audio engineer] and Sara Rosenbaum [digital music attorney]).

**2. ROCK ARTISTS SAY THE ROCK
BEAT IS OVERTLY SENSUAL (IN MANY
CASES, IMMORAL) IN NATURE.**

**"ROCK 'N' ROLL: THE TERM IS A BLUES EUPHEMISM FOR
[IMMORALITY]."**

The Rolling Stones Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll

"ROCK 'N' ROLL IS 99% [IMMORALITY]."

John Oates (Rocker)

FROM INSIDEROCKMUSIC.COM

**“EVERYBODY TAKES IT FOR GRANTED THAT ROCK 'N' ROLL IS
SYNONYMOUS WITH [IMMORALITY].”**

Chris Stein (Rocker)

FROM INSIDEROCKMUSIC.COM

“FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD, EVEN YOUR SANCTIFICATION, THAT YE SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM FORNICATION:”

1 Thessalonians 4:3

**“FLEE FORNICATION. EVERY SIN THAT A MAN DOETH IS WITHOUT THE BODY;
BUT HE THAT COMMITTETH FORNICATION SINNETH AGAINST HIS OWN BODY.”**

1 Corinthians 6:18

**3. THE PURPOSE OF THE ROCK BEAT
IS TO HYPE UP SENSUAL ENERGY IN
THE LISTENER.**

SENSUALITY OF THE BEAT

- ▶ “Our brain is wired to get excited while listening to lively, on-the-beat tracks, and the backbeat does just that. It captivates the listeners and **connects them to the dynamic rhythm and flow of the music**” (Jan Branicki).
- ▶ “The backbeat **creates a driving force** that **makes listeners** want to move and dance — setting it apart from other popular rhythmic styles” (Dustin Miraglia and Sara Rosenbaum).

‘WICKE (1991: 68)...IN SENSUOUS IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MUSIC THROUGH BODILY MOVEMENT IN DANCE THE STRUCTURES OF THE SONGS WERE DISSOLVED INTO PATTERNS AND IMAGES OF MOVEMENT. IT WAS NOT THEIR MEANING, THEIR CONTENT, THAT WAS “READ” BUT THEIR MOVEMENT; THEY WERE NOT MERELY HEARD BUT RATHER [THE BEAT WAS] PHYSICALLY DECIPHERED.’

Garry Neville Tamlyn, PhD

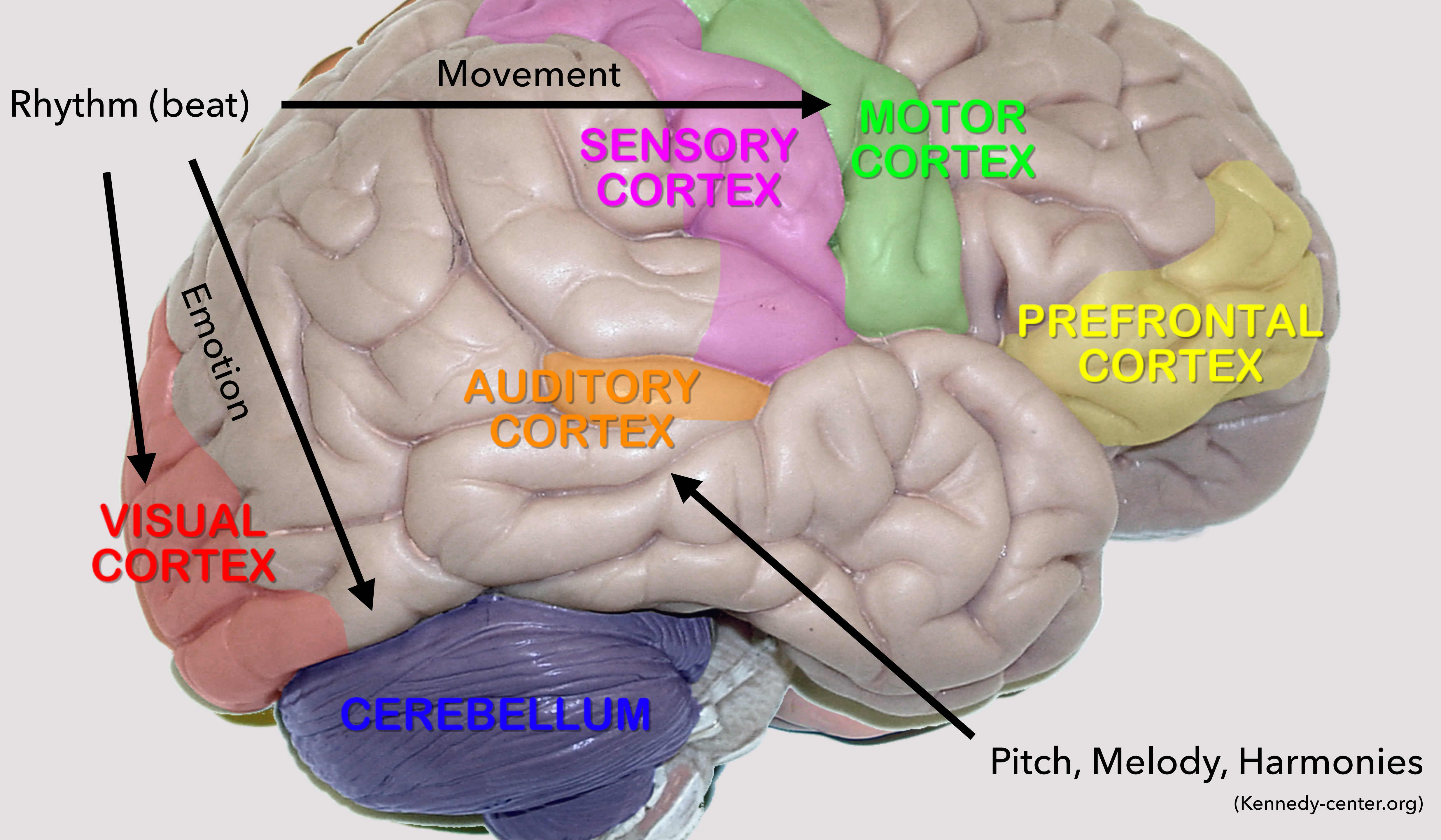
FROM “THE BIG BEAT”



THE ROCK BEAT IS A SENSUAL BEAT.
IT'S DESIGNED TO
ACTIVATE YOUR BODY
IN AN
EMOTIONAL-HIGH EXPERIENCE,
WHERE YOU ARE HOOKED
ON THE DRIVING BEAT.

**4. PITCH, MELODY, AND HARMONIES = MORE
“MATHEMATICALLY-DISCERNED”**

**RHYTHM (ESPECIALLY THE BEAT) = PROCESSED
IN THE EMOTIONAL AND MOTOR AREAS IN THE
BRAIN, LEADING MUCH QUICKER TO EMOTION-
PROVOKED RESPONSES AND PHYSICAL ACTION.**



THE BRAIN, THE BEAT, AND THE UGLY

- ▶ “Beat perception engages specific brain regions associated with motor planning and timing, notably the basal ganglia and the supplementary motor area. Interestingly, **even passive listening to music can activate these neural domains**” (National Library of Medicine).
- ▶ “Our bodies have natural internal rhythms controlled by a part of the cerebellum, which is in the very back of the brain...This portion of the brain **regulates the internal rhythms of the body including heartbeat, balance, and breathing**. It is also the part of the brain that primarily reacts to rhythm in music. It likes a nice, steady beat (similar to your internal rhythms) and can make you move to tempo” (Benjamin Helton, PhD).

“LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM; TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD.”

Colossians 3:16

**5. THE ROCK BEAT IS NATURALLY INTERPRETED
BODILY BY DANCING (OFTEN INDECENT IN
NATURE). IT APPEALS TO OUR BASE (OLD MAN/
SIN) SENSES.**

THE BEAT AND DANCING

- ▶ “Whether or not any particular song is ever danced to, then, **procedures of this nature, emphasizing the purely kinetic** [referring to the motion] **aspects of the music, point to dancing and physical movement as a foundation of rock and roll's aesthetic**” (Alan Hoffman, PhD).
- ▶ “Hoffman...suggests that propulsion manifests itself as a pure linear extension of repeated rhythmic cells (Hoffman’s “**continuously propulsive rhythms**” **that are inherent in its dance function**) **that operate within the rhythmic fabric of rock and roll** provided by the rhythm section” (ibid).

VELOCITY + PROPULSION

- ▶ ““Velocity” is described in terms of tempo and the degree of “rapid forward thrust” that is exerted on a continuous “beat”” (ibid).
- ▶ “Hoffman suggests that **propulsion [movement] primarily emanates from the accented backbeat**, which is delivered by the snare drum” (ibid).
- ▶ ‘In reference to rock and roll drumming patterns, Laing...considers that **the accented backbeat “draw(s) the listener into the music to supply the missing first and third beats either mentally or physically**, through hand-clapping, nodding or dancing’ (ibid).
- ▶ “Although the concept of velocity is not fully explicated by Hoffman, **the degree of forward propulsion experienced by a listener can be considered to depend upon the “beat”** (i.e. rhythm patterns)” (ibid).

“BRADLEY...NOTES A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROCK AND ROLL BEAT AND PHYSICAL MOVEMENT WHEN HE STATES THAT THE “KEY TO UNDERSTANDING BEAT IS DANCING” AND SUGGESTS THAT SOME MODES OF DANCING MAY RESULT IN UNINHIBITEDNESS OR A SHARED SENSE OF COMMUNALITY AMONG ITS PARTICIPANTS.”

Garry Neville Tamlyn, PhD

FROM “THE BIG BEAT”

“WHAT? KNOW YE NOT THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS IN YOU, WHICH YE HAVE OF GOD, AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN? FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD’S.”

1 Corinthians 6:19–20

**6. THE ROCK BEAT CAN BE EMOTIONALLY
AND SENSUALLY STIMULATING ENOUGH
TO RESULT IN A PSEUDO-HYPNOTISM**

THE BEAT AND PSEUDO-HYPNOTISM

- ▶ The effect of rock's **musical promiscuity**, its use of technology, and its emphasis on the individual voice is a unique sonic presence. Rock has the remarkable power both to **dominate the soundscape** and to **entice the listener into the performers' emotional lives**" (Britannica)
- ▶ "[Plato believed] Music's highly personal nature gave it the capacity to render propositional truths more persuasive...Because music was primarily imitative—it mirrored man's sensual and intellectual life—music could shape thought, action, and perception in powerful ways to which most people were oblivious. Thus, Plato concluded that "education in music is most sovereign, because more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the inmost soul and take strongest hold upon it, bringing with them and imparting grace..." (Paraphrased Plato).

THE BEAT AND PSEUDO-HYPNOTISM

- ▶ “Thousands flocked to the concert to hear Michael Jackson. Not long after the program began, the media televised pictures of those whose unconscious forms had to be passed overhead-transported by the mob's uplifted hands and arms-to the waiting medical staff for resuscitation. Other fans swayed, twisted, and contorted their bodies in response to the overwhelming pulsating rhythms emanating from the rock star's highly amplified and well-orchestrated band. Still others acted dazed and almost hypnotized. The audience seemed to be caught up in a high state of exhilaration-temporarily abandoning any sense of self restraint, and clamoring for more potent doses of an unseen “drug” (Doug Batchelor, Pastor).

“AND BE NOT DRUNK WITH WINE, WHEREIN IS EXCESS; BUT BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT;”

Ephesians 5:18

**7. BECAUSE OF THE WAY GOD HAS WIRED
HUMANITY, MUSIC HAS THE POWER TO
INFLUENCE OUR EMOTIONS, THOUGHTS, AND
THUS, OUR DECISIONS.**

“BE NOT DECEIVED: EVIL COMMUNICATIONS CORRUPT GOOD MANNERS.”

1 Corinthians 15:33

**8. MUSIC AFFECTS US WHETHER WE
CONSCIOUSLY ENGAGE WITH IT
OR NOT.**

“BEAT PERCEPTION ENGAGES SPECIFIC BRAIN REGIONS ASSOCIATED WITH MOTOR PLANNING AND TIMING, NOTABLY THE BASAL GANGLIA AND THE SUPPLEMENTARY MOTOR AREA. INTERESTINGLY, EVEN PASSIVE LISTENING TO MUSIC CAN ACTIVATE THESE NEURAL DOMAINS.”

National Library of Medicine

ENTRAINMENT

- ▶ “Entrainment, a captivating phenomenon where we **unconsciously synchronize our movements to an external rhythm**, emerges as an **inherent human response** when engaged with music. This **almost involuntary response**—be it foot tapping or dancing—**is not just about moving to the beat. It is an intricate interplay of various brain regions responsible for auditory processing, motor functions, and even prediction**” (National Library of Medicine).
- ▶ “Entrainment refers to the simultaneous activation of neurons from different parts of the brain. ‘For example, when you hear a steady rhythm, it activates your auditory system **but also automatically engages your motor system**,’ explains music therapist Brian Harris of Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital” (harvardhealth.edu).

“THERE ARE, IT MAY BE, SO MANY KINDS OF VOICES IN THE WORLD, AND NONE OF THEM IS WITHOUT SIGNIFICATION.”

1 Corinthians 14:10

9. THEREFORE, CONSTANT LISTENING TO MUSIC WITH A ROCK BEAT IS CONSTANTLY ENGAGING THE MIND AND BODY (WHETHER VOLUNTARILY OR NOT) IN A SENSUAL-HIGH EXPERIENCE.

“IN A SENSE, ALL ROCK IS REVOLUTIONARY. BY ITS BEAT AND SOUND, IT HAS ALWAYS IMPLICITLY REJECTED RESTRAINT AND CELEBRATED FREEDOM AND [IMMORALITY].”

Time magazine, January 3, 1969

“LONG BEFORE THE ROCK AND ROLL REVOLUTION, BACKBEATING HAD A RICH HISTORY IN THE PERFORMANCE OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MUSIC, DANCE, WORSHIP, LABOUR, AND [IMMORALITY].”

Steven Baur, PhD

FROM CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

THE BEAT'S ATMOSPHERE

- ▶ The driving beat forges a heightened sensual atmosphere. The lyrics give it context and specific meaning.
- ▶ It's an atmosphere dominated by emotional highs and stimulation of the motor system often resulting in lots of bodily movement.

10. WHERE SCIENCE MEETS SCRIPTURE



WHILE SCRIPTURE DOES NOT CONDEMN EMOTION OR MOVEMENT IN MUSIC (IN FACT, IT ENCOURAGES THESE AS PART OF WORSHIP, BUT NEVER THE FOCUS), IT STRICTLY CONDEMNS SENSUALITY (INDULGING IN THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH) IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER, ESPECIALLY IN WORSHIP. WE ARE TO LEAVE EVERYTHING RELATED TO IT AS WE PUT OFF THE OLD MAN. WE ARE TO DISCONNECT FROM OUR OLD LUSTS.

“CHRISTIAN ROCK” VS. OUR BIBLICAL GUIDELINES

- ▶ Lack of Holiness
- ▶ Misplaced Priorities
- ▶ Blurred Purpose

WHAT GOD THINKS OF SENSUALITY (ESPECIALLY IN WORSHIP)

- ▶ What does “Sensual” specifically mean?
 - ▶ “Psuchikos”, the word translated as “sensual” in the Bible, means “base” (“un-renovated”)—like an old house before it is renovated and made livable.
 - ▶ “Affecting the senses, or derived from them; as sensual pleasure or gratification. Hence, In theology, carnal; **pertaining to the flesh or body, in opposition to the spirit**; not spiritual or holy; evil” (Webster 1828).

WHAT GOD THINKS OF SENSUALITY (ESPECIALLY IN WORSHIP)

- ▶ James 3:13-15 (Translated as "Sensual")
- ▶ Jude 17-19 (Translated as "Sensual")
- ▶ 1 Corinthians 2:12-15 (Translated as "Natural")
- ▶ 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (Translated as "Natural")
- ▶ 1 John 2:15-17 (Loving God vs loving the flesh)

WHAT DOES SENSUALITY LOOK LIKE IN ME?

- ▶ **It will look like me allowing the voice of the flesh to override the Spirit's voice.** The flesh is adept at using your senses to convince you of what you "need" to be satisfied. Sensual music provides an atmosphere where this takeover is easy, because your walls are down.
 - ▶ A predominantly sensual atmosphere NEVER belongs in worship.
 - ▶ In gray areas, it should be treated with caution, and always judged by the Spirit.
 - ▶ 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."

YEAH, BUT IT DOESN'T AFFECT ME...

- ▶ Galatians 6:7-8 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
- ▶ If you sow sensuality, you **will be** a sensual Christian. You will become more emotionally unstable and you will find it harder to detach from sin, because you are used to giving in to the flesh.
- ▶ If you are discerning, and you sow spiritually healthy music, you will teach your mind and emotions to interact with music in a Godly way (Hebrews 5:14 "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.")

BUT THE BIBLE TALKS ABOUT MOVING TO MUSIC

- ▶ First, yes...it does!
- ▶ But don't forget context. There was a time and a place for Jewish dancing (i.e. "praise him with the timbrel and **dance**": which, incidentally, is **nothing near modern disco**).
- ▶ The command to praise the Lord with dance (full person engagement in worship) is specifically mentioned only twice in Scripture (Psa. 149:3, Psa. 150:4), as opposed to the countless other times we are commanded to praise. Movement in music is expected, but it's not the point.
- ▶ Emotional highs and sensuality are never the focus of God's music in Scripture. It's always (1) For God, (2) With others, (3) Encouraging me (Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16).

PRINCIPLES...AND HOPEFULLY A BALANCED APPROACH

- ▶ This is the line I have drawn...you will have to draw your own with the Lord.
- ▶ Guidelines I have found helpful:
 - ▶ Let's keep it simple: **"If it's Rock, take a walk."**
 - ▶ Drums themselves aren't a problem. A driving Rock beat is.
 - ▶ If the music is **driven** by the beat, it most likely doesn't belong in worship.
 - ▶ Emotion in music is great! But always remember it's not the focus in worship.

PRINCIPLES...AND HOPEFULLY A BALANCED APPROACH

- ▶ More guidelines I have found helpful:
 - ▶ If you find yourself being more caught up in the emotion of a song than the message, it's most likely as least wrong for you, if not just wrong in general.
 - ▶ Don't forget about Christian liberty. A lot of the music issue falls under liberty.
 - ▶ Treat people with grace. While music standards may become a reason for distancing from others, we shouldn't cut people off because they do not share our standards.
 - ▶ Would I give Jesus my headphones?
 - ▶ Let the Creator of both you and music guide you as you listen to music.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

- ▶ Holy Forever (Chris Tomlin) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkHgxKemCRk>
- ▶ Goodness of God (Bethel Music) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0FBb6hnwTo>
- ▶ Great Are You Lord (All Sons and Daughters) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHz0w-HG4iU>
- ▶ Trust in God (Elevation Worship) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QS04WbSnxok>
- ▶ Hard Fought Hallelujah (Brandon Lake, Jelly Roll) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJNFAaWJhp0&list=RDYJNFAaWJhp0&start_radio=1