

The Melody of Memory



Petr Janata

Professor, Psychology, Center for Mind and Brain

CURRENT RESEARCH

Supporting psychological well-being through music-evoked remembering

Most of us have a song that triggers a specific memory, whether it is a first dance or a song from our youth. Music allows people to connect with people, places, and times from their past and therefore, it is of interest to researchers because of its universality and important connection to memory. Dr. Petr Janata, of the University of California, Davis is interested in the intersection between psychology, neuroscience, and music. His research aims to understand the many ways in which music impacts people including music-evoked remembering, making music, and the cognitive psychology behind our ability to interact with music. Therefore, his creative research will help identify why people find music meaningful, why it is so important for humans and our brains, and help to explain why people with memory impairment remain responsive to music.

Current research includes:

- **Music-Evoked Memory:** Music-evoked remembering is commonly cited as the strongest experience that people have with music and is a strong trigger of nostalgia. At a more fundamental level, Dr. Janata's research is expanding laboratory research on autobiographical memory. His approach is providing some critical tests of long-standing theories about how memory works in the brain and helping offer explanations why some people with profound memory loss, like people with Alzheimer's disease, still remain responsive to music from their past.
- **Neurobiography Project:** Dr. Janata and his team are trying to map the content of memories from across a person's life in his or her brain with unprecedented detail. The ability to map such content will be useful in helping scientists understand...

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AFFILIATION



University of California, Davis

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. in Biology (Neuroscience) 1996, University of Oregon
- B.A. in Interdisciplinary (Biology/Psychology) 1990, Reed College

AWARDS

- Fulbright Fellow, Vienna, Austria, 1990-1991
- Music Has Power Award, Institute of Music and Neurological Function, 2010
- Guggenheim Fellow, 2010
- Fulbright Fellow, Prague, Czech Republic, 2010-2011

RESEARCH AREAS

Life Science, Neurological / Cognitive, Neurological / Cognitive

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will support the continued research of Dr. Petr Janata, of the University of California, Davis as he investigates the intersection between psychology, neuroscience, and music. Your donations will support the necessary \$500K in annual costs required for personnel, equipment, and MRI scanner costs. In choosing to donate, you can help uncover why music is so important and how music can be used as a tool for understanding brain function in addition to developing new therapeutics.

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