

Title: Predictability and uncertainty in the pleasure of music: a reward for learning?

Abbreviated title: Predictability and uncertainty in musical pleasure

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1 **Abstract**

2 Music ranks among the greatest human pleasures. It consistently engages the reward system, and
3 converging evidence implies it exploits predictions to do so. Both prediction confirmations and errors
4 are essential for understanding one's environment, and music offers many of each as it manipulates
5 interacting patterns across multiple timescales. Learning models suggest that a balance of these
6 outcomes, i.e., intermediate complexity, optimizes the reduction of uncertainty to rewarding and
7 pleasurable effect. Yet evidence of a similar pattern in music is mixed, hampered by arbitrary measures
8 of complexity. In the present studies, we applied a well-validated information-theoretic model of
9 auditory expectation to systematically measure two key aspects of musical complexity: predictability
10 (operationalized as information content, IC), and uncertainty (entropy). In Study 1, we evaluated how
11 these properties affect musical preferences in 43 male and female participants; in Study 2, we
12 replicated Study 1 in an independent sample of 27 people and assessed the contribution of veridical
13 predictability by presenting the same stimuli seven times. Both studies revealed significant quadratic
14 effects of IC and entropy on liking that outperformed linear effects, indicating reliable preferences for
15 music of intermediate complexity. An interaction between IC and entropy further suggested
16 preferences for more predictability during more uncertain contexts, which would facilitate uncertainty
17 reduction. Repeating stimuli decreased liking ratings but did not disrupt the preference for intermediate
18 complexity. Together, these findings support long-hypothesized optimal zones of predictability and
19 uncertainty in musical pleasure with formal modeling, relating the pleasure of music listening to the
20 intrinsic reward of learning.

21 **Significance Statement**

22 Abstract pleasures like music claim much of our time, energy, and money despite lacking any clear
23 adaptive benefits like food or shelter. Yet as music manipulates patterns of melody, rhythm, and more,
24 it proficiently exploits our expectations. Given the importance of anticipating and adapting to our ever-
25 changing environments, making and evaluating uncertain predictions can have strong emotional
26 effects. Accordingly, we present evidence that listeners consistently prefer music of intermediate
27 predictive complexity, and that preferences shift towards expected musical outcomes in more uncertain
28 contexts. These results are consistent with theories that emphasize the intrinsic reward of learning, both
29 by updating inaccurate predictions and validating accurate ones, which is optimal in environments that
30 present manageable predictive challenges, i.e. reducible uncertainty.

31 **Introduction**

32 Though rewards like food or socializing provide clear adaptive benefits, abstract pleasures with
33 aesthetic value like music have long stumped scholars (Darwin, 1871). Music is particularly adept at
34 establishing and manipulating patterns of melody, rhythm, and other features, and is often most
35 pleasurable after sudden and dramatical changes (Sloboda, 1991; Grewe et al., 2007). Activity in the
36 nucleus accumbens, a central node of the brain’s reward system, reflects how much a listener enjoys a
37 musical stimulus overall (Salimpoor et al., 2011, 2013) and increases after pleasurable musical
38 surprises (Shany et al., 2019), suggesting that much of music’s power stems from the predictions it
39 engenders and exploits (Meyer, 1956; Huron, 2006).

40 Yet surprises are often unpleasant. A study based on a naturalistic concert found that listeners
41 responded negatively to the most surprising musical phrases, most of which occurred during a complex
42 and stylistically unfamiliar piece (Egermann et al., 2013). Listeners also tend to dislike surprises during
43 short, experimenter-controlled stimuli, where context is lacking (Koelsch et al., 2008; Brattico et al.,
44 2010), but seem most likely to enjoy them in naturalistic and familiar music (Sloboda, 1991; Grewe et
45 al., 2007). These findings imply that musical events are pleasurable when the surrounding musical
46 context allows for relatively certain predictions – which may be related to evidence of caudate
47 dopamine transmission preceding moments of peak musical pleasure (Salimpoor et al., 2011).

48 Surprises are generally important feedback signals that guide belief updates and adaptive
49 behavior in ever-changing environments (den Ouden et al., 2010; Friston, 2010). Inevitably,
50 completely predictable events preclude learning because they offer no new information, but
51 unforeseeable, seemingly random surprises are equally unhelpful because they’re indecipherable. An
52 intermediate degree of predictability – i.e., a manageable challenge – therefore enhances learning,
53 piquing curiosity and attention in the process (Kang et al., 2009; Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi,
54 2012a, 2012b; Gottlieb et al., 2013; Kidd et al., 2014; Baranes et al., 2015; Daddaoua et al., 2016;
55 Oudeyer et al., 2016; Brydevall et al., 2018). Learning engages the dopaminergic reward system like

56 other adaptive benefits, often making manageable challenges highly motivational and pleasurable
57 (Bromberg-Martin and Hikosaka, 2009; Kang et al., 2009; Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi, 2012b,
58 2012a; Jepma et al., 2012; Ripollés et al., 2014; Brydevall et al., 2018). Could the manageable
59 challenge of foreseeable musical surprises help explain musical pleasure?

60 Berlyne described the appeal of manageable challenges with an inverted U-shaped “Wundt”
61 effect, named for the scholar who first linked pleasure to intermediate levels of arousal (Wundt, 1874;
62 Berlyne, 1974). Across aesthetic domains, Berlyne proposed that intermediate complexity – concerning
63 features like predictability, surprise, or uncertainty – optimizes curiosity and liking. Yet evidence for
64 musical Wundt effects is mixed: a review of 57 studies found them in only fifteen (Chmiel and
65 Schubert, 2017), while many others suggested greater preferences for prototypical or familiar music
66 that was subjectively simpler (see Zajonc, 1968; Hargreaves et al., 2005). Although these fifteen
67 studies provide some support for Wundt effects, the evidence is weak because of their different and
68 arbitrary measures of complexity; a critical test of this effect requires both well-defined independent
69 variables and heterogeneous sampling of them to identify potential curvilinear effects.

70 We designed the present two studies to address these problems. First, we formally measure the
71 unpredictability and uncertainty of unaltered real-world music to encapsulate these aspects of musical
72 complexity and relate them to pleasure. Using information-theoretic modeling (Pearce, 2005), we
73 express unpredictability as the negative log probability (or information content) of a musical event
74 given the preceding context and the prior long-term exposure of the model, and the uncertainty of the
75 prediction as the entropy of the corresponding probability distribution. Second, we ensure quantifiably
76 wide ranges of these variables to test the Wundt effect rigorously. In Study 1, we investigate how
77 musical unpredictability and uncertainty affect liking and the musical features that contribute to them.
78 In Study 2, we replicate the key findings of Study 1 and explore the additional influence of veridical
79 familiarity.

80

81 **Study 1**

82

83 **Materials & Method**

84

85 **Participants and procedure**

86 Forty-four healthy volunteers with normal hearing (25 females, mean age \pm standard deviation
87 = 21.56 \pm 3.31 years) participated in this experiment. Since our model of the information-theoretic
88 properties of the stimuli is based on Western tonal folk and classical music, we excluded three
89 additional volunteers who listed atonal or jazz music – which frequently deviate from the structures of
90 folk and classical music – among their five favorite genres in an open-ended screening questionnaire
91 during recruitment.

92 To learn more about the participants' individual backgrounds and differences, we asked them to
93 complete three questionnaires after providing informed consent. The Goldsmiths Musical
94 Sophistication Index (Gold-MSI) measured their abilities to engage with music, with questions about
95 their musical recognition, discernment, education, and more (Müllensiefen et al., 2014). It has five
96 subscales, distinguishing active engagement, perceptual abilities, musical training, emotions, and
97 singing abilities. The Barcelona Music Reward Questionnaire (BMRQ) scored the degree to which the
98 participants associate music with reward, focusing on music seeking, emotion evocation, mood
99 regulation, sensory-motor, and social reward (Mas-Herrero et al., 2013). Finally, the Big Five
100 Inventory assessed their personality traits for extraversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness, and
101 conscientiousness (Caprara et al., 1993), though these results are not reported here.

102 After the questionnaires, participants listened to each stimulus over professional monitor
103 headphones (Audio-Technica Corp., Tokyo, Japan), pre-set to a comfortable volume, via a computer
104 running Presentation® software (Neurobehavioral Systems, Inc., Berkeley, CA, USA) while a fixation
105 cross appeared on the screen. Afterwards they rated how much they liked it on a Likert scale from 1

106 (very little) to 7 (very much), and indicated whether they recognized the stimulus (not necessarily by
107 name, but by the music) so that we could exclude these trials from our analyses to avoid confounding
108 music-syntactic predictability with effects of familiarity. Since one participant rated every single trial
109 as familiar, we excluded this participant from all analyses. Another participant withdrew from the study
110 approximately halfway through, for reasons unexplained, but the existing data were maintained. The
111 resulting sample of 43 volunteers recognized the music in 431 (18.44%) of 2,337 trials, with a mean \pm
112 standard deviation of 10.02 ± 7.81 per participant; these familiar trials were therefore excluded, leaving
113 1,906 trials for analysis. Pairwise correlations showed that stimuli with lower mean duration-weighted
114 information content (see below) were more likely to be rated as familiar [Pearson's $r(53) = -0.28$, $p =$
115 0.04]. There was no significant relationship between exclusions and mean duration-weighted entropy
116 [Pearson's $r(53) = -0.11$, $p = 0.43$].

117 Prior to the listening task, participants experienced two practice trials using stimuli that did not
118 occur during the experiment for familiarization and to ensure that they understood the instructions. To
119 avoid anchoring effects, we sorted the stimuli into five clusters of mean duration-weighted information
120 content (see below) using k-means clustering, and randomly selected one stimulus from each cluster to
121 constitute the first five stimuli of the experiment. This procedure allowed the participants to acclimate
122 to the range of mean duration-weighted information contents present in the experiment. After these five
123 stimuli, the remaining 50 occurred in a random and participant-specific order.

124 To ensure the participants' attention, we included an orthogonal task in which they had to press
125 the 'Enter' key as soon as they heard the timbre of a stimulus change. A practice "attention trial"
126 warned the participants about this task and allowed them to practice; afterwards, they occurred pseudo-
127 randomly every 6 ± 2 trials during the experiment. The participants responded to every timbre change
128 within the two seconds allotted, with a mean \pm standard deviation reaction time of 0.82 ± 0.23 seconds,
129 indicating that they were attentive throughout the task. Moreover, linear regression models indicated
130 that these reaction times did not significantly vary with musical sophistication [$F(1,41) = 1.01$, $p =$

131 0.32], musical reward sensitivity scores [$F(1,41) = 0.25, p = 0.62$], or any of their subscales (all other
132 $ps > 0.40$), suggesting that these factors did not affect task attention.

133

134 **Stimuli**

135 All 55 stimuli, plus the two for the rating practice trials and the nine for the “attention trials,”
136 were excerpts of real, pre-composed music collected from public Musical Instrument Digital Interface
137 (MIDI) databases. Most stimuli came from the following websites:

138 www4.osk.3web.ne.jp/~kasumitu/eng.htm, www.classicalarchives.com/midi.html, and
139 www.baldwinsmusic.com. We opted for real music instead of custom-built stimuli to more faithfully
140 represent naturalistic listening experiences and the greater range of subjective responses it engenders.

141 To this same end, the stimuli contained examples of several musical genres from a wide range
142 of time periods, composers, tonalities, and meters (Table 1). We used only monophonic stimuli (i.e.,
143 containing only one tone at a time) to avoid the confounding effects of harmony (i.e., chordal
144 relationships) and polyphony (i.e., multiple voices), and we reduced other confounds by normalizing
145 their peak amplitudes to the same level with Audacity® (© 1999-2018 Audacity Team), limiting the
146 stimuli to 30 ± 2 seconds, and synthesizing the MIDI stimuli into Waveform Audio File (WAV)
147 format. We also standardized the tempo of each stimulus to either 96, 120, or 144 bpm – whichever
148 sounded most musically appropriate – with MuseScore (© 2018 MuseScore BVPA). These
149 considerations constrained our stimuli to excerpts that were either solo pieces or solo melodic lines
150 from polyphonic pieces.

151 We converted these well-controlled stimuli into naturalistic-sounding WAV files with the
152 Kontakt 5 synthesizer (© 2018 Native Instruments GmbH) within the Ableton Live 9 digital audio
153 workstation (© 2018 Ableton). We generated each excerpt with a flute digital synthesizer (except for
154 the “attention trials” stimuli, which switched from flute to piano timbre during the excerpt), digitally
155 filtered them to resemble the acoustics of a music studio, and randomly shifted the note onsets on the

156 order of milliseconds using Ableton’s Groove Pool with 25% randomization for “humanization” – i.e.,
157 to prevent the stimuli from sounding mechanistic and unnatural.

158

159 **Information-theoretic modeling**

160 We used the Information Dynamics of Music model (IDyOM, Pearce, 2005, 2018) to
161 characterize both the unpredictability and uncertainty of our stimuli. Across many different
162 experimental paradigms and musical samples, IDyOM has proven to provide reliable computational
163 measures of pitch unpredictability/surprise (as represented by information content) and uncertainty (as
164 represented by entropy) in Western listeners (Pearce, 2005; Pearce and Wiggins, 2006; Pearce et al.,
165 2010; Omigie et al., 2012; Egermann et al., 2013; Hansen and Pearce, 2014; Sauvé et al., 2018),
166 significantly outperforming similar models and explaining up to 83% of the variance in listeners’ pitch
167 expectations (Pearce, 2005, 2018; Pearce et al., 2010; Hansen and Pearce, 2014). IDyOM has also
168 successfully predicted several electrophysiological measures of expectancy violation (Carrus et al.,
169 2013; Omigie et al., 2013), and even psychophysiological and subjective emotional responses
170 (Egermann et al., 2013; Sauvé et al., 2018).

171 Before modeling our stimuli, we trained IDyOM on a large corpus of Western tonal music,
172 including 152 Canadian folk songs (Creighton, 1966), 566 German folk songs from the Essen folk song
173 collection (Schaffrath, 1992), and 185 chorale melodies harmonized by Bach (Riemenschneider, 1941)
174 as in other applications of IDyOM (e.g., Pearce, 2005; Pearce and Wiggins, 2006; Egermann et al.,
175 2013; Hansen and Pearce, 2014). This training set allowed IDyOM to learn the statistical structure of
176 Western tonal music via variable-order Markov modeling (Pearce, 2005), emulating the implicit
177 statistical learning that human listeners are also thought to undertake during long-term enculturation in
178 a musical style (reviewed in Pearce, 2018). The trained model therefore represents the musical syntax
179 that listeners learn over years of exposure to Western music (see Figure 1).

180 Since listeners further learn and update their expectations on-line while listening to individual
181 pieces of music (Castellano et al., 1984; Kessler et al., 1984; Oram and Cuddy, 1995; Loui et al.,
182 2010), IDyOM also dynamically learns the statistical structure of each stimulus in its test set (reviewed
183 in Pearce, 2018). The models we used here were configured to integrate these respective “long-term”
184 and “short-term” probabilities, weighting each according to its entropy such that the higher-entropy
185 model (i.e., that with a flatter probability distribution, reflecting greater predictive uncertainty) is
186 discounted relative to the lower-entropy model. Our models therefore measured the information content
187 of each note (as its negative log probability to the base 2) given prior learning of the structure of the
188 training corpus and the preceding musical context within the piece at hand. Information content
189 indicates the unpredictability of a note and therefore reflects the degree to which a stored memory of
190 that event may be compressed by discarding redundancies; compression and redundancy reduction are
191 thought to contribute to psychological processes such as pattern recognition and similarity perception
192 (Chater and Vitányi, 2003). The models similarly measure the entropy of each predictive context (as
193 the expected value of the information content across all possible continuations) based on learning of
194 long- and short-term structure, yielding higher values when there were many equally unlikely
195 continuations (i.e., the context is uncertain/unstable) and lower values when there were only a few very
196 likely continuations.

197 Note-by-note information content and entropy can be computed using different musical features
198 as input to IDyOM: one could model the probability of the next pitch, registral direction, time, inter-
199 onset-interval ratio, etc., and one could model these “viewpoints” independently or simultaneously.
200 Motivated by both music theory and empirical findings that illustrate the role of representing and
201 predicting rhythmic information (e.g., Clarke, 2005; Lumaca et al., 2019) and pitch information such as
202 pitch intervals and scale degrees (Dowling, 1978; Pearce and Müllensiefen, 2017) in perceiving and
203 responding to music, we selected four alternative viewpoints to use with IDyOM: inter-onset-interval
204 ratio, chromatic pitch, chromatic pitch interval, and chromatic scale degree.

205 We then generated seven IDyOM configurations from these viewpoints. Three of these
206 configurations used the sole timing viewpoint (inter-onset-interval ratio) to compute the probability of
207 a note's onset while one of the three pitch-based viewpoints (chromatic pitch, chromatic pitch interval,
208 or chromatic scale degree) computed the pitch probability before combining these as the joint
209 probability of the note. Three other configurations computed note probabilities in the same way, but
210 predicted both onset time and pitch using a single viewpoint that linked the respective timing and pitch
211 viewpoints. In the seventh implementation, we combined the timing viewpoint with the linked
212 chromatic pitch interval and chromatic scale degree viewpoints, based on the known role of pitch
213 intervals and scale degrees, and their relationship, in music perception (Dowling, 1978; Krumhansl,
214 1990; Pearce and Müllensiefen, 2017). We also considered versions of these models that weighted the
215 information content of each note by its duration as an indicator of salience, as in Krumhansl (1990).

216 We selected between these models by comparing the information content output of each to the
217 unexpectedness ratings of an independent sample of 24 participants (17 females and 7 males, mean age
218 \pm standard deviation = 22.08 ± 2.70 years, mean musical experience \pm standard deviation = 2.89 ± 4.52
219 years) who did not participate in the present studies. These listeners were all neurologically healthy and
220 with normal hearing, and they rated 52 of the 57 possible stimuli (see Table 1) in real time, a few
221 minutes after providing informed consent and hearing them once each (unpublished data). Comparisons
222 used linear mixed-effects models with random slopes and intercepts for each subject to separately fit
223 the fixed effects of either mean (averaged across each stimulus) information content or mean duration-
224 weighted information content (mDW-IC). We also examined the effects of mean entropy as a control
225 condition, to ensure that the chosen model would be able to distinguish between mean information
226 content – i.e., the unpredictability or unexpectedness of a melody (see above) – and the related but
227 discernable phenomenon of mean entropy, which is more directly associated with the uncertainty or
228 instability of a melody than its unexpectedness (Pearce, 2005; Hansen and Pearce, 2014).

229 Comparisons with unexpectedness ratings revealed that the best-fitting IDyOM implementation
230 was that based on an independent combination of inter-onset-interval ratio and chromatic pitch, and
231 that the variable that best explained subjective unexpectedness ratings (measured by Akaike
232 information criteria and F tests of the model's fixed effect) was mDW-IC ($R^2 = 0.13, p < 0.001$). See
233 Table 2 for more details on the models tested.

234 To better understand the mDW-IC variable, we investigated its pitch and timing contributions
235 with partial correlations based on the separate probability distributions for chromatic pitch and onset
236 time that IDyOM generated before combining them for overall note IC. Using Spearman's non-
237 parametric partial correlations to account for non-normal data, we found that mDW-IC was correlated
238 both with mean duration-weighted chromatic-pitch IC after controlling for the effect of mean duration-
239 weighted onset IC [Spearman's $\rho_p(52) = 0.72, p_p < 0.001$] and with mean duration-weighted onset IC
240 after controlling for the effect of mean duration-weighted chromatic-pitch IC [Spearman's $\rho_p(52) =$
241 $0.77, p_p < 0.001$]. These results verify that both pitch and timing features contribute to music
242 predictability, as detected by our measure of mDW-IC. We also found that mDW-IC positively
243 correlated with mean duration-weighted entropy (mDW-Ent) [Pearson's $r(53) = 0.44, p < 0.001$, Figure
244 2], even though the model selection procedure had shown that mean entropy was not significantly
245 associated with subjective unexpectedness ratings ($p = 0.11$, Table 2).

246

247 **Experimental Design and Statistical Analysis**

248 The 43 participants analyzed (24 females and 19 males) listened to the stimuli and rated their
249 familiarity and liking after each one, as described above. Several prior studies of musical preferences
250 have averaged results across participants, even though musical preferences are highly subjective and
251 variable (reviewed in Brattico & Jacobsen, 2009). Rather than blending together the ratings of different
252 listeners and potentially blurring over meaningful effects in the process, we opted for linear mixed-
253 effects models, enhancing our power to detect group-level results by accounting for the random effect

254 of subject (Diggle et al., 2002; Zuur et al., 2009). Excluding stimuli rated as familiar (see above), we
255 leveraged the remaining trials for linear mixed-effects models with the `fitlme` function in Matlab.
256 Following the procedure recommended in Diggle et al. (2002) and Zuur et al. (2009), we first
257 optimized the random-effects structure of a “beyond-optimal” model (including all relevant fixed
258 effects and interactions) according to the Akaike information criterion via restricted maximum
259 likelihood estimation, then optimized the fixed-effects structure via likelihood ratio tests of nested
260 models and Akaike information content of other models using maximum likelihood estimation, and
261 finally evaluated the model with restricted maximum likelihood estimation. Separate mixed-effects
262 models evaluated the main effects of mDW-IC and mDW-Ent, using z-scored values of these variables
263 to allow for comparisons between their linear and quadratic effects.

264 MDW-IC and mDW-Ent represent distinct, albeit related, aspects of complexity, with mDW-IC
265 reflecting the surprise of a piece and mDW-Ent its uncertainty or instability (see above). We therefore
266 explored how musical surprise might interact with the uncertainty/instability of its context to affect
267 liking ratings. To avoid the collinearity of these related variables and to simplify the complex
268 interactions of potentially linear and quadratic effects, we classified each stimulus according to its
269 mDW-Ent and mDW-IC using Matlab’s k-means clustering algorithm to obtain data-driven and well-
270 balanced groups. Starting with six points roughly corresponding to stimuli of low or high mDW-Ent
271 and low, medium, or high mDW-IC (see below), this algorithm identified six stimulus clusters through
272 Euclidean distance minimization without using any information about the participants’ liking ratings..
273 The category with low mDW-IC and low mDW-Ent contained six stimuli, while there were seventeen
274 stimuli with low mDW-IC and high mDW-Ent, thirteen with medium mDW-IC and low mDW-Ent,
275 eight with medium mDW-IC and high mDW-Ent, seven with high mDW-IC and low mDW-Ent, and
276 four with high mDW-IC and high mDW-Ent (Figure 3C). Although these groups are not perfectly
277 balanced, they represent an unbiased and robust classification of our stimuli that allows for a
278 rmANOVA. We then conducted a repeated-measures analysis of variance (rmANOVA) on the average

279 liking ratings in each of these categories, testing for main effects of mDW-IC and mDW-Ent as well as
280 their interaction. We additionally planned to investigate the nature of any interactions with post-hoc
281 Tukey-Kramer Honest Significant Difference tests.

282 Finally, we tested whether the hypothesized Wundt effect between mDW-IC and liking would
283 vary according to individual differences in music reward sensitivity and music sophistication. In this
284 case, accounting for subject as a random effect would obscure the subjective effects of interest, and so
285 we used simple linear regression models rather than mixed effects. To evaluate the shape of each
286 individual's Wundt effect, we collapsed the curve between mDW-IC and liking into a distribution by
287 weighting the mDW-IC of each stimulus by the participant's rating. This procedure represented greater
288 preferences for stimuli with mDW-IC values as more positively skewed distributions (i.e., with more
289 mass on the lower mDW-IC end and flatter tails on the positive end), and greater preferences for
290 stimuli of higher mDW-ICs as more negatively skewed distributions. Likewise, sharper preferences
291 produced distributions with greater kurtosis, and flatter preferences yielded distributions with less
292 kurtosis. Excluding stimuli the participants rated as familiar, we compared these Wundt-effect
293 parameters to total scores on the Barcelona Music Reward Questionnaire (Mas-Herrero et al., 2013)
294 and the Goldsmiths Musical Sophistication Index (Müllensiefen et al., 2014). In the case of a
295 significant relationship, we explored the effects of the relevant questionnaire's subscales with stepwise
296 linear regression using Matlab's `stepwiselm` function to identify those that best explained the variance
297 in the Wundt effect's parameters.

298

299 **Results**

300 There was a significant Wundt effect between liking ratings and mDW-IC (Figure 3A),
301 indicated by the optimal model of mDW-IC which contained significant negative linear ($\beta = -0.21, p <$
302 0.001) and quadratic effects ($\beta = -0.09, p < 0.001$). The overall model had significant random intercepts
303 and mDW-IC slopes across subjects (intercept 95% CI = 0.54 – 0.86, slope 95% CI = 0.11 – 0.29), and

304 it explained 26.3% of the variance in liking ratings ($p < 0.001$). Comparable models with only the
305 linear or quadratic term explained 25.3% and 26.0% of the variance, respectively, and the optimal
306 model (which combined these terms) fit the data significantly better than each of these alternatives
307 [linear-only model likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 22.23, p < 0.001$; quadratic-only model
308 likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 17.20, p < 0.001$].

309 There was also a significant Wundt effect between liking ratings and mDW-Ent (Figure 3B),
310 and the optimal mDW-Ent model also contained significant negative linear ($\beta = -0.09, p = 0.009$) and
311 quadratic effects ($\beta = -0.06, p = 0.003$). The overall model had significant subject-varying random
312 intercepts (95% CI = 0.54 – 0.86), and it explained 19.1% of the variance in liking ratings ($p = 0.03$).
313 This model fit the data significantly better than alternative models that were identical except for their
314 exclusion of either the linear or quadratic mDW-Ent term, which explained 19.1% and 19.0% of the
315 variance, respectively [linear-only model likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 8.31, p = 0.004$;
316 quadratic-only model likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 43) = 6.21, p = 0.01$].

317 We used k-means clustering to categorize the stimuli (Figure 3C). The rmANOVA model
318 reaffirmed the main effect of mDW-IC [$F(1.70, 69.63) = 34.45, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.51, p < 0.001$, using
319 Greenhouse-Geisser correction since Mauchly's test of sphericity was violated], but not that of mDW-
320 Ent [$F(1, 41) = 2.84, p = 0.10$]. This analysis also suggested an interaction between the two
321 [$F(1.71, 70.21) = 3.17, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.07, p = 0.06$, Figure 3D]. Planned comparisons of this interaction
322 resembled the Wundt effect of mDW-IC when mDW-Ent was low (high mDW-IC < low mDW-IC: $p <$
323 0.001 , high mDW-IC < medium mDW-IC: $p < 0.001$, low mDW-IC vs. medium mDW-IC: $p = 0.35$),
324 but not when mDW-Ent was high, when liking ratings for low mDW-IC were significantly greater than
325 those for medium mDW-IC ($p = 0.01$, high mDW-IC < low mDW-IC: $p < 0.001$, high mDW-IC <
326 medium DW-IC: $p < 0.001$). Likewise, there was a significant preference for stimuli with high mDW-
327 Ent over low mDW-Ent when mDW-IC was low ($p = 0.001$), but not when mDW-IC was medium ($p =$

328 0.60) or high ($p = 0.85$). This analysis therefore implies that predictability is more desirable in more
329 uncertain contexts.

330 Despite the strong group-level Wundt effects, linear models fit to individual participants
331 exhibited considerable inter-subject variability. These models' R^2 values ranged from 0.005 to 0.42,
332 with a mean of 0.12 and a standard deviation of 0.09, and had negative quadratic coefficients for 31 of
333 the 43 participants. We also observed substantial differences in the participants' music sophistication
334 (Gold-MSI mean \pm standard deviation = 71.65 ± 21.68) and musical reward sensitivity (BMRQ mean \pm
335 standard deviation = 80.79 ± 8.97). While this sample was consistent with other reports of musical
336 reward sensitivity scores (Mas-Herrero et al., 2013), and individuals within the sample scored from the
337 2nd to 91st percentile of normative musical sophistication scores (Müllensiefen et al., 2014), the average
338 musical sophistication score was at approximately the 30th percentile of the norm.

339 Nonetheless, measuring the kurtosis and skewness of each participant's Wundt effect (Figure
340 4A) revealed a significant positive regression between musical sophistication and the Wundt effect's
341 kurtosis (Figure 4B), such that relatively more sophisticated participants had sharper distributions, i.e.
342 more focused preferences [$F(1,41) = 7.43, p = 0.009, \beta = 0.02, R^2 = 0.15$]. A follow-up stepwise
343 regression on the five Gold-MSI subscales selected only "Perceptual Abilities" [$F(1,41) = 6.50, p =$
344 $0.01, \beta = 0.04, R^2 = 0.14$], indicating that music-listening skills drove the overall effect. This subscale
345 includes questions about the respondent's ability to recognize different versions of the same song,
346 detect out-of-tune or out-of-time events, and so on, thus reflecting fine-grained musical perceptual
347 skills that may emerge from musical training and listening but also from incidental exposure, genetics,
348 etc. (Müllensiefen et al., 2014). Kurtosis and skewness were strongly correlated [$r(41) = 0.94, p <$
349 0.001], and musical sophistication also positively correlated with the Wundt effect skewness (Figure
350 4C), as relatively more sophisticated listeners exhibited more positively skewed ratings, i.e. greater
351 preferences for stimuli of lower mDW-IC [$F(1,41) = 4.76, p = 0.03, \beta = 0.003, R^2 = 0.10$]. Once again,
352 a follow-up stepwise regression selected only the "Perceptual Abilities" subscale [$F(1,41) = 5.89, p =$

353 0.02, $\beta = 0.009$, $R^2 = 0.13$]. Parsing the independent contributions of kurtosis and skewness with partial
354 correlations, we found a stronger effect of kurtosis after controlling for skewness [$\rho_p(40) = 0.27$, $p_p =$
355 0.08] than vice-versa [$\rho_p(40) = -0.14$, $p_p = 0.38$], though neither partial correlation was significant.

356 The total BMRQ score was not significantly related to the kurtosis of the Wundt effect [$F(1,41)$
357 $= 0.25$, $p = 0.62$] or its skewness [$F(1,41) = 0.05$, $p = 0.83$], and a t test did not differentiate between
358 the participants with and without significant Wundt effects on this scale [$t(41) = 0.15$, $p = 0.88$].
359 Together, these findings illustrate that systematically measuring predictability and uncertainty yields
360 reliable Wundt effects for both variables, as well as individual differences that might arise from the
361 listeners' musical sophistication. In Study 2, we tested the reliability of these results in another sample
362 with a subset of the stimuli, and examined how the listener's immediate experience with a musical
363 excerpt – i.e., hearing it multiple times in one sitting – might affect these patterns.

364

365 **Study 2**

366

367 **Materials & Method**

368

369 **Participants and procedure**

370 This experiment had 27 healthy participants (14 females, mean age \pm standard deviation =
371 23.96 ± 5.72 years) with normal hearing, none of whom participated in Study 1. They had 8.07 ± 6.40
372 years of musical training, and 12 of them were still active musicians. After providing informed consent,
373 they listened to each stimulus over speakers set to a comfortable volume via a computer running
374 Presentation® software (Neurobehavioral Systems, Inc., Berkeley, CA) while a fixation cross appeared
375 on the screen. The procedure was very similar to Study 1's, but with a few key differences: in Study 2,
376 we used only a subset of the stimuli from Study 1 (see below and Table 1). Participants rated
377 continuously how much they liked each stimulus as they listened, using keyboard buttons 1 to 4, and

378 were instructed to have one of these buttons down whenever a stimulus was playing. Participants also
379 rated how much they liked the stimulus, the overall arousal they felt from it, and their familiarity with
380 it after it ended, again from 1 to 4; the results of these post-stimulus ratings are not reported here. The
381 familiarity ratings were simply to ensure that participants were aware of hearing the same stimuli
382 repeated – no trials were excluded for familiarity in this experiment as the stimuli were presented
383 multiple times each. Each participant was assigned a random stimulus order, and the stimuli were
384 presented in this order seven times in a row. There were no breaks between repetition blocks other than
385 the few seconds that separated each trial. Instead of beginning with stimuli across five clusters of the
386 stimulus subset, we avoided anchoring effects in Study 2 by selecting the two practice stimuli to have
387 moderately low and high mDW-IC (see Table 1). Study 2 had no “attention trials” task since providing
388 real-time ratings was already an engaging and active task, and although we do not report the data here,
389 we also recorded psychophysiological responses (skin conductance, heart rate, pulse amplitude,
390 breathing rate, and respiratory amplitude). Finally, based on research suggesting that musical playing
391 and listening experience especially affect music processing (Gold et al., 2013; Hansen and Pearce,
392 2014; Pearce, 2014), we streamlined Study 2’s questionnaires to focus on the participants’ years (if
393 any) of playing music and approximate weekly hours of music listening, instead of asking about
394 musical sophistication, music reward sensitivity, or personality.

395

396 **Stimuli**

397 The stimuli for this experiment were a subset of those used in Study 1 (see Table 1). We chose
398 these 12 stimuli to represent the full range of mDW-IC, yet with fewer stimuli so that we could repeat
399 them several times without dramatically lengthening the task. We processed and modeled the
400 information-theoretic properties of these stimuli exactly as in Study 1. The only difference was that
401 three of the stimuli were presented in the original clarinet timbre rather than flute (see Table 1).
402 Wilcoxon rank-sum tests of participants’ responses, standardized to the rating scales of the two studies

403 (see above), verified that this timbre difference had no significant effect on overall liking ratings
404 (Seven Variations on a Theme from Silvana median = 0.50 in Study 1 and 0.47 in Study 2, $Z = 734.50$,
405 $p = 0.19$; Drei Fantasiestücke median = 0.33 in Study 1 and 0.48 in Study 2, $Z = 995.00$, $p = 0.43$; Solo
406 de Concours not analyzed because it was a practice stimulus in Study 1, yielding unreliable ratings).

407

408 **Experimental Design and Statistical Analysis**

409 The 27 participants of this study (14 females and 13 males) listened to the stimuli and rated
410 them as described above. As in Study 1, we used linear mixed-effects models to detect generalizable
411 effects while accounting for the subjectivity of the participants. We built mixed-effects models using
412 the same method as in Study 1. Four separate mixed-effects models evaluated how liking ratings
413 changed according to the main effect of mDW-IC, the main effect of mDW-Ent, the main effect of
414 repetition, and the interaction between mDW-IC and repetition. We did not assess interactions between
415 mDW-IC and mDW-Ent in this study due to the limited stimulus set. To allow for comparisons
416 between linear and quadratic effects of mDW-IC, mDW-Ent, and repetition, we standardized these
417 variables as z scores before conducting any analyses.

418

419 **Results**

420 The best-fitting model of liking and mDW-IC ($p < 0.001$) explained 41.6% of the variance with
421 a negative quadratic mDW-IC term ($\beta = -0.18$, $p < 0.001$) illustrating a Wundt effect (Figure 5A). This
422 model had no fixed linear term for mDW-IC, but significant random intercepts for each subject (95%
423 CI = 0.31 – 0.58) as well as random slopes for each subject's effects of mDW-IC (95% CI = 0.15 –
424 0.29), mDW-IC² (95% CI = 0.10 – 0.19) and Repetition (95% CI = 0.05 – 0.09). Comparing AICs
425 showed that this model described the data more parsimoniously than a model with only a linear mDW-
426 IC term (AIC with mDW-IC² = 4657.9, AIC with mDW-IC = 4681.4), but a likelihood ratio test was

427 not possible because the models were not nested. Similarly, adding a linear mDW-IC term to the best-
428 fitting model did not yield a significantly better fit [likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 27) = 1.08, p = 0.30$].

429 We observed a similar Wundt effect between liking and mDW-Ent (Figure 5B), with the
430 optimal model of these variables explaining 34.9% of the variance with significant negative linear ($\beta =$
431 $-0.31, p < 0.001$) and quadratic effects ($\beta = -0.25, p < 0.001$). Like the mDW-IC model above, this
432 model allowed for randomly varying intercepts (95% CI = 0.30 – 0.58) and slopes of mDW-Ent (95%
433 CI = 0.26 – 0.49), mDW-Ent² (95% CI = 0.82 – 0.97), and Repetition (95% CI = 0.05 – 0.09) for each
434 subject ($p < 0.001$). Compared to alternative models with only the linear or quadratic mDW-Ent term,
435 this model fit the data significantly better [linear-only model likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 27) = 19.95,$
436 $p < 0.001$; quadratic-only model likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 27) = 13.91, p < 0.001$].

437 The best-fitting model of liking and Repetition ($R^2 = 0.81, p < 0.001$) also had a negative
438 quadratic effect ($\beta = -0.003, p < 0.001$), with liking ratings decreasing from the first to seventh
439 presentation of the stimuli. This model allowed for randomly varying intercepts for each stimulus (95%
440 CI = 0.22 – 0.56) as well as randomly varying intercepts (95% CI = 0.56 – 0.69) and Repetition slopes
441 (95% CI = 0.08 – 0.11) for each combination of stimulus and subject.

442 The Wundt effect of mDW-IC on liking ratings did not significantly change across repetitions,
443 as the optimal model of liking that included an interaction of mDW-IC and repetition effects showed
444 no significant interaction ($p = 0.38$; Figure 5C). Although this overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.42,$
445 $p < 0.001$), it was not significantly better than a model that was identical except that it excluded the
446 fixed effects of Repetition [likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 27) = 3.42, p = 0.18$].

447 As in Study 1, the strong group-level Wundt effect comprised significant inter-individual
448 variability. Individual-participant R^2 values ranged from 0.001 to 0.54, with a mean of 0.24 and a
449 standard deviation of 0.17, while 23 of 27 had negative quadratic terms. Once again, kurtosis and
450 skewness were positively correlated [$r(25) = 0.95, p < 0.001$], but these parameters did not

451 significantly vary with participants' musical backgrounds [years of music playing kurtosis $F(1,25) =$
452 $0.01, p = 0.92$; hours of weekly listening kurtosis $F(1,25) = 0.18, p = 0.68$; years of music playing
453 skewness $F(1,25) = 0.08, p = 0.78$; hours of weekly listening skewness $F(1,25) = 0.22, p = 0.65$].
454 Likewise, the participants with and without significant Wundt effects did not meaningfully differ in
455 years of musical training [$t(25) = -0.43, p = 0.67$] or hours of weekly music listening [$t(25) = 0.45, p =$
456 0.66], as measured with independent-samples t tests.

457

458 **General Discussion**

459 The present studies represent a diligent test of the controversial Wundt effect, validating an
460 inverted U-shaped relationship between complexity and liking. Using rigorous definitions of
461 complexity and entropy as independent variables, based on computational modeling of real-world
462 music, we find reliable evidence of the Wundt effects in aesthetic musical judgments . Linking
463 aesthetic pleasure to information-theoretic measures, we also implicate models of motivation,
464 information seeking, and learning (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi, 2012a; Oudeyer et al., 2016) in
465 aspects of music listening including attention (cf. Gottlieb et al., 2013; Baranes et al., 2015; Daddaoua
466 et al., 2016), anticipation (cf. Bromberg-Martin and Hikosaka, 2009; Salimpoor et al., 2011), and
467 pleasure (cf. Meyer, 1956; Salimpoor et al., 2011).

468 Our information-theoretic approach provides a systematic model of unpredictability,
469 operationalized as mean duration-weighted information content (mDW-IC), and uncertainty, as mean
470 duration-weighted entropy (mDW-Ent) (cf. Pearce, 2005, 2018). We chose model parameters by
471 identifying the best-fitting correlation with a separate sample of unexpectedness ratings (Table 2),
472 yielding a quantified measure of unpredictability that incorporates pitch and timing information.

473 We leveraged our systematic complexity measures and wide-ranging, natural stimuli to
474 replicate Wundt effects across two separate samples of participants (Figures 3A, 3B, 5A, 5B). This
475 nonlinear pattern explained between 19%-42% of liking ratings and fit significantly better than purely

476 linear effects. In addition to quadratic terms, three of the four regression models contained significant
477 negative linear components: a relatively common finding, sometimes even occurring without a Wundt
478 effect (Hargreaves et al., 2005; reviewed in Chmiel and Schubert, 2017). These results could indicate
479 hierarchical preferences wherein listeners like medium complexity more than simple (i.e., prototypical)
480 music (see Hargreaves et al., 2005; Chmiel and Schubert, 2017), and then highly complex music. This
481 interpretation would be better supported, however, if we had included very simple stimuli such as
482 isochronous repeating tones or musical scales. Like others, the present studies excluded such stimuli in
483 favor of real-world pieces, leaving the simpler end of the complexity distribution relatively under-
484 sampled.

485 In Study 2, repeating stimuli multiple times progressively reduced preferences across the mDW-
486 IC spectrum while leaving the Wundt effect unchanged (Figure 5C). While other studies have
487 described pleasure increasing with familiarity (Zajonc, 1968), this “mere exposure” effect emerges
488 when stimuli are repeated among distractors, or across several hours/days (Tan et al., 2006; Hunter and
489 Schellenberg, 2011), thereby allowing participants to consolidate what they’ve heard and forget
490 specific features of it– or at least experience less fatigue – and thus continue to learn (Berlyne, 1971;
491 Chmiel and Schubert, 2017). Since Study 2 illustrated decreased liking across multiple repetitions of
492 the same stimuli over a short time span, resembling novelty preferences (reviewed in Oudeyer et al.,
493 2016), this result likely reflects participants’ boredom rather than shifting preferences for certain
494 degrees of predictability. Structural and veridical predictability (i.e., familiarity) therefore seem to
495 influence liking differently (but see Chmiel and Schubert 2017 for a review of studies that show them
496 to have similar effects).

497 Between our two studies, individually fit Wundt-effect models explained between 0.1%-54% of
498 the liking variance, demonstrating both the low statistical power of within-subject analyses and
499 meaningful individual differences. Musical sophistication – particularly perceptual abilities – explained
500 a significant portion of these differences: participants with significant Wundt effects were generally

501 more sophisticated than those without, and more sophisticated participants had sharper preferences for
502 simpler stimuli (Figure 4). Yet kurtosis and skewness were strongly correlated, and partial correlations
503 suggested that musical sophistication is more closely related to sharper preferences than to preferences
504 for simpler stimuli. Moreover, the present sample fell in just the 32nd percentile of normative musical
505 sophistication scores, and since more sophisticated listeners exhibit stronger associations between
506 musical information content and unexpectedness ratings (Hansen and Pearce, 2014), a sample with
507 more sophisticated listeners and/or a broader stimulus range including simpler ones than those used
508 here might reveal a more nuanced effect. Nonetheless, more sophisticated listeners might in fact be
509 more sensitive to musical predictability – perhaps due to more confident predictions and/or greater
510 attention to music-syntactic violations – that shift their optimal level towards stimuli with lower
511 information content (cf. Hansen and Pearce, 2014; but see Pearce, 2014 for an alternative hypothesis).

512 Although mDW-IC and mDW-Ent were strongly correlated (Figure 2), an ANOVA with
513 categorized stimuli showed that preferences are more complicated than merely an overall liking for
514 intermediate complexity, as high entropy amplified preferences for predictability to exceed those of
515 greater unpredictability (Figure 3D). This pattern implies that the Wundt effect arises primarily from
516 the relative stability of low-entropy stimuli, while instability shifts preferences towards more-
517 predictable events that can validate listeners' uncertain predictions. Future research should better
518 distinguish these variables to elucidate the generalizability of this finding.

519 Our results suggest that learning about musical structure may be intrinsically rewarding. Reducing
520 uncertainty (i.e., reducing high mDW-Ent with low mDW-IC) and seeking information (i.e.,
521 incorporating medium mDW-IC during low mDW-Ent) are essential elements of learning, and appear
522 to convey reward value (Bromberg-Martin et al., 2010; Oudeyer et al., 2016; Brydevall et al., 2018).
523 People are willing to sacrifice money to reduce uncertainty about future rewards – such as how big
524 they'll be – even when that information has no influence on the rewards themselves (Brydevall et al.,
525 2018), and reducing uncertainty elicits dopamine transmission and reward-system activity (Bromberg-

526 Martin and Hikosaka, 2009; Brydevall et al., 2018). Learning new information about one's
527 environment – like the identities of blurry images, the meanings of pseudowords, or the answers to
528 trivia questions – similarly engages dopamine release and nucleus accumbens (NAc) activity (Kang et
529 al., 2009; Jepma et al., 2012; Ripollés et al., 2014, 2018). Intermediate complexity, which maximizes
530 both reducible uncertainty and learnable information, thus optimizes reward-related responses
531 (Oudeyer et al., 2016). Within this framework, it is possible that pleasurable musical surprises and the
532 Wundt effect derive from the same predictive and motivational processes that adapt our beliefs and
533 actions to our environments, such as predictions that descend from the frontal cortex to the auditory
534 cortex and brainstem and prediction errors that ascend in the reverse direction (cf. Koelsch et al.,
535 2018). Meanwhile, these pathways and subcortical structures, like the NAc, may mediate the reward of
536 seeking and obtaining information in music as in other domains (Kang et al., 2009; Jepma et al., 2012;
537 Ripollés et al., 2014; Brydevall et al., 2018).

538 The intrinsic reward of learning might also explain a range of previous music-aesthetic findings.
539 The emotional impact of musical surprises (Meyer, 1956; Sloboda, 1991; Huron, 2006; Grewe et al.,
540 2007) could derive from powerful feedback signals facilitating learning, and the distinct dopaminergic
541 activity before and during peak pleasure moments (Salimpoor et al., 2011) from curious anticipation
542 and evaluation. In goal-directed learning, dopamine neurons encode both uncertainty leading up to
543 predicted outcomes and “reward prediction errors” (RPEs) afterwards, which signal how much better
544 or worse the outcomes were than predicted (Fiorillo et al., 2003). We recently used fMRI to identify
545 RPE-related activity during music processing in the NAc with a reinforcement-learning paradigm,
546 using musical outcomes that were either unaltered and pleasant or distorted and unpleasant (Gold et al.,
547 2019). This discovery illustrates how music might engage the reward network by manipulating
548 expectations; yet it is unclear how musical events can be “better” or “worse” than expected, and thus
549 why this network might process these events during naturalistic music listening. Based on an intrinsic
550 reward for learning, one possibility is that ostensibly value-neutral musical surprises elicit positive

551 RPEs when they facilitate learning, which would occur when the surrounding context affords the
552 formation of a predictive model and the surprises contribute to this model. Conversely, surprises that
553 detract from one's model might be experienced as penalties, and thus negative RPEs. Sequences of
554 intermediate predictability and uncertainty would be most conducive to this learning process (cf.
555 Oudeyer et al., 2016), consistent with the present results and others which indicate that surprises are
556 pleasant when the context is stable enough for them to be informative and unpleasant otherwise (e.g.,
557 Brattico et al., 2010; Egermann et al., 2013; Grewe et al., 2005, 2007; Koelsch et al., 2008; Sloboda,
558 1991). The reward system's response to musical information-theoretic properties has not yet been
559 studied, but we predict that the NAc would be more engaged by intermediate complexity, based on the
560 present data.

561 Since music constantly manipulates interweaving structures, all but the most predictable stimuli
562 have some degree of uncertainty (Meyer, 1956; Huron, 2006; Vuust, 2010; Zald and Zatorre, 2011;
563 Gebauer et al., 2012). Music thus enables uncertain predictions about multiple interacting structures,
564 the anticipation of their outcomes, and learning – especially when the music is complex but
565 decipherable. This learning process could enhance predictions for future events, and induce
566 dopaminergic reward-system activity for both uncertain anticipation and learning-related RPEs (cf.
567 Fiorillo et al., 2003), potentially accounting for the pleasure these surprises so often elicit (Meyer,
568 1956; Sloboda, 1991; Huron, 2006; Steinbeis et al., 2006; Grewe et al., 2007). Our findings support
569 this interpretation by rigorously replicating the Wundt effect with formal modeling of musical
570 complexity, implicating prediction-based learning in the enduring mystery of how abstract stimuli like
571 music can be so pleasurable.

572

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724

725 **Table 1: Stimulus details.**

726 Stimulus details for all 55 experimental stimuli and nine “attention trial” stimuli.

727

728 **Table 2: Comparing IDyOM configurations.**

729 This table shows the seven IDyOM configurations tested. In all cases, IDyOM predicts the chromatic
730 pitch and onset time of a note using one or more source viewpoints (corresponding to musical
731 attributes). Viewpoints may be used in isolation or linked with another viewpoint, indicated with
732 parentheses – e.g., (ioi-ratio cpitch) – in which case the model predicts notes represented as a tuple of
733 the values of the constituent viewpoints – e.g., (1 60) for a middle C whose duration is the same as the
734 previous note. For each configuration, we used linear mixed-effects models to compare the output
735 mean information content (IC), mean duration-weighted IC (mDW-IC), and mean entropy of each
736 stimulus, given the corresponding model, to the unexpectedness ratings of an independent sample of 24
737 participants who did not participate in the present studies. The fixed-effect coefficient (β), p value,
738 coefficient of determination (R^2), and Akaike information criterion (AIC) of each model is shown here.
739 This process revealed that the mDW-IC measure based on unlinked ioi-ratio and cpitch was the best
740 correlate of subjective unexpectedness (bolded here), and so we used this implementation for the
741 present studies.

742

743 **Figure 1: Information Dynamics of Music (IDyOM) model.**

744 We used the Information Dynamics of Music model (IDyOM, Pearce, 2005, 2018) to systematically
745 measure music unpredictability as information content (IC) and entropy. As configured here, IDyOM
746 first builds a long-term model (LTM) of the statistical structure of a large training set of 903 melodies,
747 represented as sequences of pitch and inter-onset interval ratios (IOIr). In a new stimulus melody with
748 n notes, IDyOM then estimates the probability of each possible continuation x from an alphabet X , at
749 each note index i based on the LTM and a short-term model (STM) learned dynamically within the

750 current stimulus, i.e. from note 1 to note i . To combine the probabilities derived from the LTM and
751 STM, IDyOM first computes a geometric mean of the LTM and STM probabilities for pitch and IOIr
752 separately, weighting each according to its entropy such that predictions based on higher-entropy
753 models are less influential (signified by “*”) and then multiplies these resulting pitch and IOIr
754 probabilities. It then computes the note’s IC as its negative log probability to the base 2, and its entropy
755 as the expected value of the IC across all possible continuations (X). The result is a reliable
756 computational measure of pitch unpredictability and uncertainty based on long- and short-term musical
757 statistics. In the present studies, we averaged these note-by-note measures across each stimulus to
758 represent each 30-second stimulus as one unit.

759

760 **Figure 2: Stimulus unpredictability and uncertainty distributions.**

761 Using formal mathematical modeling of musical unpredictability and uncertainty, we developed 55
762 stimuli, all excerpts of real, pre-composed music, that varied across quantifiably wide ranges of mean
763 duration-weighted entropy (mDW-Ent, i.e. the average entropy of all notes in a stimulus weighted by
764 their durations) and mean duration-weighted information content (mDW-IC, i.e. the average
765 information content of all notes in a stimulus weighted by their durations). We standardized these
766 measures with z scores to compare them, and so the standardized mDW-Ent and standardized mDW-IC
767 are shown here. These features were positively correlated (Pearson’s $r = 0.44$, $p < 0.001$).

768

769 **Figure 3: Behavioral effects of unpredictability and uncertainty.**

770 Linear mixed-effects analyses revealed significant Wundt effects in Study 1. (A) The optimal model of
771 mean duration-weighted information content (mDW-IC) explained 26.3% of the variance in liking
772 ratings ($p < 0.001$) with negative linear ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.001$) and quadratic ($\beta = -0.09$, $p < 0.001$)
773 effects. It also had significant random intercepts and slopes across subjects (intercept 95% CI = 0.54 –
774 0.86, slope 95% CI = 0.11 – 0.29). The red curve shown here represents the fitted model, while the

775 blue dots depict the mean liking ratings for each stimulus adjusted according to the model's random
776 effects. (B) The optimal model of mean duration-weighted entropy (mDW-Ent) explained 19.1% of the
777 variance in liking ratings ($p = 0.03$), with negative linear ($\beta = -0.09$, $p = 0.009$) and quadratic effects (β
778 $= -0.06$, $p = 0.003$) and significant subject-varying random intercepts (95% CI = 0.54 – 0.86). The red
779 curve shown here represents the fitted model, while the blue dots depict the mean liking ratings for
780 each stimulus adjusted according to the model's random effects. (C) We used k-means clustering to
781 categorize our stimuli. Starting with six points (black diamonds) to distinguish differentiate low and
782 high mDW-Ent along with low, medium, or high mDW-IC, this procedure yielded the six stimulus
783 categories that we used for repeated-measures analysis of variances (rm-ANOVA). (D) A rm-ANOVA
784 reaffirmed the main effect of mean duration-weighted IC [$F(1.70,69.63) = 34.45$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.51$, $p <$
785 0.001 , using Greenhouse-Geisser correction since Mauchly's test of sphericity was violated] but not
786 mDW-Ent [$F(1,41) = 2.84$, $p = 0.10$], and also suggested an interaction between the two on liking
787 ratings [$F(1.71,70.21) = 3.17$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.07$, $p = 0.06$]. Planned comparisons reflected the Wundt
788 effect of mDW-IC when mDW-Ent was low (high mDW-IC < low mDW-IC: $p < 0.001$, high mDW-IC
789 < medium mDW-IC: $p < 0.001$, low mDW-IC vs. medium mDW-IC: $p = 0.35$), but not when mDW-
790 Ent was high, when liking ratings for low mDW-IC were significantly greater than those for medium
791 mDW-IC ($p = 0.01$, high mDW-IC < low mDW-IC: $p < 0.001$, high mDW-IC < medium DW-IC: $p <$
792 0.001). Likewise, there was a significant preference for stimuli with high mDW-Ent over low mDW-
793 Ent when mDW-IC was low ($p = 0.001$), but not when mDW-IC was medium ($p = 0.60$) or high ($p =$
794 0.85), implying that uncertain contexts amplify the pleasure of predictability.

795

796 **Figure 4: Individual differences in Wundt effects.**

797 Individual differences in the Wundt effects of Study 1 could be explained in part by musical
798 sophistication, as measured by the Goldsmiths Musical Sophistication Index (Gold-MSI, Müllensiefen
799 et al., 2014). (A) We represented each participant's Wundt effect as a distribution of mean liking

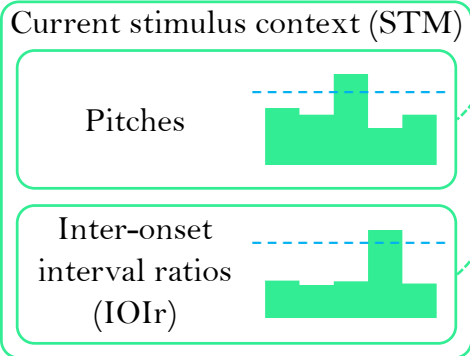
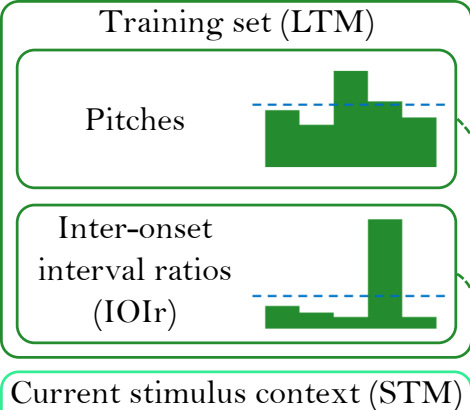
800 ratings across mean duration-weighted information contents (mDW-ICs) by multiplying these
801 measures together, resulting in flatter distributions for those with similar preferences across the mDW-
802 IC spectrum, sharper distributions for those with more particular preferences, and so on. We then
803 measured the kurtosis and skewness of each distribution, reflecting the sharpness and asymmetry of the
804 participant's preferences, respectively. To illustrate this analysis, we show the distribution for
805 Participant 7, on the left, who exhibits the greatest kurtosis and skewness of the sample, and Participant
806 43, on the right, who has the lowest kurtosis and second-lowest skewness. (B) There was a significant
807 positive correlation between Gold-MSI scores and the kurtosis of the Wundt effect, revealing sharper
808 preferences for relatively more sophisticated participants [$F(1,41) = 7.43, p = 0.009, \beta = 0.02, R^2 =$
809 0.15]. (C) There was also a significant positive correlation between Gold-MSI scores and the skewness
810 of the Wundt effect, wherein more sophisticated listeners also had greater relative preferences for
811 stimuli of lower mDW-IC [$F(1,41) = 4.76, p = 0.03, \beta = 0.003, R^2 = 0.10$]. In both cases, the Gold-MSI
812 "Perceptual Abilities" subscale was the only one to survive follow-up stepwise regressions [kurtosis
813 effect $F(1,41) = 6.50, p = 0.01, \beta = 0.04, R^2 = 0.14$; skewness effect $F(1,41) = 5.89, p = 0.02, \beta = 0.009,$
814 $R^2 = 0.13$], indicating that music-listening skills drove these results. Kurtosis and skewness were also
815 highly correlated ($r = 0.94, p < 0.001$), complicating the interpretations of these results.

816

817 **Figure 5: Behavioral effects of unpredictability, uncertainty, and repetition.**

818 Linear mixed-effects analyses revealed significant Wundt effects in Study 2. (A) The optimal model of
819 mean duration-weighted information content (IC) explained 41.6% of the variance in liking ratings ($p <$
820 0.001) with only a negative quadratic effect ($\beta = -0.18, p < 0.001$) and significant random intercepts
821 and slopes across subjects (intercept 95% CI = 0.31 – 0.58, mean duration-weighted IC slope 95% CI =
822 0.15 – 0.29, mean duration-weighted IC² slope 95% CI = 0.10 – 0.19, repetition slope 95% CI = 0.05 –
823 0.09). The red curve shown here represents the fitted model, while the blue dots depict the mean liking
824 ratings for each stimulus adjusted according to the model's random effects. (B) The optimal model of

825 mean duration-weighted entropy explained 34.9% of the variance in liking ratings ($p < 0.001$), with
826 negative linear ($\beta = -0.31, p < 0.001$) and quadratic effects ($\beta = -0.25, p < 0.001$). This model also had
827 significant subject-varying random intercepts (95% CI = 0.30 – 0.58), slopes for mean duration-
828 weighted entropy (95% CI = 0.26 – 0.49), slopes for mean duration-weighted entropy² (95% CI = 0.82
829 – 0.97), and slopes for repetition (95% CI = 0.05 – 0.09). The red curve shown here represents the
830 fitted model, while the blue dots depict the mean liking ratings for each stimulus adjusted according to
831 the model's random effects. (C) The best-fitting model of liking and repetition which included an
832 interaction term between mean duration-weighted information content and liking significantly fit the
833 data ($R^2 = 0.42, p < 0.001$), but not better than an alternative model that excluded the fixed effects of
834 repetition [likelihood ratio test $\chi^2(1, N = 27) = 3.42, p = 0.18$]. Even so, this model indicated that the
835 Wundt effect did not significantly change across repetitions, as the interaction term was not significant
836 ($p = 0.38$).



Current stimulus at note index i , $i = \{1, 2, \dots, n\}$

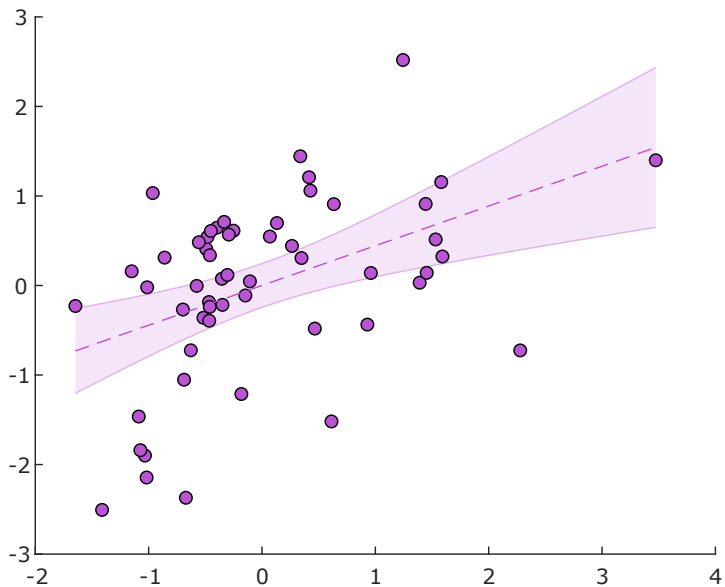
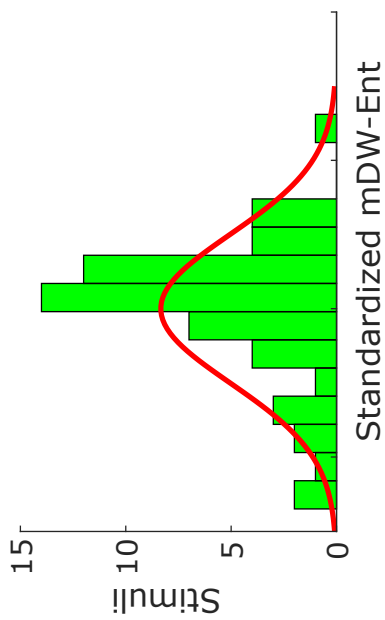
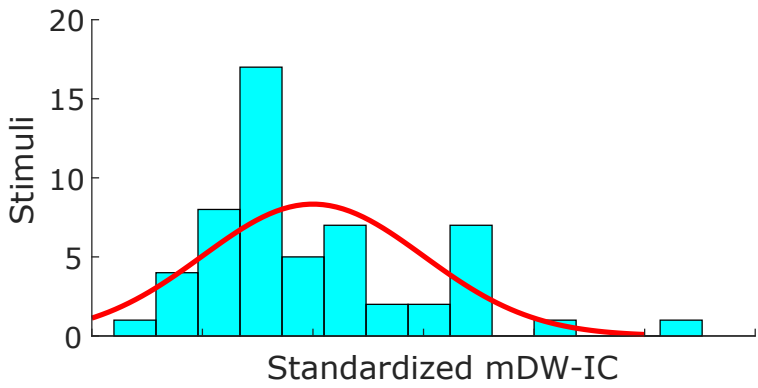
$$P_{both}(x_{i,pitch}) = P_{STM}(x_{i,pitch}) * P_{LTM}(x_{i,pitch})$$

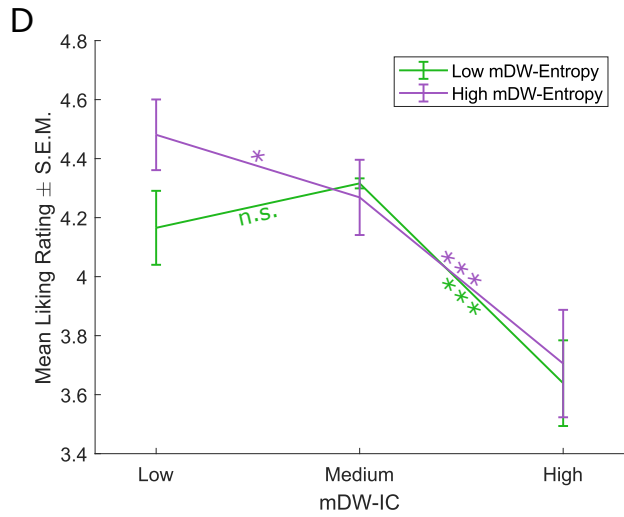
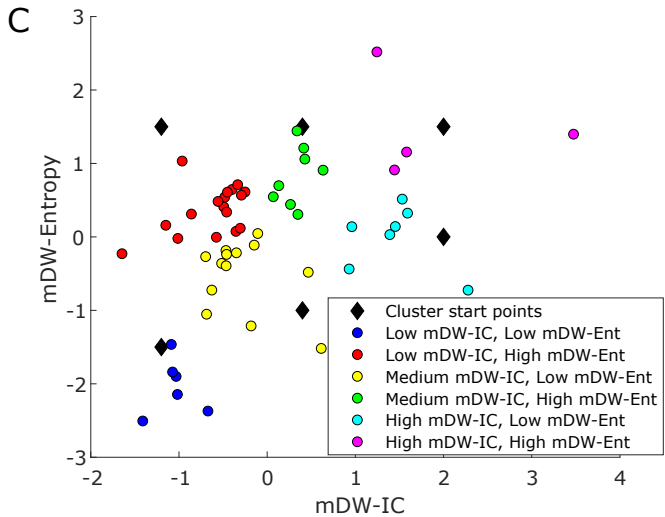
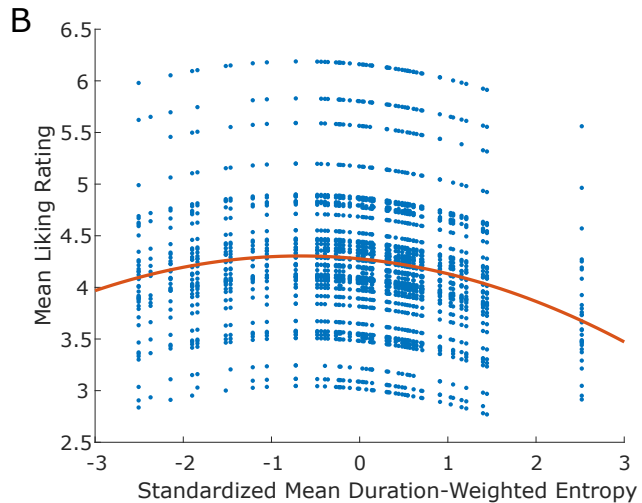
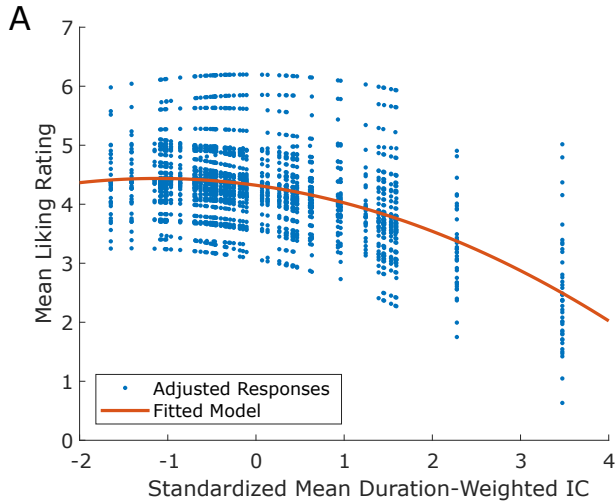
$$P_{both}(x_{i,IOIr}) = P_{STM}(x_{i,IOIr}) * P_{LTM}(x_{i,IOIr})$$

$$P(x_i) = P_{both}(x_{i,pitch}) P_{both}(x_{i,IOIr})$$

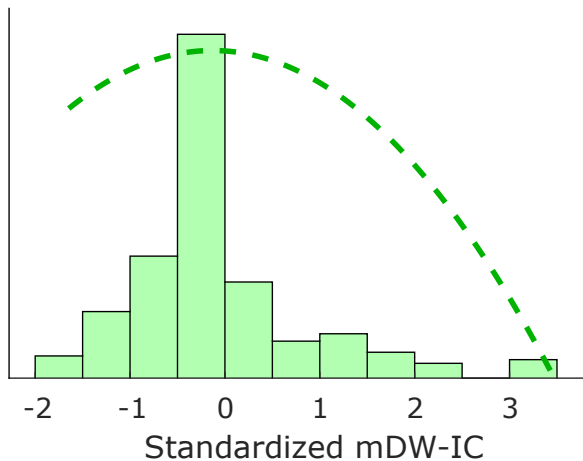
$$IC(x_i) = -\log_2(P(x_i))$$

$$\text{Entropy}(x_i) = -\sum_{x \in X} P(x_i) \log_2 P(x_i)$$

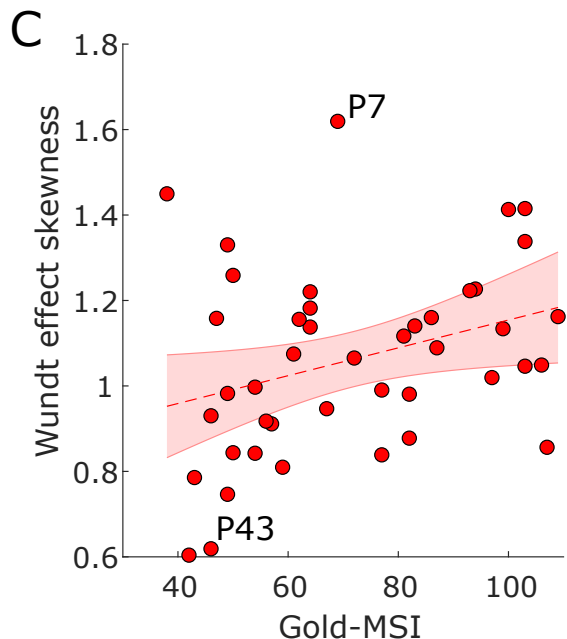
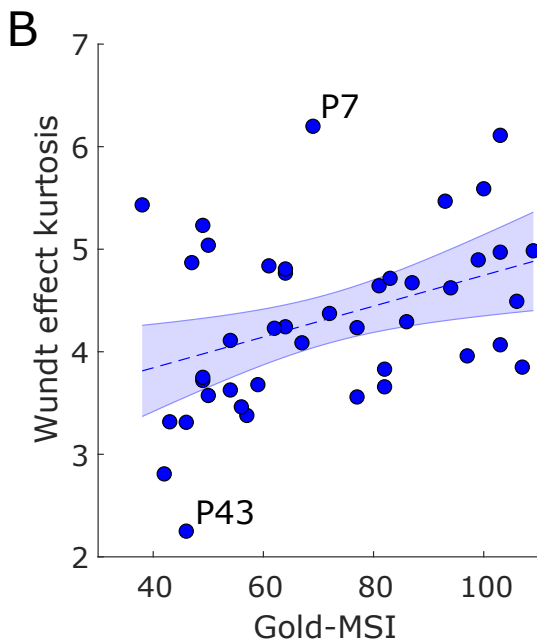
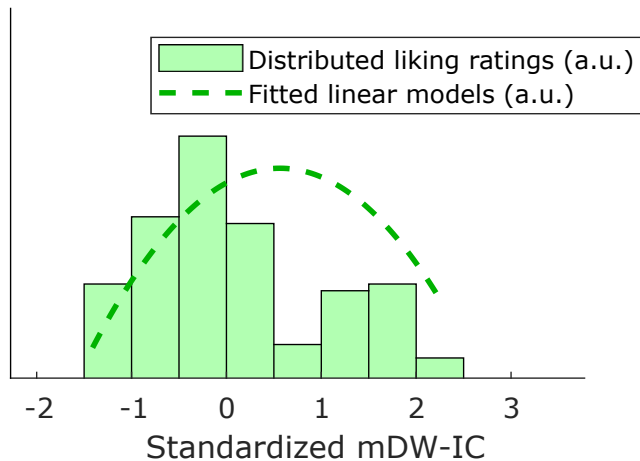


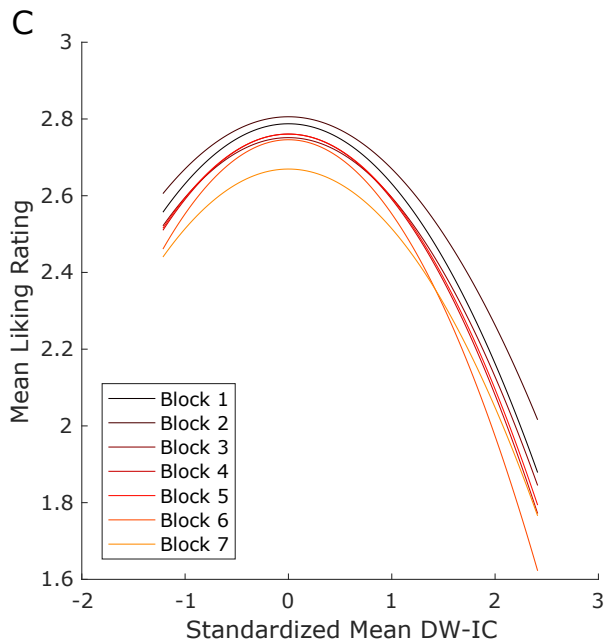
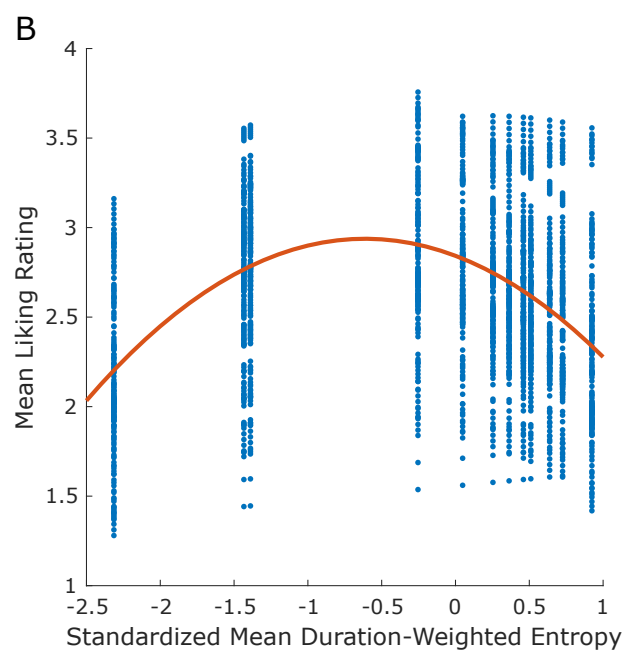
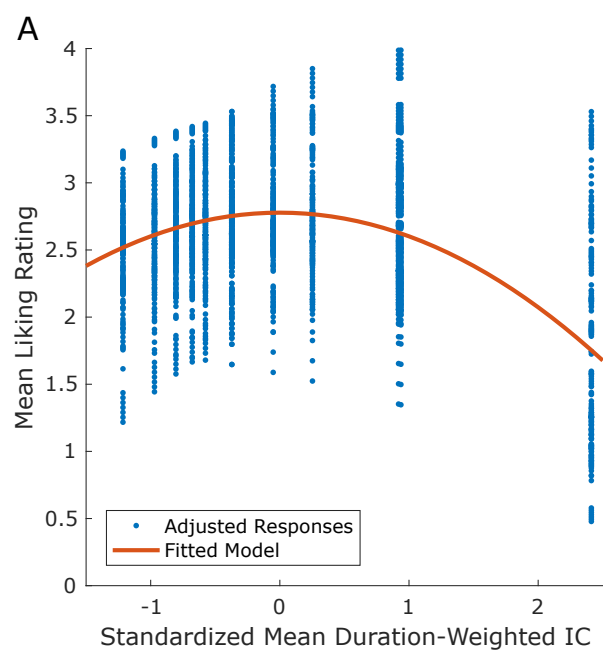


A Participant 7
(Kurtosis = 6.20, Skewness = 1.62)



Participant 43
(Kurtosis = 2.25, Skewness = 0.62)





Piece	Excerpt Time (approx.)	Composer	Year	Key	Meter	Studies	mDW- IC	mDW- Ent
Streams of Kilnaspig	0:00 – 0:30	Irish Traditional	Unknown	G Major	Compound Duple	1, IS	2.34	3.62
Eighteen Studies for the Flute, Op. 41, No. 11	1:30 – 2:00	Joachim Andersen	1891	F Major	Simple Duple	1, 2, IS	2.99	2.23
When This Cruel War is Over	1:00 – 1:30	American Traditional	1863	Bb Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	3.72	3.86
Seven Variations on a Theme from Silvana, J. 128, Op. 33, Var. 7	8:00 – 8:30	Carl Maria von Weber	1854	Bb Major	Compound Duple	1, 2 (clar), IS	3.89	2.87
12 Fantasias for Solo Flute, No. 3, Vivace	0:45 – 1:15	Georg Philipp Telemann	1733	B Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	3.93	2.64
Eighteen Studies for the Flute, Op. 41, No. 18	0:50 – 1:20	Joachim Andersen	1891	F Minor	Compound Duple	1, IS	4.04	2.6
12 Fantasias for Solo Flute, No. 3, Vivace	0:10 – 0:40	Georg Philipp Telemann	1733	B Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	4.08	2.45
Young Cowherd	0:00 – 0:30	Chinese Traditional	Unknown	G Major	Simple Duple	1	4.1	3.75
Sakura	0:00 – 0:30	Japanese Traditional	Unknown	D Minor	Simple Duple	1	4.23	4.39
Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067	2:45 – 3:15	Johann Sebastian Bach	1739	B Minor	Simple Duple	1, 2, IS	4.52	3.95
Eighteen Studies for the Flute, Op. 41, No. 1	0:45 – 1:15	Joachim Andersen	1891	C Major	Simple Duple	1, 2, IS	4.97	3.6
Five Divertimentos, K. 439b, No. 2, mvt. 4	0:50 – 1:20	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	1785	C Major	Simple Triple	1, IS	5	3.12
Gavotte	0:00 – 0:30	François- Joseph Gossec	Unknown	C Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	5.04	2.32
Maiden Voyage	2:50 – 3:20	Herbie Hancock	1965	A Minor	Simple Duple	1	5.16	3.32
Seven Variations on a Theme from Silvana, J. 128, Op. 33, Theme	0:00 – 0:30	Carl Maria von Weber	1854	Bb Major	Compound Duple	1, IS	5.31	3.76
Drei Fantasiestücke, Op. 73, No. 1	0:30 – 1:00	Robert Schumann	1849	A Minor	Simple Duple	1, 2 (clar), IS	5.36	4.06
Five Divertimentos, K. 439b, No. 2, mvt. 4	3:50 – 4:20	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	1785	G Major	Simple Triple	1, IS	5.47	3.54
35 Exercises for Flute, Op. 33, No. 3	1:00 – 1:30	Ernesto Koehler	1880s	F Major	Simple Triple	1, IS	5.54	4.01
Eighteen Studies for the Flute, Op. 41, No. 6	1:00 – 1:30	Joachim Andersen	1891	B Minor	Simple Triple	1, IS	5.57	4.09

Carmen Suite No. 1, Aragonaise	0:45 – 1:15	Georges Bizet	1882	D Minor	Simple Triple	1, IS	5.61	3.65
Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067	0:00 – 0:30	Johann Sebastian Bach	1739	B Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	5.61	3.52
35 Exercises for Flute, Op. 33, No. 15	0:00 – 0:30	Ernesto Koehler	1880s	E Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	5.63	3.62
Drei Fantasiestücke, Op. 73, No. 1	1:15 – 1:45	Robert Schumann	1849	A Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	5.63	3.97
Eighteen Studies for the Flute, Op. 41, No. 10	0:00 – 0:30	Joachim Andersen	1891	C# Minor	Compound Duple	1, 2 (prac), IS	5.65	4.13
35 Exercises for Flute, Op. 33, No. 10	0:00 – 0:30	Ernesto Koehler	1880s	D Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	5.8	4.16
Study No. 1 in C Major, Op. 131	0:00 – 0:30	Giuseppe Gariboldi	1900	C Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	5.92	3.81
Flute Concerto No. 2 in G minor, RV439 “La notte”	10:00 – 10:30	Antonio Vivaldi	1729	C Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	5.93	3.63
Dolly Suite Op. 56, No. 1	0:10 – 0:40	Gabriel Fauré	1893	G Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	5.98	4.2
Flute Concerto No. 2 in G minor, RV439 “La notte”	9:15 – 9:45	Antonio Vivaldi	1729	G Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	6.06	3.83
Solo de Concours	4:00 – 4:30	André Messenger	1899	Bb Major	Simple Duple	1 (prac), 2 (clar), IS	6.09	4.22
Student Instrumental Course: Flute Student, Level II book: pg. 12 exercise no. 2	0:10 – 0:40	Douglas Steensland, Fred Weber	2000	Ab Major	Simple Duple	1, 2, IS	6.09	4.11
Eighteen Studies for the Flute, Op. 41, No. 6	0:00 – 0:30	Joachim Andersen	1891	B Minor	Simple Triple	1 (prac), 2, IS	6.09	4.07
Fantaisie, Op. 79	0:30 – 1:00	Gabriel Fauré	1898	E Minor	Simple Triple	1, IS	6.21	4.14
12 Fantasias for Solo Flute, No. 5, Allegro	0:37 – 1:17	Georg Philipp Telemann	1733	C Major	Simple Triple	1, IS	6.49	3.70
12 Fantasias for Solo Flute, No. 10, Dolce	1:57 – 2:27	Georg Philipp Telemann	1733	G Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	6.4	3.02
35 Exercises for Flute, Op. 33, No. 2	0:07 – 0:37	Ernesto Koehler	1880s	G Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	6.61	3.79
12 Fantasias for Solo Flute, No. 10, Presto	2:45 – 3:15	Georg Philipp Telemann	1733	F# Minor	Simple Triple	1, IS	7.09	4.1
Eighteen Studies for the Flute, Op. 41, No. 8	1:30 – 2:00	Joachim Andersen	1891	F# Minor	Simple Triple	1, 2, IS	7.27	4.19

Con Alma	1:15 – 1:45	Dizzy Gillespie	1954	Ab Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	7.63	4.03
35 Exercises for Flute, Op. 33, No. 11	1:00 – 1:30	Ernesto Koehler	1880s	A Minor	Compound Duple	1, IS	7.84	4.64
Syrinx	2:15 – 2:45	Claude Debussy	1913	Bb Minor	Simple Triple	1, IS	7.87	3.95
Orchestral Suite No. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067	3:45 – 4:15	Johann Sebastian Bach	1739	E Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	8.05	4.5
Nocturnes, Op. 37, No. 1	0:30 – 1:00	Frédéric Chopin	1839	C Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	8.08	4.41
Seven Early Songs, Die Nachtigall	0:30 – 1:00	Alban Berg	1907	A Major	Simple Triple	1, IS	8.19	3.47
Les Folies d'Espagne, Nos. 7 and 8	0:10 – 0:40	Marin Marais	1701	E Minor	Simple Triple	1, 2, IS	8.6	2.84
Nocturnes, Op. 37, No. 1	0:00 – 0:30	Frédéric Chopin	1839	C Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	8.66	4.32
Les Folies d'Espagne, No. 5	0:00 – 0:30	Marin Marais	1701	E Minor	Simple Triple	1, IS	9.48	3.5
Le Rossignol en Amour	1:45 – 2:15	François Couperin	1722	G Major	Simple Triple	1, IS	9.56	3.85
Caravan	0:00 – 0:30	Duke Ellington, Juan Tizol	1936	C Minor	Simple Duple	1	10.35	5.3
Citygate/Rumble	1:00 – 1:30	Chick Corea	1986	Db Major	Simple Duple	1, IS	10.75	3.78
First Rhapsody	0:30 – 1:00	Claude Debussy	1910	F# Minor, E Minor	Simple Duple	1, 2, IS	10.9	4.32
Alone Together	0:45 – 1:15	Arthur Schwartz	1932	D Minor	Simple Duple	1, 2, IS	10.93	3.85
Seven Early Songs, Traumgekrönt	0:30 – 1:00	Alban Berg	1908	G Minor	Simple Duple	1, IS	11.15	4.08
Les Folies d'Espagne, No. 1	0:00 – 0:30	Marin Marais	1701	E Minor	Compound Triple	1, 2 (prac), IS	11.28	4.47
Le Jamf	0:45 – 1:15	Bobby Jaspar	1960	Eb Major	Simple Duple	1	11.31	3.96
Syrinx	0:00 – 0:30	Claude Debussy	1913	Bb Minor	Simple Triple	1, IS	13.21	3.32
Mei	0:37 – 1:07	Kazuo Fukushima	1962	Atonal	Simple Duple	1, 2, IS	16.52	4.62
35 Exercises for Flute, Op. 33, No. 5	0:03 – 0:33 (piano at 2.5)	Ernesto Koehler	1880s	G Major	Simple Duple	1 (attn.)	10.71	3.61
Ballet of the Shepherds (from Armide, Wq. 45)	0:05 – 0:35 (piano at 7.5)	Christoph W. von Gluck	1777	Eb Major	Simple Duple	1 (attn.)	14.46	3.64
Baldwin's Music, Exercise No. 4	0:00 – 0:30 (piano at 8.8)	Baldwin's Music	Unknown	F Major	Simple Duple	1 (attn.)	10.57	3.89

Waltz (from Coppélia)	0:50 – 1:20 (piano at 12.3)	Léo Delibes	1870	C Major	Simple Triple	1 (attn.)	8.15	4.02
22 Studies in Expression and Facility, Op. 89, No. 6	0:00 – 0:30 (piano at 15.0)	Ernesto Koehler	1904	D Minor	Simple Duple	1 (attn.)	4.95	4.14
Fuku Ju So	0:02 – 0:32 (piano at 18.8)	Japanese Traditional	Unknown	A Minor	Simple Duple	1 (attn.)	6.4	4.47
Scheherazade, Op. 35, mvmt. 3 (The Young Prince and The Young Princess)	0:00 – 30:00 (piano at 21.7)	Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov	1888	B Minor	Simple Triple	1 (attn.)	4.42	3.90
Sicilienne, Op.78	0:00 – 0:30 (piano at 24.4)	Gabriel Fauré	1893	G Minor	Compound Duple	1 (attn.)	6.17	4.04
Baldwin's Music, Exercise No. 1	0:00 – 0:30 (piano at 25.7)	Baldwin's Music	Unknown	G Major	Simple Duple	1 (attn.)	6.47	4.36

Model source viewpoints	Regression predictor	Fixed effect (β)	<i>P</i> value	R ²	AIC
(ioi-ratio cpitch)	Mean IC	4.93	< 0.001	0.10	3854.6
	mDW-IC	6.16	< 0.001	0.12	3845.7
	Mean Entropy	11.51	0.012	0.06	3866.7
ioi-ratio cpitch*	Mean IC	4.33	< 0.001	0.09	3856.4
	mDW-IC*	5.99*	< 0.001*	0.13*	3844.0*
	Mean Entropy	18.09	0.109	0.05	3869.8
(ioi-ratio cpint)	Mean IC	3.40	0.005	0.07	3864.0
	mDW-IC	5.89	< 0.001	0.10	3852.3
	Mean Entropy	2.17	0.751	0.04	3873.1
ioi-ratio cpint	Mean IC	3.65	0.001	0.08	3860.7
	mDW-IC	5.28	< 0.001	0.10	3851.8
	Mean Entropy	7.71	0.613	0.04	3872.5
(ioi-ratio cpintfref)	Mean IC	5.26	< 0.001	0.09	3856.8
	mDW-IC	6.76	< 0.001	0.11	3848.5
	Mean Entropy	12.86	0.065	0.05	3869.1
ioi-ratio cpintfref	Mean IC	4.92	< 0.001	0.09	3855.9
	mDW-IC	6.27	< 0.001	0.11	3849.2
	Mean Entropy	21.01	0.292	0.04	3872.1
ioi-ratio (cpint cpintfref)	Mean IC	3.84	< 0.001	0.08	3859.7
	mDW-IC	5.17	< 0.001	0.10	3851.2
	Mean Entropy	-4.32	0.823	0.04	3873.2