



Research Colloquia Fall 2023

How Music Triggers and Shapes the Contents of Thoughts and Mental Images

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Among the different uses of music in daily life, people commonly listen to music to fantasise, daydream, mind wander, escape, or introspect. Most of these mental experiences are rooted in imagination processes and spontaneous cognition (thought processes that occur without conscious control over their direction, e.g., mind-wandering). While previous research has often conceptualised mind-wandering as “internally-driven” and “stimulus-independent,” more recent work using music has shown how specific music properties and music’s emotional tone can influence aspects of evoked thoughts and mental images. Hence, music can act as a trigger to shape people's mental experiences. This talk will offer an overview of this new empirical strand of music research focusing in particular on mind-wandering and mental imagery, while addressing fundamental questions such as their relationship with emotion and relevant implications for mental health and well-being.



Liila Taruffi is Assistant Professor in Music Psychology at the Academy of Music of Hong Kong Baptist University. After receiving her PhD in Psychology of Music from the Free University of Berlin, Taruffi has held various research and teaching positions in a number of international institutions including the Free University of Berlin, the Humboldt University of Berlin in Germany, and Durham University in the UK. Her core recent work focuses on music's capability to influence emotion and consciousness (specifically, internally oriented mental states such as mind-wandering and imagination), as well as their relationship to health and well-being. Taruffi has recently co-edited the volume *Music and Mental Imagery* (Routledge, 2022). Ultimately, her research is driven by the goal of practical applications of music for therapeutic practices and for enhancing well-being in daily life.

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Seminar Room

11.01 11/F Run Run Shaw Tower

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