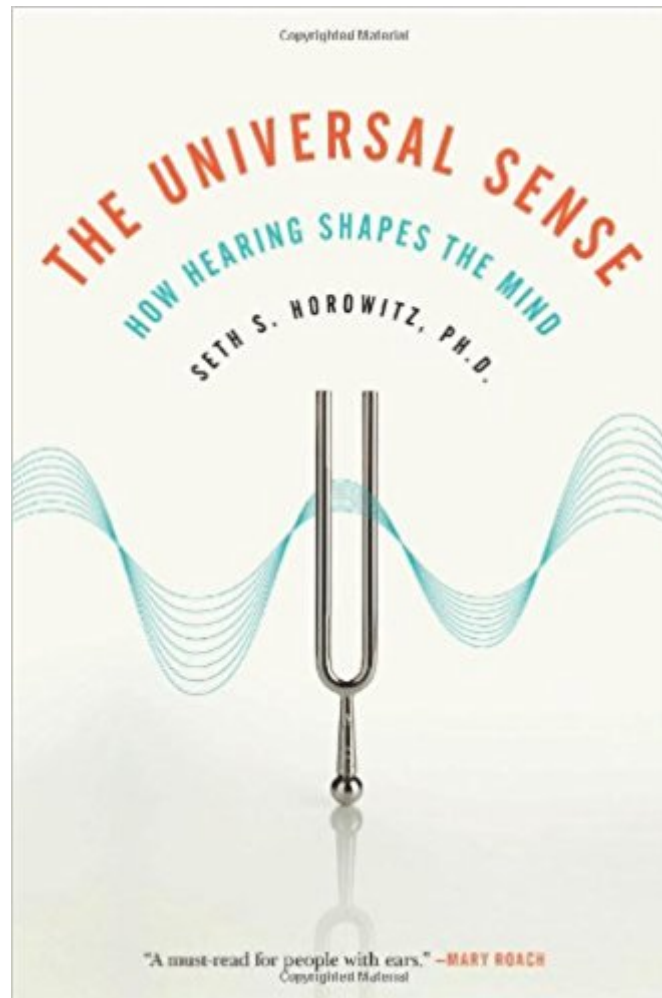




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The Universal Sense: How Hearing Shapes The Mind



Synopsis

The surprising truth about how the things our ears hear affect what's between them. ã ã Every day, we are surrounded by millions of sounds - ambient ones like the rumble of the train and the hum of air conditioner, as well as more attention-grabbing sounds, such as human speech, music, and sirens. But how do we process what we hear every day? And how does it affect our brains and our minds? ã ã This book answers such revealing questions as: How do bats see in 3D with their ears and how did that lead to the development of medical ultrasound? What is it about the sound of fingernails on a chalkboard that makes us cringe? Why do city folks have trouble sleeping in the country, and vice versa? Why can't you get that song out of your head? Starting with the basics of auditory biology, neuroscientist and musician Seth Horowitz explains how sound affects us, and in turn, how we've learned to manipulate sound: into music, commercial jingles, car horns, and modern inventions like cochlear implants, ultrasound scans, and the mosquito ringtone. Whether you're standing in a crowded subway or a quiet meadow, you'll never hear the same way after reading this book. The Universal Sense gives new insight into what the sounds of our world have to do with the way we think, feel, and interact.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Brown University neuroscientist Horowitz has pulled off an unusual feat. His science book, about the way hearing shapes the ã ã ã ã “evolution, development, and day-to-day function of the mind, ã ã ã ã can be genuinely poetic. It is also laced with humor. Horowitz says he attempted less

a text than a venue for imparting “wonder.” He succeeds, unearthing one little-known gem after another.

We live in a sonic world. Sounds and vibration affect our mood, memories, and mind. Neuroscientist Horowitz’s aim is to amp up understanding and respect for our auditory environment. He draws on physiology, physics, and psychology to demonstrate “how sound and hearing have shaped the evolution, development, and day-to-day function of the mind.” Sound assists in mating, playing, and acquiring food. Hearing helps us stay vigilant and monitor our surroundings. Horowitz contemplates the difficulty in defining music and how it influences the mind. He highlights the power of acoustics by invoking our usual reaction to the noise of fingernails scraping across a blackboard, the employment of echolocation by bats, and the love songs of frogs. He defuses the hype of sound-based weaponry that dates back to Joshua and his hundreds of warriors who blew on rams’ horns and shouted in unison to collapse the walls of Jericho. It must be myth or miracle, since physics alone cannot explain the magnitude of such a sonic blast. The science of sound is fascinating, and Horowitz is an author worth listening to. --Tony Miksanek

Book was helpful with the factual science of hearing. Clearly author believes in evolution, and he makes real jumps between what is known and speculative ideas about evolution that he writes- as if they are already proven facts. Evolution skews some of the book. Otherwise very interesting about the shape of the outer ear, etc.

A very interesting theme but overwritten, too wordy, and poorly edited. I couldn’t finish it due to the poor writing style.

This book covers quite a wide range of very specific scientific information in auditory neuroscience/acoustics/psychology. It’s basically meant to be a ‘reading documentary’. The info I’ve found most interesting were:-changes in the hearing system from tadpole to adult frog-sopite syndrome-Hebbian plasticityIn addition to these information, the author brings in personal experiences, aka “pet projects” that he and his wife undertook as they relate to perception of sound. It’s been a tremendously fun read and it’s not hard to put down and read at different times. It also always amazes me that people with specialized background could venture into more interdisciplinary research quests. The author thus tackles stories from amphibian auditory system to military research in non-atmospheric acoustics...It’s a fun read.

There is a perfect balance between humor and technical information in the book. It is kind of like having just enough sugar on your breakfast cereal so that you are not eating it just because it is good for you. I highly recommend it to anyone.

This is just a great book on all things hearing and sound. Seth is an excellent engaging writer and really wants you to understand and become passionate about sound. He is a bat researcher and does all types of investigations of animal hearing. There is humor as well. He really treats his sub-title thoroughly, how hearing shapes the mind. Sound is so overlooked in our overtly visual world, while it is a sense that is more deeply powerful and fundamental to our being.

The book is loaded with valuable information about sound. My favorite quote is "Music is the math everybody gets." I want to add that to my email signatures! The cover design is also worth noting, and staring at. There is a quality of silence that is transmitted just by looking at the cover.

I didn't read this, but gave it as a Christmas gift to my mother, who is fascinated with cognitive science. She can't stop raving about it. She called me to read passages outloud which she found particularly enthralling.

Amazingly insightful

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