Volume Preface

This volume presents an overview of a relatively new field of psychoacoustic and hearing research. The field involves perception of musical sound patterns, and this is considered in a set of chapters that reflect the current status of scientific scholarship related to music perception. Each chapter aims at synthesizing a range of findings associated with each of several major research areas in the field of music perception. These chapters have been crafted to present conceptual, but not necessarily exhaustive, reviews of research addressed to the major issues in the field of music perception.

In Chapter 2, Patterson, Gaudrain, and Walters introduce the reader to theory and research concerned with the basics of musical note perception; they offer a new approach to the meaning and measurement of pitch and timbre. Krumhansl and Cuddy (Chapter 3) focus on relative pitch in musical events and the way it conveys tonal relationships to listeners. This is followed by Chapter 4, authored by Trainor and Corrigall, who discuss acquiring musical sensibilities, which are often customized within a given musical culture and present new findings using listeners drawn from many different age ranges and cultures. In Chapter 5, Schellenberg and Hunter lay out the theoretical and methodological complexities presented by studying various responses to music with a special focus on the way musical passages can elicit emotions. In Chapter 6, McAuley considers basic distinctions among tempo, meter, and rhythm as well as relevant methodological concerns. This is followed by Chapter 7 by Large, who adapts the framework of dynamical systems to describe neurodynamical models of pitch perception and musical listening and to explain musical universals. Finally, in Chapter 8, Halpern and Bartlett provide an overview of people’s ability to recognize melodies and consider the ability of people of different ages to recognize familiar and novel melodies.

As in other SHAR volumes, chapters in this volume are complemented by earlier chapters and volumes in the series, and particularly in those volumes that cover perception of sound, in general, and speech, in particular. These include chapters in Volume 3 (Human Psychophysics), Volume 24 (Pitch), and Volume 29 (Auditory Perception of Sound Sources). In addition, many of the ideas regarding music perception are paralleled in Volume 18 (Speech Processing in the Auditory System).

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