

PERCEPTION OF MUSIC – THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

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Abstract

Why do we listen to music so much? Why is it that we listen to the same piece of music many times and why is it that we do not usually do the same with movies or books? Even more curiously, why do we sometimes end up listening to a piece of music over and over again, when initially we found it quite unpleasant? Why do we stop listening to a piece of music, which once we did not wish to remove from the CD player?

This paper attempts to investigate some of the different reactions to music and offers some explanation as to why these reactions might take place. It also will attempt to offer a broader explanation of the human response with relation to other aspects of daily life. Finally, there will be an analysis of some basic experimentation that has been used to investigate these ideas.

Acknowledgements

The following paper is a result of many influences. My first thoughts on this matter were conceived many years ago, regarding the similarity of people's perceptions of music and their perceptions of each other. Most of these I dismissed as flippant but, in recent years, I have come to consider some aspects more closely and begin to explore others.

Secondly, I have had the benefit of some further research, mostly within the **Mark Gander Library** in California – for which I am extremely grateful to him.

Finally – I relish the prospect of presenting something that links my interests in music and psychology. This is not a subject that often surfaces in my usual line of work but when the conference title "Perception, Reception, Deception" was decided upon I seized the chance to explore and then convey my thoughts further.


I hope you find my comments interesting.



Introduction

The aim of this paper is to bring greater awareness of people's appreciation of music and how this relates generally to the human condition.

It is not intended to offer a 'general rule' but more a specific one, applying most to people who frequently listen to and appreciate music.

The ideas presented here are drawn from the author's personal experience, many references  Mark Gander's library and the results of some ongoing investigation among associates and friends.

Some Parameters that will fall outside the scope of this paper:


Emotional Response. Many preferences for varied aspects of life can be heavily influenced by the environment where they were experienced or in whose company. This paper does not seek to investigate those responses, though it is acknowledged that they are an integral part of much of the discussion.

Musical Genre Preference. Some discussion of which genres may have a greater lasting appeal will be covered. However, the author does not consider some types of music to be better than others and the object here is not to ascertain the "best" type of music. The objective of this paper is to more understand the human response to the music within the subject's preferred genre(s).

Measurement of Musical Taste and Appreciation. Lehman [2] quotes this as being done normally by a panel of musical "experts" or with groups from the general population – also it being almost impossible to ascertain. *"There are no absolute standards of beauty in music. Neither are there absolute standards of quality"* also *"Music exists in time. The listener is never in the presence of an entire work at one time. He must perceive the meaning of the work by hearing one sonority after another"* *"Like looking at a painting one small area at a time"*.

The submitted experimental questionnaire [Appendix 1] does allow for some analysis of musical taste, but for the purposes of this paper we are more interested in the variety and longevity of the subject's appreciation.

Some other notable quotes from Lehman: *"Music can be anything the individual takes it to be". "The emotional content and potential of a piece of music cannot be evaluated adequately by objective means". "Some writers have suggested that we might find a mathematical formula that will provide a measure of the degree of beauty present in a work of art"*

As the last objective may never be accomplished by  the universally accepted means, the author will confine this paper to a simpler premise.

The Premise

People's relationships with a piece of music are similar to those that they have with each other, and may also be analogous to other aspects of life.

The Element of Surprise

Why is a joke funny only the first time? When we re-hear it, even in identical circumstances, the reaction is rarely as strong as the first time. The only possible answer is surprise.

Humour is a strange device and, like music, it has many forms and with each form there are critics and fans.

One could divide the response between 'catchphrase' humour (BBC's "*The Fast Show*") – and quotable humour (*Monty Python*) as being part of 'social grooming', a way of establishing common ground with someone. This is therefore separate from 'joke' humour. As this study is not into humour itself, we will simplify this into the 'joke' style.

Even here there are great differences – "*The Office*" [9] which has taken much critical acclaim of late is hardly a 'joke' – more a reflection of modern life in an office in the UK. Some find it "*too painful to watch*" (Guardian, 24/9/02 – TV review) – but others laugh at the 'shock' or surprise of seeing something they know so well being openly questioned or parodied.

In terms of surprise, we can consider the 'set up' and 'punch-line' element of humour. Thus we can readily determine that the audience will not laugh as much if they already know the jokes, therefore the sketch has a limited lifespan. Leaving jokes aside, some people love to see the same comedy sketch many times. However, even with the best of any other genre of humour, it is difficult to imagine a subject enjoying a sketch over and over again without some respite.

Being tickled can be very surprising. Consider also one's inability to tickle oneself – why is it that we are unable to do this to ourselves when we can be so susceptible to it from others? This is a surprise on a physical level – even if we know someone may be about to do this to us, the effect is still the same.

We could draw a basic conclusion here that human beings react to surprise differently than they react to an expected change. This is little more than common sense, but further, as part of the premise of this paper, it is suggested that the amount of surprise is key to whether or not the subject will find it an enjoyable experience.

Perception

Perception of music, as with most things, is an inherently personal experience. Even the same material can result in very different responses from different subjects. To study this in detail would require a separate study in itself. Buck [1] had a personal experiment he carried out on classes of school children. "If you play the chord "D, F, B flat": to all the stimulus is identical, all record the same sensations, the percepts are the same, though varying in clearness of definition – all hear three notes – but their concepts vary enormously. Here are the usual responses he obtained:

- It's a major chord [fairly often]
- It's a first inversion [now and then]
- It's a common chord [occasionally]
- The top note is B flat [rarely]
- It's not in tune [perhaps their ears were sharper than mine]
- It's the first chord of "God save the King" [Quite Frequently]

Clearly, even with simple stimulus, the perception can vary widely.

Learned Perception

It is also clear that what someone might find shocking or surprising is dependent on what his or her expectations are. Thus someone's personal experiences in the past will greatly affect their perceptions in the future.

Buck [1] had a good analogy for this *"Your thoughts on Marriage, Divorce, Abortion, Education may not be advanced by today's standards, but maybe would have shocked your great grandparents"*

In much of the research I conducted, the composer Wagner was widely quoted as being controversial for producing musical work radically different to that of his peers. Beethoven too, caused something of a stir with his 9th Symphony and a large choral section – **with lyrics** – unused by his peers, yet Mahler and others embraced this in subsequent compositions.

The Breadth of Experience

A subject's perception of a piece of music, a culinary dish or even another person may depend greatly on their previous experience.

This seems to be readily understood – when a fan of Indian food introduces someone to curry for the first time, they will usually choose a mild dish rather than the spiciest on the menu. If a fan of heavy metal music wants to introduce someone to their genre, they will probably pick one of the more mellow and melodic tracks as a sampler. Finally, when people of differing cultures travel, they are usually wisest to try to blend and adapt rather than simply to force their ideals on their hosts.

The most favourable response in the cases above seems to be when the level of unfamiliarity – or **unpredictability** – is increased slowly from any given start point. Several small changes in predictability, with time to assimilate each, can seem like an interesting learning experience. One large change can be simply too overwhelming for the subject to consider or appreciate.

It is often the case that people can broaden their experience from simple beginnings – but some are critical of this approach. With reference to the "modern" style of presenting some classical pieces, Lebrecht [11] writes, "people who buy Charlotte Church and The Planets do not upgrade to Reneé Flemming and the Berlin Philharmonic". While his observation may be true in many cases, the author can't help but think that there would be more rather than fewer 'conversions' to classical music as a result of these popular performers.

How do people evaluate a piece of music?

The author's survey found that people appreciate music in many different ways. Some will take to a piece immediately, whereas others seem to need more time in 'getting into' the music.

It seems reasonable to conclude that, as not everyone likes a piece music initially, there are four phases.

- First Audition, Forming initial opinion
- Getting to Know, evaluating and finalising the opinion.
- Decline in interest / listening less frequently
- Listen to again much less frequently **OR** never listen to again

The duration of the second and third phases will vary greatly depending on the music and the listener. Clearly, for the music to have a long lasting approach, the second stage of appreciation has to have a lasting appeal. So the level of interest or complexity – or surprise – is an important factor.

As an interesting note, while some of the respondents to the musical appreciation questionnaire rated "Dance Music (Electronic)" as a preferred Genre, none rated an album from this genre as their favourite of all time. Dance music would be regarded by few as a complex or surprising genre.

How do people evaluate one another?

It is my supposition that people evaluate others in a similar way to how they evaluate music. Sometimes, human beings are drawn towards an attractive person. They can be extremely taken by this individual – yet they know very little about them.

The stereotype of the 'bimbo' creates the image of an attractive yet unintelligent person (***please note, in the author's opinion there can be 'bimbos' of both sexes***). We could question the fairness of discrimination against attractive people, making the assumption that it comes from jealousy or that it is simply too unlikely that one could both be very attractive **and** also intelligent. However, it does seem that such people, 'bimbo's', do exist – and, overall, they are not regarded as desirable **long-term** partners by most.

Of course, when someone meets another person, they will initially judge that person on their appearance. Until something is communicated there is no other information available and, it is widely believed, the majority of our first impression is made up this way.

Thus we have the first audition.

This can be the part where, to return to the musical analogy, we are tapping our feet and unable to get the song from our minds. Most people have, I am sure, had feeling of this nature for a person at some stage in their lives.

Then there is the 'Getting to Know' stage. This can be where the 'bimbo' may fall from favour. As we said earlier, human beings tire of the repeated stimuli. If there is no additional information from the initial audition, we tend to become disinterested and rapidly move through the third and into the fourth phase.

The Differences in Music and People

Of course, the musical relationship is one-way. The CD, or other medium, never changes and is therefore stable and fixed.

However, the level of complexity – how interesting a person or piece of music is – will produce a strong bearing on the duration of the phases after the initial audition. It is even possible that someone may “hover” between the second and third phases, discovering something new when they thought they knew it all.

What makes music interesting?

Clearly, there is a large degree of subjectivity here. One often hears of classical music aficionados lambasting “modern” interpretations or performances. Sir Thomas Allen, a leading British Baritone was recently quoted [10] as saying “I’m sick and tired of hearing those performers who talk of their life’s work to bring the classics to the wider public” and “I don’t want to see Georgian Babes, and the idea of a wet t-shirted quartet where once there was Amadeus, has me reaching for the sea sickness pills”. This was regarded in the article [10] as an attack on performers such as Charlotte Church, Bond and the Mediaeval Baebes.

Norman Lebrecht recently wrote [11] of a “*Classical Charade*” where the Classical Brit Awards were showcasing some of these modern classical performers. In his view “No immediate harm is done by such misrepresentations. Like junk food, the stuff that is served up at the Classical Brits is cleverly processed to look, sound and smell like the real thing. All it lacks is the nutritional benefit and aesthetic gratification.”

Damning stuff indeed.

Across the board it seems that within any genre you will find those who approve and those who do not – simply looking at the review sections in any newspaper will confirm this. However, there do seem to be some pieces of music that stand the test of time better than others.

Booth [8] defines a tune as “something with a degree of predictability” and also broadly states that the degree of unpredictability is what makes it interesting. This is the area we will focus on in this paper.

Predictability and ‘complexity’ could be related, but it is important to establish what is meant by complexity in the context of this work.

Clearly, some musicians choose to try and make their work as complicated as possible – though this rarely meets with critical acclaim if done for its own sake. Also, one could listen to completely random (unpredictable) sounds and find no musical pleasure.

Complexity, for us, therefore is a function defined within certain predictable terms. Booth [8] covers this extremely well and the reader can find much more information there.

It is the author’s assertion that the complexity of a piece of music may not be immediately obvious – and that the listener’s belief that they are fully aware of the content of the music may be somewhat misplaced.

I would invite the reader to consider the differences between a singer reaching a note and someone playing the same note on a piano. Also consider the differences between someone playing a chord on an acoustic guitar, against that same chord being reproduced by a computer.

In each case, there will be a difference in the accuracy of the reproduction – the vocalist will be unlikely to be able to reproduce the note in **exactly** the same way twice – the piano will be more accurate save for some possible change in level. The second case is much clearer – every time someone plays a chord on a guitar there are many variables: How fast the strings are played, how uniform the speed across all the strings, where on the instrument the strumming occurs. The computer synthesiser has the capability of being identical each time.

The assertion therefore is that even when the music may be a simple acoustic piece with a couple of instruments and/or a vocalist, the differences in the playing of each chord and note may give the music greater complexity than might otherwise be assumed.

Today's Music

[5] *"Bass in modern music makes it less intrusive and less directional than orchestra where all is distinct. Like looking over a landscape rather than at detailed small art"*

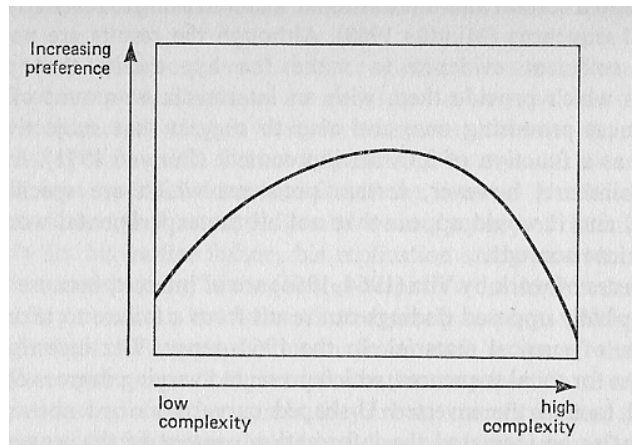
Music video plays a large part in today's music – and while some may see this as a distraction from the main art form, others argue that this is simply visual art to compliment the other – we could draw a new conclusion. Witney [6] comments on how visual and musical art can be complementary, but also makes the observation that this is relevant in today's pop videos and in "sound presentation".

Almost all popular music today is released with an accompanying video, though it is a minority of the music's total audience who actually experience the music alongside it. It could be interesting to contemplate if the video is an enhancement of the musical performance or a separate art form in itself. The decision on which is the correct answer is left to the reader here, however, one thing does seem clear – the use of the pop video can significantly increase the song's initial appeal.

We could assess that the pictures give the visual part of the brain something familiar while the auditory part processes the new information of the unfamiliar tune.

Complexity and Preference

It is reasonable to conclude that there is an optimal level of complexity or predictability for any particular subject. Booth [8] offered that graph below by illustration:



Booth [8] summarises some of his findings to say “with repeated exposure to the same piece of music, a person is likely to experience a subjective reduction in the complexity of that piece”. Further he states that the relative appreciation of the music with each subsequent audition will depend on whether the listener is moving towards or away from the “optimum” level of complexity.

We could summarise this into current parlance as the ‘getting into’ and ‘decline in interest’ phases.

The Level of Complexity

We could take two disparate types of “music”. A scale in C-major and Free Jazz. These examples are used as they form the most predictable and least predictable types of commonly heard music.

Many people find the free jazz discomforting and most find the scale to be boring. Again, the analogy with people’s evaluation of others holds true. People who are totally predictable are found to be boring, while people who are totally unpredictable are usually regarded as strange and unpleasant.

Let us suppose I were to repeat the word “la” over and over again. After a while it becomes tedious – you know exactly what is coming next. However, if I were to jump up and down and run away from and rapidly towards someone while talking, my audience would likely find that a little too much stimulus.

Kylie Minogue’s Song – “Can’t get you out of my head” was nominated for many awards, called “a work of genius” by U2’s Bono, spent many weeks at number one in the UK charts and was extremely successful around the world. The main chorus is “La la la, La la la lala”. Simple. Repetitive but catchy. We know exactly what is coming next, but we love it. How does this fit in with the need for surprise?

Curiously enough, the part we all sing along with is the repetitive part that we would dismiss out of hand if that’s all there was to it.

So why does Kylie’s song, have such appeal and an apparent degree of longevity?

My assertion is that this comes from our arrogance that we know everything. We think we know the song when in reality we **almost** know it. The chorus singing backs this up – we have the urge to “show off” and sing the part we know... music magazines publish the lyrics so we can all sing along... but we only learn the easy part.

The Presumption of Knowledge

Human beings always seem to presume they know what will happen. They often do this against all evidence to the contrary. In Western society, few consider death as a reality and avoid discussing it – but this is the one thing that has thus far failed to elude anyone.

People will indulge in dangerous sports or other activities because they **know** they can beat the odds. People make assumptions about people on first sight based on previous experiences – they like to think they **know** how that type of person might behave.

However, our arrogance is backed up by the fact that most of the time, we **are** right – or at least we convince ourselves that we are. Our lives tend to stay more or less as we expect and if they don't we often take steps to ensure that status quo is maintained. In this, it is clear that human beings in general need a stable basis or platform on which to exist – but are also constantly trying to push those boundaries.

As stated – if conditions do not change, then human beings become quickly disinterested and go in search of stimulus.

In musical terms, this can present an ironic requirement for a positive response: we have to think we know what is coming next to feel comfortable listening, but not quite know in order to find it interesting.

In personal terms, we could make the analogy that we have to believe that our friends have essentially the same values as we do to feel comfortable with them. However, we must also have sufficient differences in order to find them interesting.

Factors that may affect the first, and later impressions.

Hook Lines, First Impressions

Hook lines provide the listener with instant, positive familiarity. They can make the listener feel as though they know the song immediately and this usually creates a positive impression. They usually form a repetitive part of the song and are regarded as the “catchy” part of the piece. Songwriters often try to use hook lines to make their songs acceptable to agents, but it is unlikely that it is the hook line that gives the song longevity.

If the “hook line” is found to be attractive to the listener, then this could be said to be analogous to the way a person presents himself or herself – perhaps the way in which they dress, or the way in which they speak, even the first few things they say.

At University entrance interviews, many students will wear a suit, despite the fact that they are unlikely to do so at any other time in the course of their studies. This is clearly to give a good – or at least neutral impression – and therefore encourage a positive response to the other aspects of their presentation.

Quality of Musical Reproduction

It is conceivable to draw an analogy to musical reproduction with the first impression also. A well-reproduced piece could be said to be “well dressed”.

It is true that something that has impact from an impressive bass response or clarity from a well-defined mid-high frequency section will usually be well received, and therefore give a better positive initial impression. However, there is another aspect we should consider – with longer term effects.

If the listener first hears the piece on a relatively ‘low fidelity’ sound system, then a subsequent audition on a higher fidelity system will result in an increase in the amount of information available. This increase in information would be unexpected (at least specifically) and could lead to prolonged enjoyment of the piece.

There is no clear analogy here with response to other people. However, not learning everything about others when the information is actually available may be more relevant to the environment.

Listening environment

The immediate environment will reflect how much attention the listener is able to give to a piece of music. The greater the level of attention, the quicker an assessment can be made – and more detail can be evaluated. Changing the environment might give cause for someone to hear something they had previously missed, again with the potential of prolonging the interest in the piece – or person.

Once Learned – The Passion and Conviction of the Converted

People seem to want to share music and have it appreciated in the same way that they do: Rastafarians who play their music to the neighbourhood, DJs in clubs, classical critics who say “this is not the genuine article” about the latest popular rendition of their favourite composer.

Conversion – Once the person is converted, they have got past the “too unfamiliar/too unpredictable” stage they are often the best advocate for that product. See: religion, ex-smokers, curry fanatics, heavy metal fans, classical music fans etc. Each wants to explain how you will enjoy your new experience so much and how they understand that you might not like it at first because neither did they. Again we have the human assumption that they know exactly how the other person will respond.

Maintaining Interest

The music industry currently uses various ways of maintaining our interest in a piece of music. Here are some examples:

- Remixes, where the original piece is modified in some way
- Recordings of live performances, the same song as previously released on a “studio” album, but now performed live with a different sound to the recording and possibly slightly different performance.
- Cover versions – An artist may cover a song that was previously released by another artist.
- Compilations – A collection of the “Greatest Hits” of a band

All of these have a common theme; they are presenting something with which the audience are already familiar, yet with a subtle (or sometimes not so subtle) modification. This applies mostly to the first three items. Also: [8] “After a period of intense exposure to a tune, as a result of which its complexity has fallen to a non-preferred level, a period of rest during which the tune not being heard will cause it to return to a higher level when we next hear it.

Thus, the compilation can also revive interest in music, simply by re-introducing it alongside material it was not previously placed with.

Maintaining Interest – The Interpersonal Analogy

Clearly if I were able to offer a unified theory here, I would put many lifestyle magazines out of business. However, in a long term personal or even business relationship it does seem important to keep “re-inventing” the same presentation in order to maintain interest. Most relationship counsellors advise a holiday or a change of scene when difficulties are faced. What is this if not re-presenting the same information in a slightly different way? The element of change provides stimulus and interest that was previously missing.

Conclusion

The human response to most stimuli is positive ONLY if it has subtle changes over time, or if the memory of that stimuli fades to make it appear as something new.

Our perceptions of musical recordings and performance can be made analogous to our perceptions of other people in daily life.

Building on this assertion, it may be possible to enhance our understanding of why we tire of certain experiences, but seem to have an enduring desire for others.

The answer to finding a piece of music that will have lasting appeal is for it to have sufficient complexity to make it difficult to “learn” everything quickly. Ideally, it may have several “backing” sections behind the main melody and/or rhythm that may only become apparent over time.

For it to be accessible to the listener, it should have a degree of familiarity also. The amount of familiarity may depend upon the patience of the subject.

The answer to forming a lasting relationship with a person or partner is of course far more complicated. However, it seems fair to suggest that the above requirements for music could also be applied.

The human relationship always has the possibility to last longer than that with a piece of music. Unlike the music, people are capable of change.

If someone changes, but only a little, over time, then they will continue to be complex difficult to “learn”. The element of surprise can be retained, and so can the interest...

Further Work

- Statistical Analysis of the questionnaire.
- Based upon the answers from the initial survey, re-writing of the Questionnaire to provide more useful answers to some of the questions.
- Exposure of the revised questionnaire to a wider sample
- Further explorations of the apparent human desire to wish to consistently *almost* know what the answer is. Related to music – and elsewhere

References

- [1] Percy C. Buck – Psychology for musicians (Oxford University Press 1944)
- [2] Paul R. Lehman – Tests and Measurement in Music (Prentice Hall Inc 1968)
- [3] Edward Podolsky – Music for Your Health (Bernard Ackerman 1939)
- [4] Leopold Stokowski – Music for all of us (Simon and Schuster 1943)
- [5] R. Murray (Schafer) – The Tuning of the World
- [6] John Witney – Digital Harmony
- [7] Samarov Stokowski – The Layman's music book (W.W.Norton & Co. 1935)
- [8] John Booth Davies – The Psychology of Music (Hutchinson, London 1978)
- [9] "The Office" Spoof Documentary on life in an office in the UK (BBC 2002)
- [10] Article by Richard Allen, London Evening Standard 9/10/2002
- [11] Article by Norman Lebrecht, London Evening Standard 22/5/2002

Appendix 1 – Preliminary Questionnaire

Notes on Answering

- Please answer by placing a [x] in the appropriate box, or by typing the answer in the space provided.
- On the Music section, please note that Album/recording means a collection of songs, or perhaps a whole composition. It does not refer to individual tracks / movements.
- If your answer to the question is not an available option, please choose the closest answer.
- When you have completed the questionnaire, please re-save the document and email it to: mark@acoustics.demon.co.uk

Many, many thanks!

Mark

Appendix 1 – Preliminary Questionnaire Part 1/2

Questionnaire – Music research – Preferences

About you

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age: ☐ 0-18 ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-34 ☐ 35-45 ☐ 45-55 ☐ 55+

What personality best describes you? (Tick ONE)

☐ Shy ☐ Happy/Optimistic ☐ Thoughtful
☐ Life of the Party ☐ Unhappy/Pessimistic

Place each of the following in order of importance. Give the most important category [1] and the least important category [6].

☐ Academic Achievement ☐ Family ☐ Career
☐ Being happy with your circumstances ☐ Relaxation ☐ Financial Security

Your Relationships

Status: ☐ Single / No relationship at present
 ☐ Married/Relationship

Time in this relationship: ____ years ____ months

How many relationships have you had in the last three years? _____

In your opinion, you can be in love with someone after:

☐ One Date ☐ Between Two-Ten Dates ☐ More than Ten Dates

Your Food Preferences

Rate all of the following cuisine:

[1] = Preferred [2] = Acceptable [3] = Unacceptable [4] = Never Tried

☐ Italian ☐ French ☐ Chinese ☐ Indian
☐ Mexican ☐ Traditional English ☐ Sushi ☐ Thai

Other _____

Favourite type of cuisine: _____ or ☐ Other

The Company You Keep

How do you feel in company? ☐ Very Happy ☐ Happy ☐ Indifferent ☐ Unhappy

How do you feel when Alone? ☐ Very Happy ☐ Happy ☐ Indifferent ☐ Unhappy

If space is not a problem, what would be the ideal number of people for a party?

☐ 0-10 ☐ 11-30 ☐ 31-60 ☐ 61-100 ☐ 100+

How many of the people you know would you class as close friends?

☐ 0-3 ☐ 4-7 ☐ 8-11 ☐ 12-16 ☐ 17+

Appendix 1 – Preliminary Questionnaire Part 2/2

Music

Where do you most listen to music? (tick ONE)

- ☐ Car ☐ Home ☐ Live Venue ☐ Night Club
☐ Personal Stereo ☐ Work

Do you mostly listen to music – (tick ONE)

- ☐ Alone ☐ With a few people ☐ With many people

Most of the time, what medium would you prefer to use to listen to music? (tick ONE)

- ☐ Radio ☐ MTV/VH1 etc. ☐ CD/LP/Cassette or other audio playback medium
☐ DVD/Video ☐ Live Performance

Most of the time, what medium do you actually use to listen to music? (tick ONE)

- ☐ Radio ☐ MTV/VH1 etc. ☐ CD/LP/Cassette or other audio playback medium
☐ DVD/Video ☐ Live Performance

Rate your general preference for all of the following types of music – Rate each category 1-4.
It is appreciated that the categories given are broad and encompass many sub-categories.
Please consider your overall view of the category in general.

[1] = Preferred

[2] = Acceptable

[3] = Acceptable in moderation

[4] = Unacceptable

- ☐ Rock ☐ Pop ☐ Dance (electronic) ☐ Classical
☐ Heavy Metal ☐ Latin ☐ Rap ☐ Soul ☐ Jazz
☐ Opera ☐ Reggae ☐ Country ☐ Blues ☐ Folk

• **Favourite Album/recording of all time:**

_____ by _____ Genre _____

What was your initial impression when you first heard this recording? (Tick ONE)

- Work of Genius ☐ Really Good ☐ OK/Quite Good ☐ Didn't like ☐

When did you first hear this recording: _____

When did you last listen to this recording: _____

• **At present, what is your favourite Album/recording?**

_____ by _____ Genre _____

What was your initial impression when you first heard this recording? (Tick ONE)

- Work of Genius ☐ Really Good ☐ OK/Quite Good ☐ Didn't like ☐

When did you first hear this recording: _____

When did you last listen to this recording: _____

Do you think this album/recording will have lasting appeal for you? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Previous Favourite albums (add as many or few as desired, ideally at least two)

Name	Artist	Type/ Genre	First heard	Last listened	Initial Impression

