Language and Music as Cognitive Systems

By Patrick Rebuschat, Martin Rohmeier, John A. Hawkins, Ian Cross

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The past 15 years have witnessed an increasing interest in the comparative study of language and music as cognitive systems. Language and music are uniquely human traits, so it is not surprising that this interest spans practically all branches of cognitive science, including psychology, computer science, linguistics, cognitive neuroscience, and education. Underlying the study of language and music is the assumption that the comparison of these two domains can shed light on the structural and functional properties of each, while also serving as a test case for theories of how the mind and, ultimately, the brain work.

This book presents an interdisciplinary study of language and music, bringing together a team of leading specialists across these fields. The volume is structured around four core areas in which the study of music and language has been particularly fruitful: (i) structural comparisons, (ii) evolution, (iii) learning and processing, and (iv) neuroscience. As such it provides a snapshot of the different research strands that have focused on language and music, identifying current trends and methodologies that have been (or could be) applied to the study of both domains, and outlining future research directions. This volume is valuable in promoting the investigation of language and music by fostering interdisciplinary discussion and collaboration.

With an ever increasing interest in both music cognition and language, this book will be valuable for students and researchers of psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, and musicology.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Patrick Rebuschat is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics at Georgetown University. He obtained a PhD in English & Applied Linguistics from the University of Cambridge in 2008. His research focuses on the cognitive aspects underlying second language acquisition and processing. He is the editor of a forthcoming volume on Statistical Learning and Language Acquisition (with John Williams, de Gruyter).

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