

# Blame it on your brain if you are tone deaf

**ANDREW READ**

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If you got flung out of the school choir, or you just don't get excited about music, don't blame your ears or your voice. It's your brain.

Neuroscientists can now explain a range of musical disabilities – and have discovered that professional musicians stave off at least some of the ravages of age.

Bad singers are usually tone deaf. But this has nothing to do with their ears – it is the way their brains make sense of sound, said Prof Timothy Griffiths, from Newcastle University.

There is no single music centre in the brain. Instead,

different elements of music are processed in different ways, he said at the Festival of Science yesterday. For instance, the pitch of a note depends on whether it's a C or a C sharp and how high the note is. These two components are processed in different places in the brain and patterns of pitch (melodies) in a third location.

“This means that in a normal brain, the analysis of music is an orchestrated activity of a number of different brain mechanisms,” said Prof Griffiths. The tingling spine that people get listening to Rachmaninov or U2 is due to another part of the brain, he said.

This is a really good example of a story that the subeditors cut so badly it ended up as meaningless/unintelligible. The longer version I filed was of course lucid and informative, as well as entertaining.....