Keeping Time with the Grim Reaper: Soldiers, the Battlefield, and the Music that Motivates Them to Kill or be Killed

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Music is a powerful and influential factor in our lives. Throughout our lives, our most memorable moments are often marked by a particular song. For instance, most of us can probably remember the song that was playing when we had our first kiss; momentous occasions—such as graduations and weddings—have their own marches; moreover, we choose a song for our first dance with our spouse at our wedding reception; and many people even request that a certain song be played in memory of them at their funeral. To be sure, music possesses an emotive quality that engrains it in our lives and connects us to key points throughout. This emotional connection is perhaps a product of evolution itself.

If you were able to travel back in time forty-five thousand years, you might find one of our earliest ancestors playing a musical instrument very similar to the modern flute. In fact, this ancient flute even possessed the same seven note diatonic scale that musicians use today (Byrne 302). It is conceivable that our ability to play music is as old as our ability to communicate through speech, or that it even predates it. It is also conceivable that music was our earliest communication tool and that through vocal harmonizing alongside early rudimentary instruments, sounds eventually formed into crude words that became a communicative language. From here, perhaps, language became the way we communicate cerebrally and music became the way we communicate emotionally.

Music's emotiveness has evolved over the years so that it has come to reach beyond individual experience. To be sure, music is immersed in modern pop culture, but it is also a part of the political landscape. For instance, politicians often use music to relate to their

Written for Dr. Erik Trump's PS 320: Art and Politics
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