



# The Power of Notes: The Psychological Impact of Music on Feelings of Spirituality

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*“Music is an outburst of the soul”- Frederick Delius*

## Introduction


“I was sitting one evening, listening to a Brahms symphony. My eyes were closed and I must have been completely relaxed for I became aware of a feeling of ‘expansion’, I seemed to be beyond the boundaries of my physical self.”

Question: What **intrinsic qualities of music** elicit **feelings of spirituality** in listeners?

- a) **Intrinsic qualities (IV)** - the intensity, valence, and depth of music, fundamental psychological dimensions of music according to Greenberg et al (2016).
- b) **feelings of spirituality (DV)** - measured through questions on connectivity, self-reflection, and transcendence; determined through literature research.

**Objective:** Study how intensity, valence, and depth differences in instrumental music elicit feelings of spirituality in listeners.

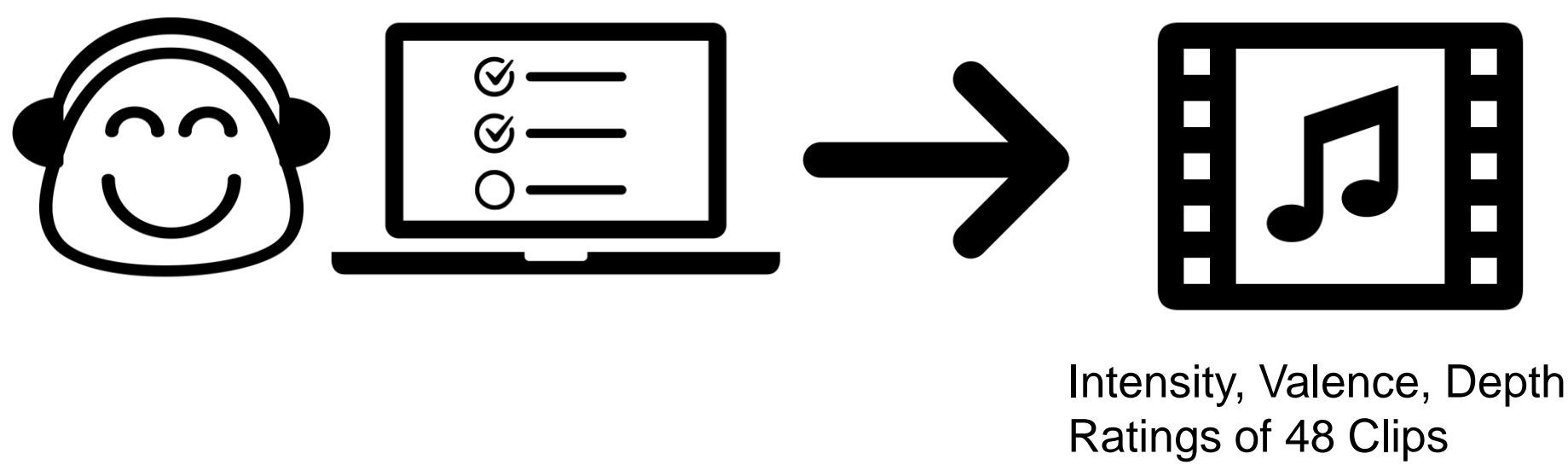
## Materials

 48 clips of instrumental music were selected from Youtube, encompassing many genres and styles

 A Qualtrics form measured spirituality through 14 ratings:

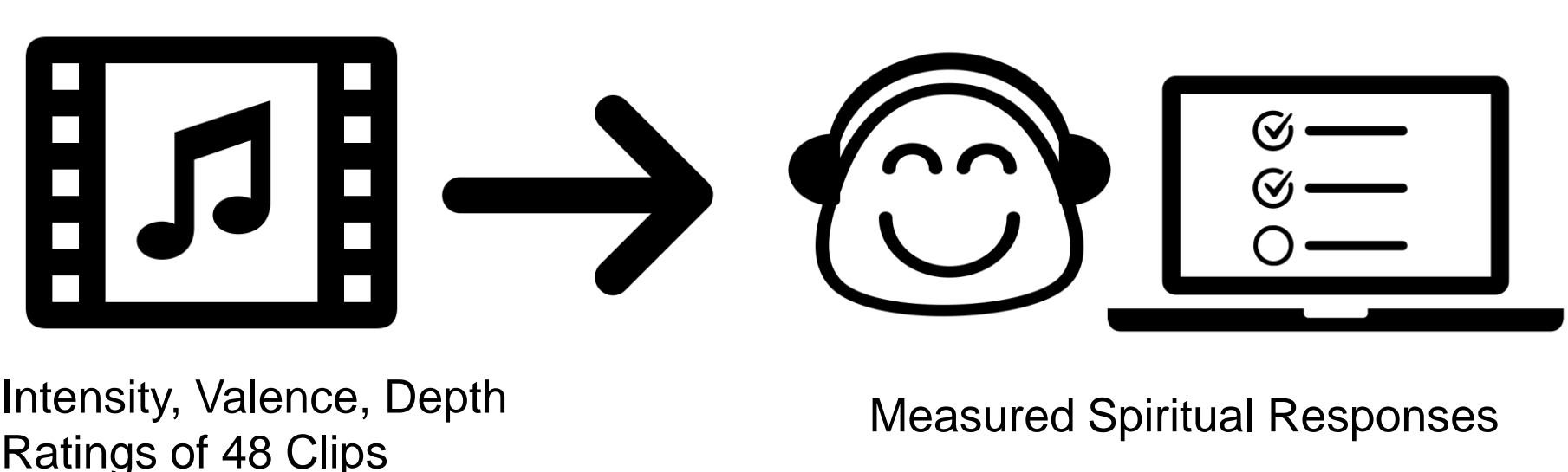
- a deep emotional feeling
- a connection to others
- an inner stillness
- feelings of love for other people
- a connection to a higher power
- a connection to nature
- a feeling of being overwhelmed
- a feeling of being empowered
- detachment from worldly concerns
- feeling you face the same struggles as others
- relaxation
- desire to do good things
- sadness/ wistfulness
- hopefulness

## Pilot Study – Get I, V, D of Clips



- 105 participants listened to a random sample of 16/48 total clips in the lab.
- Each participant rated each clip’s **intensity, valence, and depth** according to 21 psychological attributes used by Greenberg et al.
- The average intensity, valence, and depth scores of each clip was found.

## Main Study – Measure Spirituality

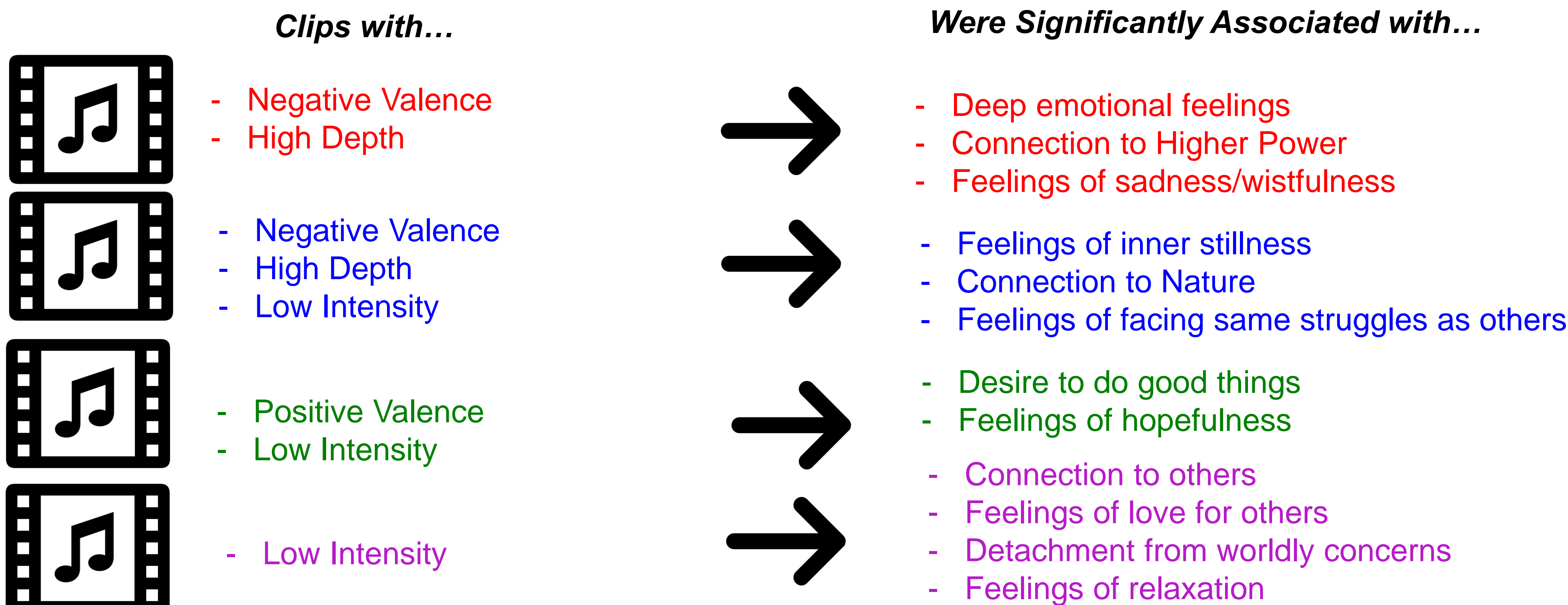


- 102 participants listened to a random sample of 16/48 total clips in the lab.
- Each participant rated how ‘spiritual’ they felt after listening to each clip, according to the list of 14 ratings.
- The average ratings for each clip was found (14 averages for each clip).

## Conclusions

- Spiritual music appear to be associated with:
  - High Depth
  - Low Intensity
  - Both Positive and Negative Valence
- Feelings of connection (to god, nature, and humanity) are associated with different kinds of music.
- Positive valenced music is the only one associated with a pro-social inclination.
- Areas for future research: 1) How personality traits affect spiritual responses (empathy, religiosity) 2) studying spiritual responses using non-instrumental music

## Results



## Acknowledgements

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