

Séminaire interdisciplinaire « Maths et Musique » I du CREA

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(chercheur – USIAS visiting fellow)

*Acoustic and Cultural Explanations for
Musical Harmony and its Associated
Emotions*



A fundamental uncertainty about musical pitch/harmony and its cognition is the extent to which its structure and the emotions it induces are the result of 1) potentially universal acoustic features and 2) cognitive mechanisms related to cultural learning (familiarity and associative conditioning). In this talk, I will detail a series of music cognition experiments with Western-enculturated participants listening to unfamiliar (microtonal) music, and with participants in a remote cloud forest community in Papua New Guinea who have limited exposure to Western music and harmony. The results indicate that cultural aspects play an important role but there is one acoustic element (roughness) with a possibly universal effect.

Dr. Andrew Milne is a Senior Research Fellow in Music Cognition and Computation, and leader of the Music Science Lab at the MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development, Western Sydney University, Australia. His research is at the interface of music, cognitive science, mathematics, computing, and their implications for education and well-being. He is currently USIAS fellow within the SMIR Project.