

Thesis: Music is not morally neutral. Some musical forms—by their very structure—provoke immoral responses and are thus inherently immoral.

EVIDENCE FROM NATURE

- Creation reflects God’s character not only in structure and beauty, but also in **SOUND**.
- Romans 1:20 implies that the audible world reflects invisible truths.
- Natural sound is orderly, rhythmic, and harmonic—testifying to God's attributes.
- God's order is seen and **HEARD** in the created world.

THE STUDY OF MUSIC IN THE QUADRIVIUM

Key Question: Is music a gift embedded in creation to reflect the moral order of God, or is it a purely human construct designed for subjective pleasure without inherent meaning?

- If music is merely a matter of subjective pleasure, why is it so deeply rooted in the mathematical and physical structures of the natural world?
- If music is merely a matter of preference, then no form of music—no matter how disorderly, sensual, or chaotic—can be condemned without violating the rules of relativism.
 - “Relativism is a family of philosophical views which deny claims to absolute objectivity within a particular domain and assert that valuations in that domain are relative to the perspective of an observer or the context in which they are assessed.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relativism>
- If music reveals God's character, then the structure, rhythm, and tone of music are not morally neutral—they are either in harmony with that character or in conflict with it.

Classical thought (in opposition to modern thought) views music as fundamentally based in nature and in the character of God.

MUSIC AS A MATHEMATICAL SCIENCE

- Music was part of the classical Quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy.
- Defined as “number in time,” in contrast to arithmetic (pure number), geometry (number in space), and astronomy (number in motion).
- Emphasis on musical intervals and harmony, not performance.
- Music taught perception of order and proportion—critical for theology.
- Understood as preparation for higher disciplines by training the mind toward structure and truth.

PYTHAGORAS AND THE DISCOVERY OF HARMONIC RATIOS

- Pythagoras discovered simple ratios governing musical harmony:
 - Octave = 2:1
 - Perfect fifth = 3:2
 - Perfect fourth = 4:3
- Sound and math were linked through constant, measurable proportions.
- Proposed **MUSICA UNIVERSALIS**—music of the spheres—celestial motion expressed in harmonious but inaudible sound.
- Music reflects universal order: celestial, natural, and human.

PLATO AND MORAL ORDER IN MUSIC

- Plato argued music was not morally neutral.
- Musical structure influences virtue or vice:
 - Some modes promote rationality and discipline.

- Others foster emotional instability and disorder.
- Advocated musical censorship for societal harmony.
- Music affects the soul by shaping desires and thoughts.

BOETHIUS AND THE THREEFOLD DIVISION OF MUSIC

- In *DE INSTITUTIONE MUSICA*, Boethius categorized music into three types:
 - **Musica mundana** – harmony of the cosmos (inaudible but perfect).
 - **Musica humana** – harmony between body and soul.
 - **Musica instrumentalis** – audible music, used to express and teach higher orders.
- Reinforced that music is a moral and mathematical science, not just an art.

MUSIC AS MORAL AND COSMIC ORDER

- Classical music is a mirror of God’s orderly creation:
 - Pythagoras: mathematical ratios
 - Plato: moral shaping
 - Boethius: hierarchical structure
- Musical training cultivates virtue, not just skill.
- Composers like Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven reflected this:
 - Bach: "Well-Tempered Clavier"—mathematically precise sequences
 - Mozart: balanced phrasing, structured forms
 - Beethoven: rhythmic motifs and harmonic logic

NATURE FAVORS ORDER, PROPORTION, AND RESOLUTION—AND THIS IS TRUE IN SOUND.

- **Animal calls:**
 - Tonal and patterned, not dissonant.
 - Even warnings are rhythmically structured.
- **Environmental sounds:**
 - Wind, waves, and rain follow rhythmic, soothing patterns.
 - Thunder is intense but structured.
- **Plants respond to sound:**
 - Harmonic frequencies promote growth.
 - Dissonant noise inhibits it.
- **Mechanical resonance:**
 - Fans, engines, transformers hum in harmonic tones.
 - Reflect physical laws of sound, not chaos.

WHAT ABOUT THE DISORDERED SOUNDS OF NATURE?

- Some sounds are jarring:
 - Screeches, predator growls, disaster noise.
 - Human-made equivalents (chalkboard, feedback) cause distress.
- These are **alarms**, not music:
 - They signal danger, disorder, or rebellion.
- Scripture links chaotic sound with judgment:
 - Exodus 19:16, Ezekiel 1:24, Revelation 8:5.
- Disordered sound:
 - Is not normative or desirable.
 - Should not be imitated musically.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

- Sound reveals moral and natural order.
- Harmonious sound aligns with God’s creation; disordered sound resists it.
- Sound affects behavior, much like moral disorder does.
- Examples:
 - Lullabies calm infants.
 - Marches regulate movement.
 - Worship is structured, not chaotic.
- Question for all music: Does it align with the natural order of sound found in creation?

TEST CASES: MUSICAL FORMS WITH CONSISTENT IMMORAL USE

WHAT ABOUT RHYTHM?

- Rhythm can subtly distort perception even without lyrics.

BEAT EMPHASIS: THE SUBTLE POWER OF RHYTHM

- Rhythm alone can shape spiritual receptivity.
- Traditional rhythm (beats 1 and 3):
 - Marches, hymns, classical works.
 - Stable and reflective.
- The **Backbeat** (beats 2 and 4):
 - Common in pop, rock, and CCM.
 - Loosens rhythm, encourages sway and dance.
 - Engages body, not mind or spirit.
 - Designed for unconscious movement.

JAZZ, SWING, AND OTHER FORMS

- Built on **syncopation**, **improvisation**, and **body-driven expression**.
- Not inherently immoral, but deserve scrutiny:
 - Do they promote virtue and beauty?
 - Or sensuality and lack of restraint?
- Test is effect, not cultural origin.

MUSICAL GENRE

- Immoral use isn't just by accident—it can be structural.
- Like chemicals, if the **FORM** consistently produces corruption, it's the form that's faulty.

RAVE / TRANCE / EDM (ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC)

- Based on rhythm, not melody or lyrics.
- **Structural Traits:**
 - 120–150+ BPM
 - Repetitive loops
 - Sub-bass and high-frequency effects
 - Minimal harmonic movement
- **Environments:**
 - Clubs, raves, drugs, sensory overload
- **Effect:**
 - Designed for **trance**, not thought.
 - Detaches listener from reality.

- Language becomes irrelevant.
- Bypasses rational control.

DEATH METAL / BLACK METAL

- Built on hostility, chaos, and rejection of order.
- **Traits:**
 - Dissonant, distorted guitars
 - Irregular meter
 - Growling, screaming vocals
 - No tonal center
- **Themes:**
 - Rage, death, nihilism, blasphemy
- Even without lyrics, sound is aggressive and disturbing.
- Simulates rebellion and wrath through structure.

PORNOGRAPHIC SOUNDTRACKS

- Engineered to provoke lust.
- **Traits:**
 - Repetitive grooves
 - Mid-tempo rhythms
 - Bass-heavy, mimic arousal cycles
 - No melody or variation
- **Effect:**
 - Stimulates body, not mind.
 - Disconnects music from virtue.
 - Not morally neutral—built for seduction.

THE KEY QUESTION

- Ask of any musical form: Has it ever—without lyrics—been used to promote:
 - Virtue?
 - Reverence?
 - Moral clarity?
- If not, the **form itself** may be the problem—not the content or performer.