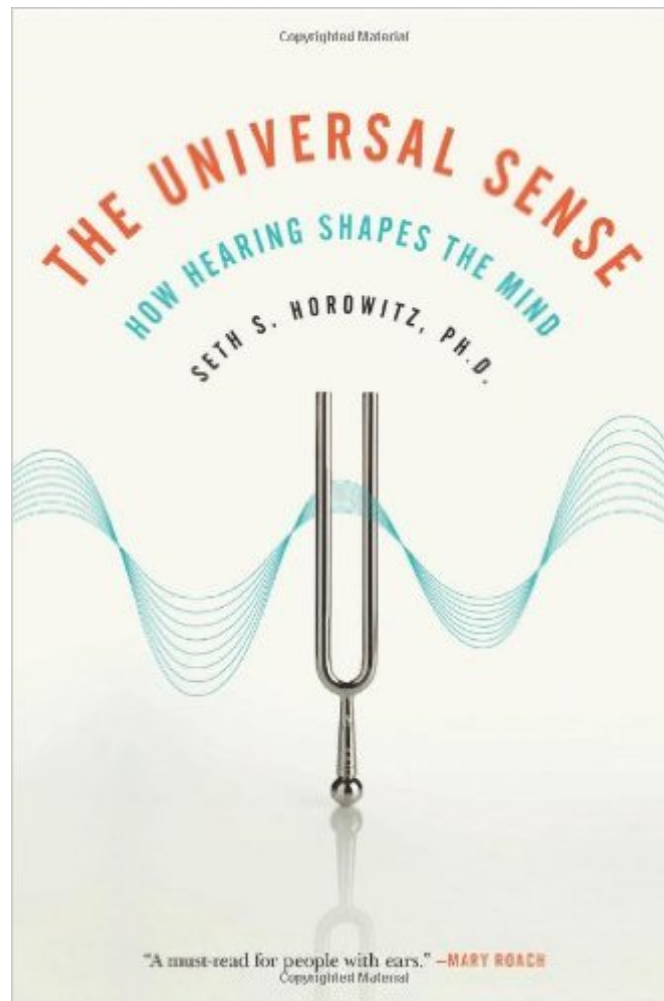


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# The Universal Sense: How Hearing Shapes The Mind



## Synopsis

The surprising truth about how the things our ears hear affect what's between them. Every day, we are surrounded by millions of sounds - ambient ones like the rumble of the train and the hum of air conditioner, as well as more attention-grabbing sounds, such as human speech, music, and sirens. But how do we process what we hear every day? And how does it affect our brains and our minds? This book answers such revealing questions as: How do bats see in 3D with their ears and how did that lead to the development of medical ultrasound? What is it about the sound of fingernails on a chalkboard that makes us cringe? Why do city folks have trouble sleeping in the country, and vice versa? Why can't you get that song out of your head? Starting with the basics of auditory biology, neuroscientist and musician Seth Horowitz explains how sound affects us, and in turn, how we've learned to manipulate sound: into music, commercial jingles, car horns, and modern inventions like cochlear implants, ultrasound scans, and the mosquito ringtone. Whether you're standing in a crowded subway or a quiet meadow, you'll never hear the same way after reading this book. The Universal Sense gives new insight into what the sounds of our world have to do with the way we think, feel, and interact.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sound is all around us. Its meanings and contradictions shape our emotional responses. We have a hamburger franchise named after sound (Sonic) and we can supersize sound (Supersonic).

Professor Seth S. Horowitz (aka Dr. Evil - a nickname he earned when he mounted a laser pack on

the back of a brown bat) tries to explain the mysteries of sound in his neat first book, *The Universal Sense*. He begins with questions about the mysteries of sound, like "What is it about fingernails on chalkboard that makes us cringe?" Everyone who reads this book will likely add their own gnawing sound mystery. Mine is this: why is the sound coming from my iPad stronger when the device is fully cloaked in its iHome leather (more likely faux leather) bound casing, than when the device is taken out of its encasement and free to blare to the rooftops? A sound mystery. Sound is technical as well as emotional, and we live in a world fascinated by big sexy words having to do with sound. The author uses one of these terms early, "amplitude modulation", our daily media is chock full of others, some of which have surfaced with the release of the new iPhone 5. Newspapers were running stories about "Circuit Switchback" the process by which consumers using 4G LTE networks will be switched back to 3G when they use applications involving voice and data, because 4G LTE can't yet handle simultaneous voice and data transmissions, but 3G can. But if Professor Horowitz's book was just about fancy sound terms, it would probably be dull and listless: This is your brain listening to Metallica; this is your brain listening to the sea. Instead the author begins the other way - with sound itself. He brings a sound to our ears and describes how we are changed by it.

*The Universal Sense: How Hearing Shapes the Mind* by Seth S. Horowitz is a fascinating book that explains how sounds shape our minds. Horowitz is a musician and neuroscientist. He is a professor at Brown University and is also the chief scientist and CEO of NeuroPop: a company that is finding ways to use sound to help reduce stress and promote sleep. Sounds bring out emotions and these emotions can be different between individuals. One sound that makes one person happy could bring out anger in another person. The emotions that are brought out by sounds are the biggest influence on how sounds shape our minds. Horowitz does a great job explaining how we hear sounds and how our minds are influenced by sounds. The main ideas of *The Universal Sense* are how we hear sounds, how our brains process sounds, and how those sounds shape our minds. Sounds are vibrations and waves that are constantly entering our ears. These waves move inner structures of the ear in many different ways depending on the frequency and amplitude of the sound wave. When these structures move, they move hair cells in the ear, which send neuronal signals to the brain. Sounds over time activate and can create different neuronal pathways that are different between individuals. The more that pathway is activated the easier it becomes to activate that pathway. Our minds have been shaped to recognize what sounds are "normal" or "abnormal" for different environments. While you are reading this review, someone may be coughing or tapping their foot. Your brain may be processing this sound as an annoyance, and in

your mind you are getting more irritated because you cannot concentrate. On the other hand you may not even notice the noise and can read on just fine. Sounds provoke different emotions among individuals.

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