
Subject: The Perfect Pitch saga continues...

Posted by [Kim](#) on Wed, 14 Jun 2006 11:10:41 GMT

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Well, I'm slugging away on this little app, doing maybe an hour a day spread out, hearing notes, guessing notes, pressing notes... getting about 95% correct most of the time, though I'm still not using the full chromatic scale, which brings me down to about 85%. I'm using C major, or the last couple of days D major. And also using Eb minor pentatonic (ie all the black notes). All in all though, I get these patches where it just falls into place for a bit and I get like 50 notes correct in a row, just flying through them. Over the last week I've really tried to speed up my response time and just go with my gut feeling, and I'm finding it's working more and more. The instant response brought my score down a lot when I started, but it's back up again, and I'm quite happy with my progress.

Of course, there's plenty of relative pitch in my 95% figures contributing to them, and sometimes the program plays the same note twice or even more in a row, or an octave, or a semitone, or some other simple interval, so on sheer "instant response pitch guessing without relative or other assistance" my score wouldn't be that high, but at the same time I'm confident I'm getting the hang of it. Often my relative pitch is thrown and I don't know what it is, yet my gut feel gets it right mostly.

I've been reading all over the net for clues as to what to look for, and whether indeed it is possible to develop it. There's certainly a lot of controversy around the topic. Many claim it can't be learned, that you must be born with it, some of whom have tried out one course or another, but flying in the face of this are a few examples of people who claim to have developed it late in life, or know people who have. I'm finding little evidence of people who developed it from any course however, so I'm just battling through with lots of testing myself, and using my own methods to try and train my ear, based on what I'm hearing is the experience of those who have the ability, and I think I'm starting to hear something.

I've had a few good experiences over the past couple of days which have given me hope. The first was that somehow Abba's Waterloo got stuck in my head (no, that didn't give me hope) and upon slowing it down in my head an listening to the notes I guessed the two notes of "Waterloo" were B and A. Followed the rest of the melody "Couldn't escape if I wanted to" down past G to F# and back to G and went "Yep, that's it. That's definately it". Checked later and sure enough I was dead on.

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There is also a lot of controversy, as mentioned by our AA here, about whether it's a good thing all round to even have perfect pitch at all. My feeling on this is that, as a person who (hopefully) develops the skill at a later stage in life, long after developing my relative pitch skills, long after learning to play, and long after establishing my taste in music, that I'm hoping that I can take all the old stuff I have learned with me also. I'm hoping that, for example, I will be able to transpose a tune my old way. I'm thinking that those born with perfect pitch come to rely on it, whereas I am unlikely to, as I have learned to do without it already. Hence I am picturing that I should be able to use it when appropriate, but basically turn it off when I don't need it, or at least ignore it when something is off key and just listen "how I used to"... though time will tell if I'm right. In any case, I've heard a lot of different stories about such things, and how differently some possessors of perfect pitch respond to out of key parts, transposition, and similar such things. Some have trouble with some things and not others. Some seem to have the best of all worlds and simply use it when they want, and experience little in the way of negatives. I'm hoping, seeing as how I know how to live without it already, that I can be one of those who doesn't experience too many negatives from it...

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I really am starting to feel that want to acquire it just so that I can explain to all the people I've seen post that "It can't be learned" that, in fact, it can. I'd like to sort that one out at least.

The point is though, that notes and keys do sound different to me. Some are more happy, and bright, where others are mellow and soft, and others still are, well, kinda rounded. I'm hearing this, and I'm becoming increasingly confident that my training is increasing my perception of this.

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www.sarah-tonin.com/wayward.htm

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Posted by [Kim](#) on Thu, 15 Jun 2006 00:49:23 GMT

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"Sarah" <sarahjane@sarahtonin.com> wrote:

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Subject: Re: The Perfect Pitch saga continues...
Posted by [Edna Sloan](#) on Fri, 16 Jun 2006 01:08:38 GMT
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Although PP could come in handy, say for identifying a particular key, I see no advantage to it over relative pitch. As far as it having negatives, such as knowing when something is not in tune, the same is also true of relative pitch. This is what bothers me when I hear something out of tune (relatively). I don't have to know the name of the key (which is really arbitrary anyway). To what tolerance is PP? How many cents are we talking about. At what point centwise does something not exactly in tune bother you? I don't think this will change with practice. If it doesn't bother you now, I don't think it would with pitch practice.

I do think what is really important is ear training, especially in jazz where you have all types of subtle voicings and progressions to create a harmony behind a melody or just walls of color. All the voicings have a different "sound" and what you leave out as well as how you move between changes makes a big difference. For me this was the most important part of

learning music since it gets more deeply into the artistic aspects. I do believe one with a decent ear can learn to identify these textures or "sounds." There was a good book on voicings, by Dan Haerle I believe, used at NTSU.

MHO,
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> >> parts, transposition, and similar such things. Some have trouble with
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> >> Cheers,
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Subject: Re: The Perfect Pitch saga continues...
Posted by [Kim](#) on Fri, 16 Jun 2006 03:16:58 GMT
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

The thing is I guess that the program I'm using will be helping my relative pitch also. Indeed Chris Latham argued that that is possibly all it is doing. I mean it just feeds me random notes, and some of the time I clearly use relative pitch to work out which note it is. How much of the time? Who knows? The first note is certainly harder than later notes.

If I can get to pretty much 100% hit rate on the program, and find I still don't have perfect pitch, at least I'll know that my relative pitch is second to none, and at least in that I will have achieved something.

Cheers,
Kim.

"RiverLake Farms" <edna@texomaonline.com> wrote:

>Although PP could come in handy, say for identifying a particular key, I
see
>no advantage to it over relative pitch. As far as it having negatives,
such
>as knowing when something is not in tune, the same is also true of relative
>pitch. This is what bothers me when I hear something out of tune
>(relatively). I don't have to know the name of the key (which is really
>arbitrary anyway). To what tolerance is PP? How many cents are we talking
>about. At what point centswise does something not exactly in tune bother
>you? I don't think this will change with practice. If it doesn't bother
>you now, I don't think it would with pitch practice.

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>I do think what is really important is ear training, especially in jazz
>where you have all types of subtle voicings and progressions to create a
>harmony behind a melody or just walls of color. All the voicings have a
>different "sound" and what you leave out as well as how you move between
>changes makes a big difference. For me this was the most important part
of
>learning music since it gets more deeply into the artistic aspects. I do
>believe one with a decent ear can learn to identify these textures or
>"sounds." There was a good book on voicings, by Dan Haerle I believe, used
>at NTSU.

>MHO,

>Edna

>

>"Kim" <hiddensounds@hotmail.com> wrote in message news:4490ae93\$1@linux...

>>

>>

>> I'm already pretty good with all that, for the most part. I mean if a
song

>> is in a normal major or minor key, for the most part I can, given the
>first

>> chord, fairly much fudge my way through it first bash, assuming I've heard

>> the song enough to be able to remember it. I can usually accurately guess

>> most standard chord changes, and can also deal with most of the typical
>modifications

>> to normal keys used in pop songs... say incorporating chords like G major

>> or D major into a song in E major for example. All that stuff is fairly

>second

>> nature, as I learned originally by ear using the Suzuki method. I was
>working
>> out songs off the radio at age ten, so I've pretty much got that down,
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>> I do need a starting key.
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>> The issue is that I'm bored with it all I guess, and I want more new
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>> I want to do things that I don't know the sound of, that is unusual, and
>> for that I'm going to have to do a lot more ear training. I want to master
>> jazz, and I'd like to be able to just imagine a chord that I want to hear,
>> and play it... and with jazz that means not just major and minor and
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>> relationships to the current chord or key, but often parts that fit in
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>> anyhow. I figure it's worth exploring perfect pitch as an option.
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>> my ear will have improved in both relative pitch and perfect pitch, so
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>> got to be a good thing. If all I achieve is the ability to pick any
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>> >identify intervals and chords by ear is something that has been very
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>> >get my students to the point where I could play and name a chord for
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>> >and then have them identify the chords that followed just by listening.
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>> >Some got there and some didn't, but all made some progress.
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>> >> Well, I'm slugging away on this little app, doing maybe an hour a day
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>> >> spread
>> >> out, hearing notes, guessing notes, pressing notes... getting about
>> >>95%
>> >> correct most of the time, though I'm still not using the full chromatic

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>> >> scale,
>> >> which brings me down to about 85%. I'm using C major, or the last
>couple
>> >> of days D major. And also using Eb minor pentatonic (ie all the black
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>> >> All in all though, I get these patches where it just falls into place
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>> >> with
>> >> it, some of whom have tried out one course or another, but flying in
>the
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>> >> late in life, or know people who have. I'm finding little evidence
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>> >> who developed it from any course however, so I'm just battling through
>> with
>> >> lots of testing myself, and using my own methods to try and train my
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>> >> based on what I'm hearing is the experience of those who have the
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Subject: Re: The Perfect Pitch saga continues...

Will it sounds like you are somewhere between RP and PP, i.e., you have better than RP but not quite PP. As to whether PP can actually be learned, I have heard it both ways. A very great guitarist I know claims he did and that NTSU offers a course in it. He explained it as if different pitches have a "color" that you can learn to hear, just as you recognize different literal colors. In any case, I don't see how practice could hurt.

"Kim" <hiddenounds@hotmail.com> wrote in message news:449222aa\$1@linux...

>

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> The thing is I guess that the program I'm using will be helping my relative

> pitch also. Indeed Chris Latham argued that that is possibly all it is doing.

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> >> >> Kim.
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Subject: Re: The Perfect Pitch saga continues...
Posted by [Kim](#) on Fri, 16 Jun 2006 13:02:55 GMT

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I am beginning to recognise these colors. Colors is an interesting word. I read it somewhere described as having a "chroma". Personally, while I see some truth in all these words, I'd also add that different notes have their own "feel". E feels different to Eb. For a good example, Eb has a darkness to it that neither E nor D share. D is a hard one. It's a kinda neutral note to me, though it does have it's own thing, but the thing is similar to the thing of a number of other different notes. I get it confused with C sometimes because C is so "central" whereas D is quite "neutral". E certainly is a note unto itself, though B shares some of E's qualities, but B is definately darker/more mellow. I've gotten E and B confused a few times I've noticed, especially if I'm not using relative pitch to aid me at the time.

The thing is, while the confidence in my statements about these notes would make it sound like I have a clear grasp, I don't feel that I do quite yet. Well, I kind of do. I'm getting the feeling at the moment that I'm doing ok at recognising the qualities of the notes, but what I need to learn is to actually listen for these qualities. I have experienced a lifetime of listening simply for relative pitch, and in that have learned quite well to ignore the note colors. I'm fighting to break that habit. The habit of listening to the relative pitches and trying to guess from there.

But I can hear it, I'm confident of that. I'm just trying to work out how to make myself more aware of it, and more focussed on it. There are 12 notes, and there are a number of them I don't have a grasp on yet, and some I have far more of a grasp than others. There's only a few I feel I really know.

Cheers,
Kim.

"RiverLake Farms" <edna@texomaonline.com> wrote:

>Will it sounds like you are somewhere between RP and PP, i.e., you have
>better than RP but not quite PP. As to whether PP can actually be learned,
>I have heard it both ways. A very great guitarist I know claims he did
and

>that NTSU offers a course in it. He explained it as if different pitches
>have a "color" that you can learn to hear, just as you recognize different
>literal colors. In any case, I don't see how practice could hurt.

>

>"Kim" <hiddensounds@hotmail.com> wrote in message news:449222aa\$1@linux...

>>

>>

>> The thing is I guess that the program I'm using will be helping my
>relative
>> pitch also. Indeed Chris Latham argued that that is possibly all it is
>doing.

>> I mean it just feeds me random notes, and some of the time I clearly use
>> relative pitch to work out which note it is. How much of the time? Who
>knows?

>> The first note is certainly harder than later notes.

>>

>> If I can get to pretty much 100% hit rate on the program, and find I still
>> don't have perfect pitch, at least I'll know that my relative pitch is
>second

>> to none, and at least in that I will have achieved something.

>>

>> Cheers,

>> Kim.

>>

>> "RiverLake Farms" <edna@texomaonline.com> wrote:

>> >Although PP could come in handy, say for identifying a particular key,
|

>> see

>> >no advantage to it over relative pitch. As far as it having negatives,
>> such

>> >as knowing when something is not in tune, the same is also true of
>relative

>> >pitch. This is what bothers me when I hear something out of tune
>> >(relatively). I don't have to know the name of the key (which is really
>> >arbitrary anyway). To what tolerance is PP? How many cents are we
>talking

>> >about. At what point centswise does something not exactly in tune bother
>> >you? I don't think this will change with practice. If it doesn't bother
>> >you now, I don't think it would with pitch practice.

>> >

>> >I do think what is really important is ear training, especially in jazz
>> >where you have all types of subtle voicings and progressions to create
a

>> >harmony behind a melody or just walls of color. All the voicings have
a

>> >different "sound" and what you leave out as well as how you move between
>> >changes makes a big difference. For me this was the most important
part

>> of
>> >learning music since it gets more deeply into the artistic aspects.
I do
>> >believe one with a decent ear can learn to identify these textures or
>> >"sounds." There was a good book on voicings, by Dan Haerle I believe,
>used
>> >at NTSU.
>> >MHO,
>> >Edna
>> >
>> >"Kim" <hiddensounds@hotmail.com> wrote in message
>news:4490ae93\$1@linux...
>> >>
>> >>
>> >> I'm already pretty good with all that, for the most part. I mean if
a
>> song
>> >> is in a normal major or minor key, for the most part I can, given the
>> >first
>> >> chord, fairly much fudge my way through it first bash, assuming I've
>heard
>> >> the song enough to be able to remember it. I can usually accurately
>guess
>> >> most standard chord changes, and can also deal with most of the typical
>> >modifications
>> >> to normal keys used in pop songs... say incorporating chords like
G
>major
>> >> or D major into a song in E major for example. All that stuff is fairly
>> >second
>> >> nature, as I learned originally by ear using the Suzuki method. I was
>> >working
>> >> out songs off the radio at age ten, so I've pretty much got that down,
>> but
>> >> I do need a starting key.
>> >>
>> >> The issue is that I'm bored with it all I guess, and I want more new
>> >ground
>> >> to explore. Anything I already know the sound of, I know the sound
of.
>> ;o)
>> >> I want to do things that I don't know the sound of, that is unusual,
>and
>> >> for that I'm going to have to do a lot more ear training. I want to
>master
>> >> jazz, and I'd like to be able to just imagine a chord that I want to
>hear,
>> >> and play it... and with jazz that means not just major and minor and

>> the
>> >> odd seventh or sixth, but 9ths, 11ths, 13ths, diminished, augmented,
>and
>> >> every other variation... and not necessarily chords with simple
>obvious
>> >> relationships to the current chord or key, but often parts that fit
in
>> >very
>> >> odd ways. This is all stuff I'm not used to. This is all stuff which
is
>> >hard
>> >> for me with just relative pitch, so I'm going to have to do some
>training
>> >> anyhow. I figure it's worth exploring perfect pitch as an option.
>> >>
>> >> The thing is, I figure, there is evidence that you can train perfect
>> >pitch,
>> >> and if you can, I want it. ;o)
>> >>
>> >> I'm thinking that, while to a degree it would be possible, to train
my
>> >relative
>> >> pitch up to a standard where I can immediately recognise any chord
at
>> all
>> >> from a given known starting point, that it would be the long road.
If
>> >there's
>> >> a chance of circumventing the process by acquiring perfect pitch, then
>> I'm
>> >> willing to do that. The question is how much effort will it take to
get
>> >the
>> >> skills to the point where any sound I hear in my head will be
>immediately
>> >> translated to an actual note.
>> >>
>> >> In any case, the perfect pitch training I'm doing is certainly aiding
>> my
>> >> relative pitch skills also. A lot of the note guessing is done using
>> >relative
>> >> pitch, so I'm kind of killing two birds with one stone. When I'm
>finished,
>> >> my ear will have improved in both relative pitch and perfect pitch,
so
>> >that's
>> >> got to be a good thing. If all I achieve is the ability to pick any
>> >interval,

>> >> first guess, every time, using relative pitch, even intervals of
>several
>> >> octaves, well, that will be a significant improvement, but if I can
>aquire
>> >> perfect pitch, all the better.
>> >>
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>> >> >> face of this are a few examples of people who claim to have
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Subject: Re: The Perfect Pitch saga continues...
Posted by [tonehouse](#) on Mon, 19 Jun 2006 19:08:56 GMT
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Hi folks...You can "learn" relative pitch ..such as a 440 tuning fork tone..if you hear it over and over again...now whether you can discern "339" or "441" is very doubtful...Perfect Pitch would be someone who can name EXACT frequencies...without hearing ANY pitch reference...I am a piano tuner so A - 440 is "Drilled" into my sub-conscious...and I can tune a guitar to 440

no problem...but that is "relative pitch"..Like someone else noted,learning the intervals in Music, is way more important than naming a frequency...unless you are a sound guy ,trying to find feedback from a sound system,or a Mastering Engineer to find offending frequencies by ear..As far as "colors" of notes go..that is a very old concept,dating back to the 1600's,before any "equal temperment" was set as a "standard"...there were many different early "temperments",based on feelings,colors,etc....cheers

"Sarah" <sarahjane@sarahtonin.com> wrote in message news:4490a2c3\$1@linux...

> Kim,

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