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Intentions behind Music

Music has been used as a means to communicate for thousands of years. Many religions and cultures have used it as a way to speak to their Gods, and more popularly, artists and bands have used it as a way to connect to their fans and express their feelings. Through the study of human cognition, we learn that there is a lot to be understood about the implied intentions that occur when we give and receive music. On the surface, music tries to connect to people through language and melodic sounds, but underneath that there are intentions that are implied to both the listener and the maker of music. Take the example of boy writing a song for his girlfriend. Gricean, or communicative intentions are displayed because the boy intends that the girl recognize the fact that he is written a song that is intended to woo and flatter her. There is the implication that this gesture is a sign of affection and his girlfriend must understand this. On a larger scale, a band is trying to relate to their fans so they must understand that their fans want to be understood and desire to listen to their music. This is partially Gricean intention, but even more evident is the presence of joint attention during concerts for bands and artists. Joint attention is shown because, during a concert, every person in the audience is focused on what is being played and they understand that the people around them are there for the same reason. Music is an interesting example of joint and communicative intentions because so many people feel they can relate more to music than they can to other sources of entertainment.