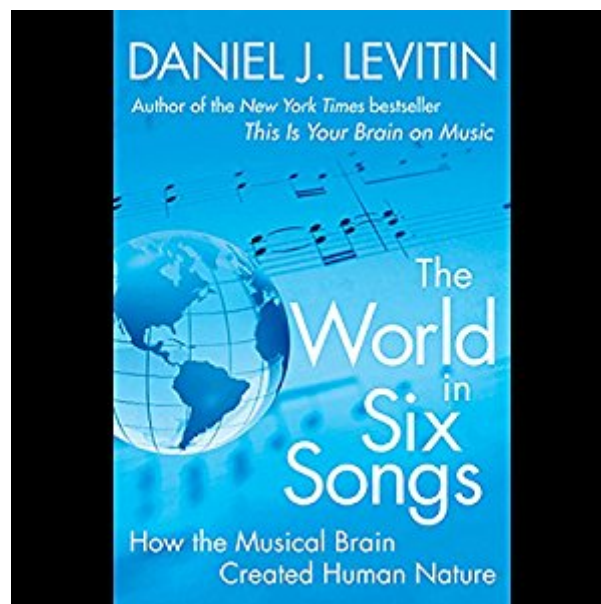


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# The World In Six Songs



## Synopsis

The author of the New York Times bestseller *This Is Your Brain on Music* reveals music's role in the evolution of human culture-and "will leave you awestruck" (The New York Times) Daniel J. Levitin's astounding debut bestseller, *This Is Your Brain on Music*, enthralled and delighted readers as it transformed our understanding of how music gets in our heads and stays there. Now in his second New York Times bestseller, his genius for combining science and art reveals how music shaped humanity across cultures and throughout history. Dr. Levitin identifies six fundamental song functions or types-friendship, joy, comfort, religion, knowledge, and love-then shows how each in its own way has enabled the social bonding necessary for human culture and society to evolve. He shows, in effect, how these "six songs" work in our brains to preserve the emotional history of our lives and species. Dr. Levitin combines cutting-edge scientific research from his music cognition lab at McGill University and work in an array of related fields; his own sometimes hilarious experiences in the music business; and illuminating interviews with musicians such as Sting and David Byrne, as well as conductors, anthropologists, and evolutionary biologists. *The World in Six Songs* is, ultimately, a revolution in our understanding of how human nature evolved-right up to the iPod. Read Daniel Levitin's posts on the Penguin Blog. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Photography > Music > Theory, Composition & Performance > Appreciation

## Customer Reviews

2.0 out of 5 stars Seriously unreadable, July 2, 2010 By Shannon Thornton-Walsh (Dallas, TX USA)

- See all my reviews This review is from: *The World in Six Songs: How the Musical Brain Created*

*Human Nature* (Paperback) I'm giving two stars, because I didn't feel fully justified in giving one star,

seeing as I've only read one quarter of the way through Levitin's book. I ordered it as a free sample from the publisher, who was promoting it as a possible secondary or optional classroom text. I was intrigued. My doctoral research was in ethnomusicology. I started to read soon after I received the book last year but was immediately put off by one of Levitin's opening statements: "Anthropologists, archaeologists, biologists, and psychologists all study human origins, but relatively little attention has been paid to the origins of music." Huh? OK. Probably true and for good reason. Evidence for music in early human culture is overwhelming, but determining the "why" is an enterprise fraught with complexity and ambiguity. But Anthropology has two entire subfields devoted to evolution on the one hand and the study of music in culture, on the other, which seems to me to be two of the best places to start. Levitin acknowledges and draws on the first, mostly not very confidently, and ignores the second. I lent the book to a friend and recently received it back and thought I'd push past my initial resistance. Levitin draws on cross-cultural examples to begin supporting his thesis, but not once in the entire book can I find a single reference to any of the pioneering work done by ethnomusicologists. Perhaps this is because Levitin only sourced the work of anthropologists, not music/culture specialists within that field. Why the obvious elision of the entire field of study?

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