

Just out in PLoSOne, an article on musical cognition entitled "[Expression of Emotion in Eastern and Western Music Mirrors Vocalization](#)" by Daniel Liu Bowling, Janani Sundararajan, Shui'er Han, Dale Purves (all from the [Purves-lab](#) at Duke).

Abstract: In Western music, the major mode is typically used to convey excited, happy, bright or martial emotions, whereas the minor mode typically conveys subdued, sad or dark emotions. Recent studies indicate that the differences between these modes parallel differences between the prosodic and spectral characteristics of voiced speech sounds uttered in corresponding emotional states. Here we ask whether tonality and emotion are similarly linked in an Eastern musical tradition. The results show that the tonal relationships used to express positive/excited and negative/subdued emotions in classical South Indian music are much the same as those used in Western music. Moreover, tonal variations in the prosody of English and Tamil speech uttered in different emotional states are parallel to the tonal trends in music. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that the association between musical tonality and emotion is based on universal vocal characteristics of different affective states.