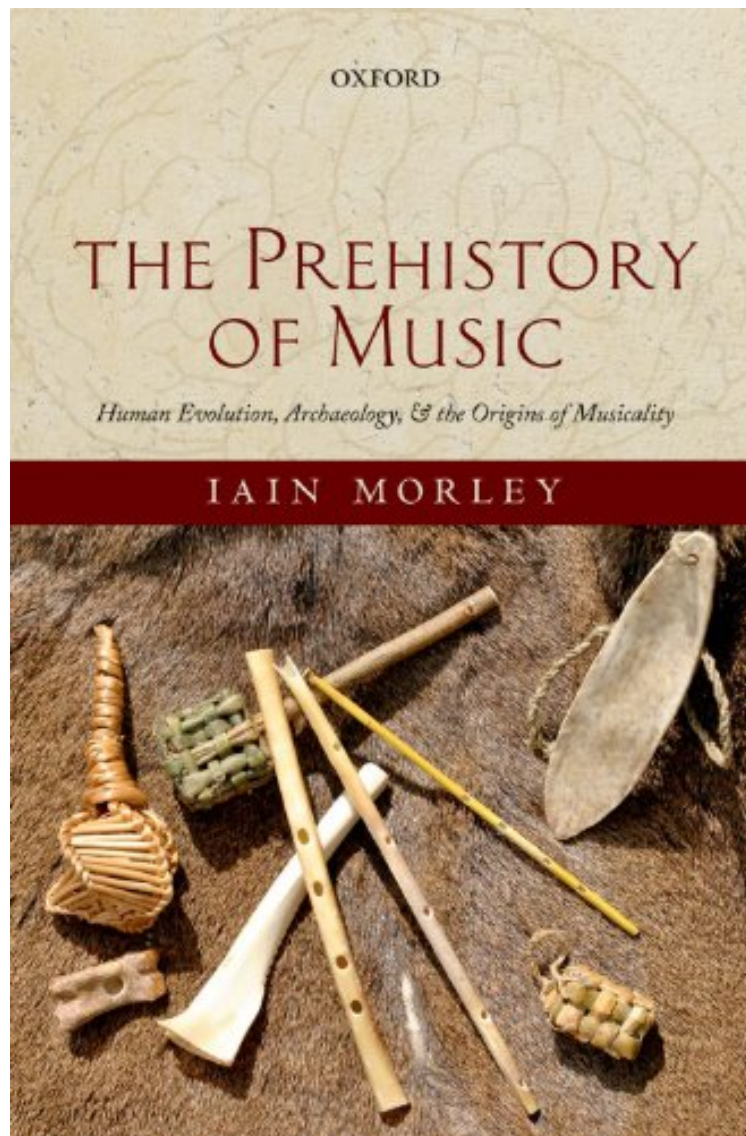


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The Prehistory of Music: Human Evolution, Archaeology, and the Origins of Musicality

Iain Morley

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Iain Morley : The Prehistory of Music: Human Evolution, Archaeology, and the Origins of Musicality before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Prehistory of Music: Human Evolution, Archaeology, and the Origins of Musicality:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Darwin would have welcomed this informative, well-researched, encyclopedic work. By Ellen Dissanayake In his great opus on the descent of man, Charles Darwin pondered the

mystery of music, noting that "neither the enjoyment nor the capacity of producing musical notes are faculties of the least use to man in reference to his daily habits of life." He was probably thinking mostly of Western European music and, in any case, he could not have known in 1871 the multitude and variety of human societies that existed on every continent. Today, anthropologists have not discovered any society that lacks what can be identified as "music" and, indeed, large amounts of time, effort, and resources are devoted to performing and listening to it. Laymen as well as scholars have wondered why music should ever have appeared in our species, and from what origin(s). Both these questions cannot be answered simply: we need scholars like Iain Morley to describe the many capacities and components required for even asking the right questions, much less putting together plausible answers. *The Prehistory of Music* is a trove of the latest information and theory about what needs to be included in any comprehensive and systematic understanding of the phenomenon of music. It is a truly interdisciplinary endeavor that necessarily includes ethnomusicology (a description of musical behavior in different hunter-gatherer groups); archaeology (the earliest physical evidence of musical behavior including a 42 page appendix table with an inventory of proposed Palaeolithic pipes and flutes); anatomy and neurophysiology (of the vocal tract, the ear, and aural perception); the relationships between music and speech production and perception; infant and child development (innate elements of melodic and rhythmic production and perception); the relationship between vocal control and gesture, (including rhythm, movement, and emotion); and musical emotion and communication. Only then, with an understanding of these diverse sources of evidence, can one propose and evaluate the selective benefits of musical behavior as a whole and the implications of the foregoing subjects with regard to understanding musicality and its origin and place in human evolution. Although not light reading, the book is clearly written, comprehensive, and a necessity for anyone who is serious about understanding the phenomenon of music, its deep and complex roots in our biology, and its necessity to human life. Darwin would have welcomed this informative, well-researched, encyclopedic work. One can only hope that Oxford University Press will soon bring out a paperback version so that more readers who are interested in the subject can afford to own the book.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars
By Richard Freedland
good book

Music is possessed by all human cultures, and archaeological evidence for musical activities pre-dates even the earliest-known cave art. Music has been the subject of keen investigation across a great diversity of fields, from neuroscience and psychology to ethnography, archaeology, and its own dedicated field, musicology. Despite the great contributions that these studies have made towards understanding musical behaviours, much remains mysterious about this ubiquitous human phenomenon - not least, its origins. In a ground-breaking study, this volume brings together evidence from these fields, and more, in investigating the evolutionary origins of our musical abilities, the nature of music, and the earliest archaeological evidence for musical activities amongst our ancestors. Seeking to understand the true relationship between our unique musical capabilities and the development of the remarkable social, emotional, and communicative abilities of our species, it will be essential reading for anyone interested in music and human physical and cultural evolution.

an up-to-date and authoritative overview of recent research on evolution and cognition of musicality ... a comprehensive and sophisticated outline of the present state of play by a leading authority ... The text is geared seamlessly to academics, students, and general readership; its accessible style and keen exposition will no doubt garner enthusiasm for the project. * Dr Anton Killin, *Biology Philosophy* * [A] superb book ... very clear and easy to follow and understand. * Sean Gurd, *The Classical Journal* *
About the Author
Dr Iain Morley is Lecturer in Palaeoanthropology and Human Sciences at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of St Hugh's College. He teaches human evolution and the evolution of human cognition. Particular areas of interest include the emergence of ritual and religion, Palaeolithic imagery, and the evolutionary origins and archaeology of music.