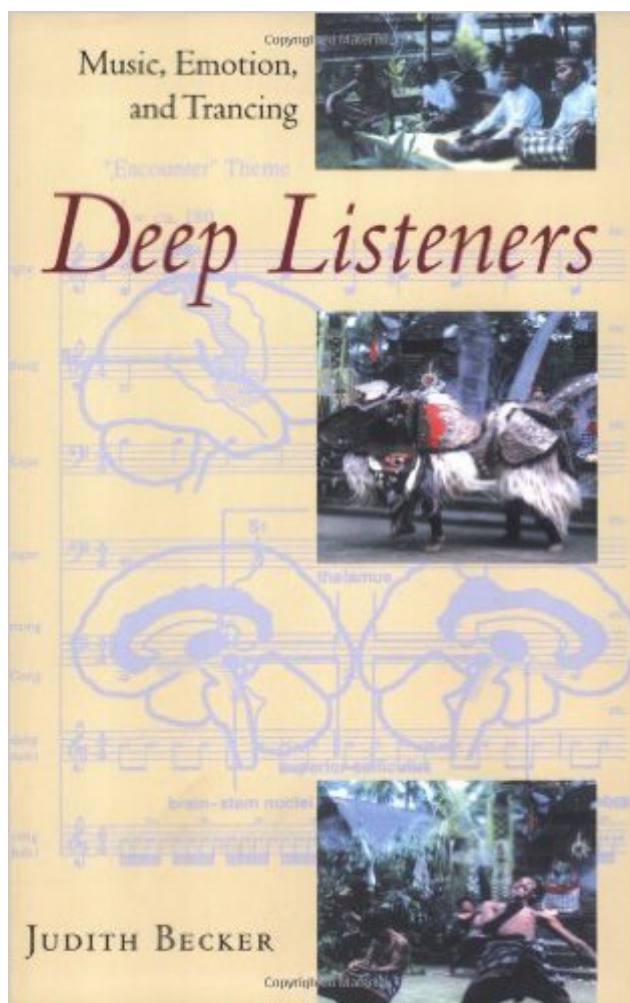# The book was found

Deep Listeners: Music, Emotion, And Trancing

Synopsis

"A fascinating thesis and a timely synthesis.... Becker urges the reader to view certain arcane cultural rituals as being in the mainstream of spiritual development and argues that the resulting trance-like states may relate to the basic fabric of emotions and consciousness, which are our ancestral, animalian heritage. This is both a risky and courageous undertaking that challenges both cultural and neuroscientific studies." â •Jaak Panksepp, author of Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal EmotionsIn Deep Listeners, Judith Becker brings together scientific and cultural approaches to the study of music and emotion, and music and trancing. Becker claims that persons who experience deep emotions when listening to music are akin to those who trance within the context of religious rituals. Using new discoveries in the fields of neuroscience and biology, Deep Listeners outlines an emotion-based theory of trance using examples from Southeast Asian and American musics. A companion CD includes excerpts from several of the musical genres under discussion, and a 16-page color insert presents vivid documentation of the global experience of "deep listening."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

More than a well-written, scholarly but easy to follow academic book on the distinctions of "deep listening" and "trancing", this extraordinary treatise by Judith Becker includes insights from her ethnomusicological field work with Balinese and Suwalesi spirit trancers in Indonesia, Sufi Qawwali singers in India, and Pentecostals in the United States. Moreover, she provides a fine history of

European trancing, including Mesmerism, Italian tarantismo, and related hypnotism; the Indian rasa system of fundamental emotions; various historic and ethnic conceptions of ego, notions of an individual's self and consorts, and associated examples of possession. And if that is not sufficient, she also correlates her anthropological and psychological findings with neuroscience and the work of Nobel scientist Gerald Edelman, and with cognitive philosophy. Emotions (psycho-neuro-endocrinolgoic mediated) are the key, through the aesthetic appreciation in profound listening [Arabic tarab] that can stop time, drop ego-sense, create bliss, and move to tears, and, for trancing, through cultural conditioning and belief systems coupled with strong music-entrained movements, which can development amnesia and anesthesia. Her discussions have a framework of holism, process and flow, and mutual feedback systems, which include the union of musicians, music, and trancers. The book has some musical scores, color photographic plates, and a CD with musical exemplars. The reader will apt to be fascinated and left with much to ponder, especially since most people have had some similar powerful experiences while listening to music. This excellent book brings to bear the role of music in consciousness-mind.

With plenty of examples from numerous cultures, Becker brings home the point that cultural expectations shape the spiritual experience, rather than the music itself. The music CD that comes with the book provides actual examples from various folk traditions. My only complaint was that I didn't have the Wikipedia handy when I was reading the book, so I often did not know what part of the world the various tribes being discussed were from. If you don't know the names of lots of tribal societies, have some kind of reference material available.

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