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Fool Your Ears - Five Great Auditory Illusions

[newscientist.com](#) — Auditory illusions can help us understand the workings of the human brain. Here we have compiled five of the most striking auditory illusions discovered so far. (Listen through stereo headphones, or stereo separated loudspeakers, best placed some distance apart)



submitted by **MrBabyMan**
May 31, 2008

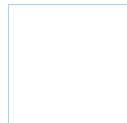
Bury Who dugg this? Made popular **Jun 1, 2008**

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- DiscoLando** on 06/01/2008
Wow... when the virtual barber put the bag over my head, I really wanted to take it off. Amazing!
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- geneticlemon** on 06/01/2008
First one seriously made me paranoid that there was an Italian man in my house speaking to me.
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- zzz@tkz** on 06/01/2008
First one was really cool, especially at the end.
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- spyd4r** on 06/01/2008
would be nice if the audio files loaded.
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- staffell** on 06/01/2008
****, the first one really messed with my head :S
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- inactive** on 06/01/2008
When the guy whispered in my ear I shat my pants :(
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- Angelix** on 06/01/2008
I actually closed my eyes the whole time during the virtual haircut. I think he nearly cut off my ear.
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- rages4calm** on 06/01/2008
I wanted to punch him when he whispered in my ear. lol
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- ballsonyourface** on 06/01/2008
Yea me too. I thought Luigi was a plumber...
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 **insomniacal**
on 06/01/2008

Not sure how anyone can miss the melody in the 1/4 speed Frühlingsrauschen (copy-pasted, not spelled). It's slow, sure, with regular patterns and only occasional note changes, but my mind seems to ignore all but the melodic notes -- my ears keep waiting for the beats with changed notes, and pulls those together. I think it would have to be slowed down to ludicrous speed (1/64?) before my ears would give up piecing it together.

+16 diggs  


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 **inactive**
on 06/01/2008



I heard Ron Paul, iPhone and Ubuntu.

+14 diggs  

[Thread / Reply](#)

 **Evi1d33d**
on 06/01/2008


I flinched when I heard the whisper.

+13 diggs  

[Thread / Reply](#)

 **Soave**
on 06/01/2008

The Octave Illusion audio linked on that page wouldn't load for me, but it can be found here:


+13 diggs  

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octave_illusion

Additional audio examples from Diana Deutsch can be found linked from here:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diana_Deutsch

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 **nericus**
on 06/01/2008

<http://digg.com/search?s=Five+Great+Audit...>


+13 diggs  

Anyone surprised?

[Thread / Reply](#)

 **jexdawg**
on 06/01/2008


Who cares? It's a cool article. I would have dugged it regardless of the submitter.

+11 diggs  


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 **viksra**
on 06/01/2008

I want to hear one just like the barber shop, but of war!

+11 diggs  


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 **batmanz**
on 06/01/2008

Oh my lawd! Someone just virtually shaved my head!

+9 diggs  

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 **inactive**
on 06/01/2008

I felt like my ears were going to be chopped off when the scissors came out. Especially with my eyes closed. lol

+8 diggs  


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 **Sk1ppy**
on 06/01/2008

All I hear is "No way."

+8 diggs  

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 **kevdotbadger**
on 06/01/2008

mirror for second one

+8 diggs  

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/listverse/audioillusions/P...>

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 **D4rkDrago0n**
on 06/01/2008

I heard "nowhere" "weep" and "not me"

+8 diggs  

There's an emo trapped in my computer!


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 **BowieX**
on 06/01/2008

What words did you hear from the second one? I heard nothing but 'nowhere'.

+8 diggs  

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 **inactive**
on 05/31/2008

Very cool stuff. An old sonar tech approves ;-)

+7 diggs  

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 **mearom**
on 06/02/2008

no, but there is a japanese woman in your closet

+7 diggs  

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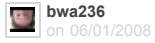
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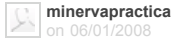


bwa236
on 06/01/2008

and you wouldn't have seen this either if MrBabyMan hadn't submitted it, that's the point...

+6 diggs

[Thread](#)



minervapRACTICA
on 06/01/2008

Indeed.. I actually found it to be more musically pleasing in the slowed version. The notes may be the same, but the speed changes the impact of the melody quite a bit. While it's still easily perceived, I hear it as a very, very different piece. Not really sure how anyone could miss it, though.

+6 diggs

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mgyqmb
on 06/01/2008

I listen to that probably once a week, and still get chills when the chair moves. I instinctively open my eyes to see if someone has entered the room.

+6 diggs

[Thread / Reply](#)



THETEh
on 06/01/2008

The barber one was frightening at first. I was looking around the room for where the noise was coming from!

+6 diggs

[Thread / Reply](#)



Mononuclear
on 06/01/2008

Same with me. I am also familiar with the piece so that might be part of it. It might only work if you haven't heard the song before. Or maybe if you aren't a musician. I don't know, but it didn't work for me.

+6 diggs

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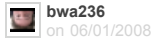


chicoer2001
on 06/01/2008

I heard "no way" and "mango"

+6 diggs

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bwa236
on 06/01/2008

he never said he HAD any hair (naturally bald? waxes it?)

+5 diggs

[Thread](#)



tjcUTIGER06
on 06/01/2008

I heard things like "nowhere," "help me," "love me," and "milk me." Weird thing was it seemed like I could actually control which phrase I would hear next.

+5 diggs

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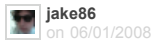


tehRICH
on 06/01/2008

How long is your hair??...

+5 diggs

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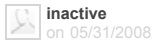


jake86
on 06/01/2008

These guys should have their barber license revoked.

+5 diggs

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inactive
on 05/31/2008

...what? Speak up.

+5 diggs

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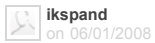


sweetemotion
on 06/01/2008

I got nowhere in the right ear and bueno in the left. Then I heard a cat but it turns out that was outside.

+5 diggs

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ikspand
on 06/01/2008

Whoa buddy, that first one was awesome. I haven't had a haircut in 20 years and it STILL tickled my ear - damn brain.

+5 diggs

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Harelin
on 06/01/2008

If you like this article, you might also enjoy:
<http://www.quietamerican.org/vacation.html>

+5 diggs

'One minute vacations' - wear it with headphones and it will sound like you've been transported to whatever exotic destination you've chosen to listen to.

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bj1989
on 06/01/2008

If they could use the technique of the first illusion in gaming that would be awesome.

+5 diggs

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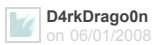


SepetEUS
on 06/01/2008

I guess Digg has influenced me somehow. All I heard was "NOM NOM NOM NOM NOM...".

+4 diggs

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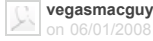
D4rkDrago0n
on 06/01/2008

lol at all this digg politics,

+4 diggs

I could care less who submits the articles, so long as the article's decent

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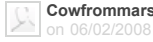
vegasmacguy
on 06/01/2008

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/listverse/audioillus...>

+4 diggs

This is a better link with stereo separation.

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Cowfrommars
on 06/02/2008

Right... and if it weren't for him, the 1128 people who dugg this one would have missed it.

+4 diggs

Anyone surprised?

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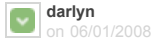
Dotcommer
on 06/01/2008

Imagine if recording studios would record music like the barbershop example...

+3 diggs

Just think about that for a sec...

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darlyn
on 06/01/2008

Whatever, man. I would have never seen it, as I don't usually visit the "Upcoming" section.

+3 diggs

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SystemicAnomaly
on 06/01/2008

Dugg for the first one. Reminded me of the match audio illusion (holophonic matchbox) from a while back:

+3 diggs

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5G3HUiscW4>

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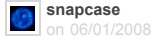


Lewiji
on 06/01/2008

It's actually a holophonic recording, which gives the impression of true surround using only stereo output.

+3 diggs

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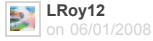


snapcase
on 06/01/2008

Am I the only one that still hears the melody in Frühlingsrauschen at one quarter speed, for number 5?

+3 diggs

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LRoy12
on 06/01/2008

i hear.. 'well wig' then it sounds like techno if i think about it..

+3 diggs

ok i moved my speakers further apart and now i hear "rape rape rape"

[Thread](#)



leverarchfile
on 06/01/2008

good stuff. diana deutsch has done a lot of great experiments in this field.

+3 diggs

Also consider checking out the risset tone illusion (ever-increasing pitch), and the tritone experiment, whereby two notes are played in sequence, the pitch of the second has a different pitch, but is neither definitively higher, or lower. I did an experiment recently to do with these two phenomenon and it really is crazy.

I haven't explained this very well, but i recommend that anyone interested in auditory illusions tries this tritone one out. I'd find it and submit it, but i doubt it'd get seen.

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