

A comparison of rhythm and melody in English dialects and music

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Informal observations have often been made that the prosody of a country's language is reflected in its instrumental music. Limited research exists studying similarities between the rhythmic and melodic characteristics of French music and language on the one hand and British music and language on the other. Our research compares the rhythmic and melodic characteristics of the music and English dialects of the Shetland Islands in Scotland, County Donegal in Ireland, and the state of Kentucky, examining spontaneous speech and musical recordings from the same people. Although we found limited support for predicted melodic differences among the dialects, we did find that rhythmic characteristics are correlated in the speech and music in each dialect area.