

English princess with a plain laurel wreath. Indeed, he's bent over so far forward that Mary has difficulty keeping her balance. As she steadies herself with her left arm, gripping the edge of her throne, she yet stoically and serenely observes the ritual playing out before her eyes.

The accompanying Saints follow the proceedings, enraptured, to the left, Saint Barbara and Saint Cecile. Two angels, gliding in above their heads, hold their attributes, the tower and the organ, aloft in their hands. To the right, Saint Catherine of Alexandria. The circle is completed by an astonished Joseph, who presents a lily, and by an angel that copies his posture with a palm branch. The baroque S-shaped composition concludes with the four winged angels' heads at the upper edge of the painting. Only the two angels playing with an arrow in the picture's foreground seem not to notice the holy scene taking place – their attention is wholly focused on Saint Ursula's instrument of torture.

Only over time does one realize the remarkable composition of this picture. It's not so much the arrangement of the people, which is modelled on the *Sacra Conversazione*, but their selection that stands out. With the exception of Joseph – except for the children and angels – only women stand before us.

In a similar fashion, this can be seen at the erstwhile main altar, which is no longer located in Le Grand Beguinage. In the foreground, there's a group of three women. While all the disciples and saints are arranged behind Mary's grave, it's almost as though they provide a pure link between the group and Mary ascending in a cloud. Once again, van Loon's full artistry to create a room out of people, light and shade, is on display here. Against the grain, light falls onto Mary, brushes John the Baptist, and is caught by the group of three women.

In all likelihood, these pictures can thus only have been painted for this place. On similar pictures in any other church, we would find a mixed, more likely male-dominated audience in the lower part. In the other pictures located in the church, the arrangement may not be as striking as it is in these two, but even in them we find selections of people that would suggest that they've been commissioned by the Beguines (*Pieta* and *Annunciation*). From their cooperation with the painter van Loon sprang a constellation of pictures that, while remaining closely connected to the Christian iconography, offer in their interpretation something special and self-determined, just like the community life of the Beguines itself.

Wreal Wrappers Wrinkle

Kevin Gallagher

The first thing I ever tried to compose music on was Fruity Loops. Fruity Loops was a computer program with a simple interface that combined step-based sequencing with pattern-based arrangements – the perfect fit for any teenage tenderfoot trying to get their beat game in order. In a nutshell, you would choose sounds you like from a library, insert them into the dashboard and turn them on or off along a segmented timeline. This timeline would be set to a tempo which would continuously loop, thus allowing your beat to bump. You could easily adjust the BPM (Beats Per Minute) to create something akin to an R&B beat (Aaliyah's *One in a Million* clocks in at 61 bpm) or speed it way up to 160 bpm if Jungle or Drum & Bass was your vibe. My novice hip-hop tracks usually clocked in at somewhere in the 90-100 bpm range.



At rest, the human heart beats at an average rate of 60-90 beats per minute. In a similar state, dogs' hearts beat between 60-160, depending on size, and cats between 130-220 (perfect for Gabber). A hummingbird heart rate can reach 1,260 bpm. (How do you dance to that?) Expectant parents have been known to say the fetal heart rate sounds like the galloping of a horse.

Tempo is more basic than rhythm; it's closer to the pace of how one experiences life, rather than the flavor in which one experiences it. But tempo can also change. While relaxing on the sofa eating chips, you might be at 73 bpm (synchronous to Justin Timberlake's *Cry Me A River*), but while riding an *omafiets* through Rotterdam's Maas Tunnel, your bpm might jump up to 132 (69 Boyz's *Tootsee Roll*).

Audiobooks are usually between 150-160 words per minute, which is the rate at which humans 'comfortably' hear and vocalize words. Steve Woodmore, who is currently listed in the Guinness World Records as the fastest speaker in the world, clocked in at 637 words per minute. In fact, Woodmore recently said he's been purposefully trying to slow down the speed of his speech so he can have normal conversations with others. Woodmore's speech surpasses the comprehensible abilities of humans, but would a hummingbird still get bored in a conversation at 600 wpm?

This brings up something else about tempo: it's hidden. And when Woodmore speaks at four times the normal speed, this internal mechanism is uncloaked.

Gregg Bordowitz once said that all artworks have a kind of hidden pulse, like a beating drum, and that accessing the work has to do with tuning ourselves to that tempo. I love this idea because it shifts relation from a cognitive level to an embodied one. It's a bodily understanding, pulsing together.

The parasympathetic nervous system controls some of our bodies' unconscious actions when at rest, such as digestion, salivation, lacrimation (tears). Deep primal response mechanisms. Interestingly, parasympathetic sensitivity can vary. In about four percent of the population, the parasympathetic nervous system has been shown to *overreact*, causing individuals to faint. This reaction is most commonly caused by the sight of blood, but it can also be triggered by the sound of another's heartbeat. The audible pulsations produce an empathic response so intense you can confuse your heart with someone else's.

*He felt like
his heart was trying
to match
her beat
and
he couldn't catch his breath.*