DIPT:

The Distortion of Music

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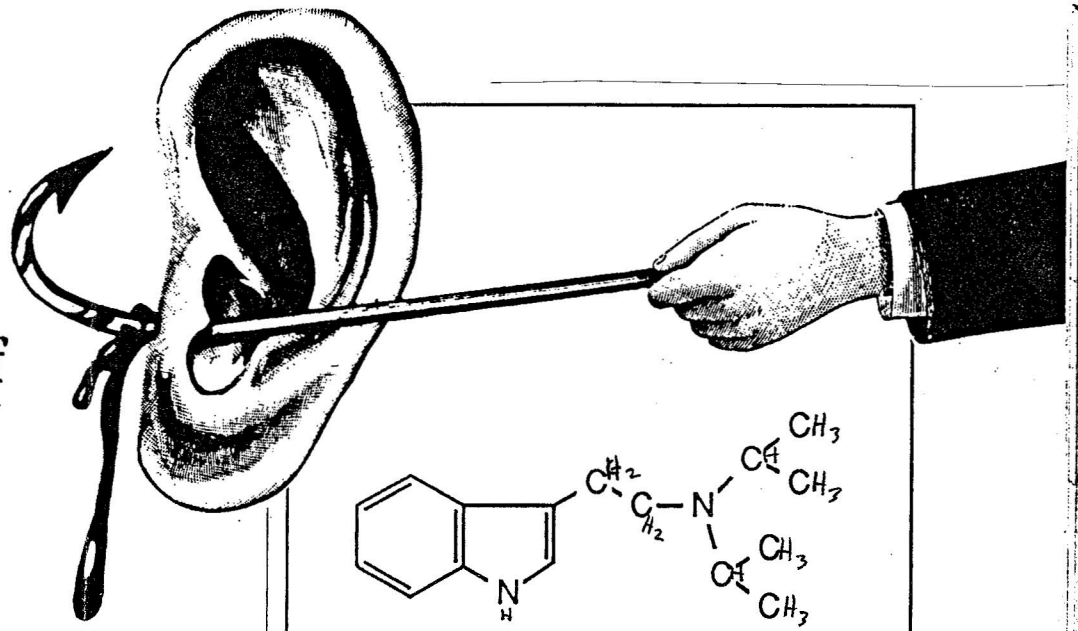

N,N DI-ISOPROPYLTRYPTAMINE

Generally the effect of psychedelic drugs on the perceived quality of music is a positive one. Psychedelic drugs usually promote eyes-closed imagery furnished with figures, structures, patterns, and designs that create a synthesis with the music.

One family of such drugs is represented by the dialkyl tryptamines. These indole bases are all relatives of DMT (N,N-dimethyltryptamine), the simplest and best studied of the group and a component of toad venom and several South American snuffs. DMT, like its close allies DET (N,N-diethyltryptamine) and DPT (N,N-dipropyltryptamine), is inactive when taken orally: it must be absorbed parenterally [outside the intestine]. A well-known exception is psilocin (4-hydroxy-N, N-dimethyltryptamine) and its phosphate ester, psilocybin — the major active components of Mexico's magic mushrooms — which *are* orally active. These drugs are noted facilitators of visual imagery in conjunction with music.

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DIPT (N,N-diisopropyltryptamine), the structural isomer of DPT with branched chains on the nitrogen, is exceptional among the DMT congeners in that it is orally active. Visual effects are non-existent. Its most remarkable effect is to produce distortion in the hearing or perception of sound, whether voice or music. [1]

The effective level of DIPT is from 20 to 50 mg. Onset of symptoms occurs about half an hour after ingestion; the full effects last from one to two hours; with recovery to a symptom-free state by the fourth hour. Side effects can include mild nausea and mydriasis.

It is the subjective effect of DIPT that is most unusual — that being a consistent disturbance in the auditory process. Most subjects note that observers' voices sound much lower in pitch. Women's voices are heard in bass tones. Musical sounds are also distorted. Subjects volunteer such comments as: "Do you have a bad cold?" or, "How strange they would put such a poor recording on the radio." The subjective decrease in the frequency of sounds is a fixed value rather than proportional, which leads to jarring distortions of harmonic intervals. Subjects vary in the degree to which this auditory phenomenon occurs, but there is a consistently complete return to normal perception coincident with the disappearance of the other symptoms described. Subjects report little or no euphoria and are curiously neutral when asked whether the experience was unpleasant or pleasant. A single trial conducted at 80 mg revealed only a greater intensity of the same activity.

One classical distinction between the "natural" schizophrenic state and that induced by drugs (the so-called "psychotomimetic" state) is that in the former, hallucinations are largely auditory, while in the latter, they are visual. DIPT produces changes *only* at the auditory level. Whether this occurs by affecting the musculature of the ear or the integrity of the auditory association areas remains unclear. What is clear however, is that this unusual indolic drug, DIPT, could be uniquely useful in helping us map out the distinction between endogenous and chemically-induced sensory distortion.

(1) See:"N,N-Diisopropyltryptamine (DIPT) and 5-Methoxy-N,N-diisopropyltryptamine(5-MeO DIPT). Two Orally Active Tryptamine Analogs with CNS Activity." Shulgin, A.T. and Carter, M. F. Commun. Psychopharmacol. 4 363-369 (1981)