

**To ‘Fill Up, Completely, the Whole Capacity of the Mind’:
Listening with Attention in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland**

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This talk reveals a hitherto unsuspected intellectual relationship among three important thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment. The great philosopher and economist Adam Smith is known to have had a conception of instrumental music exceptional for his time in its foreshadowing of ideas generally associated with Hanslick. I show how Smith’s views were decisively influenced by the psychological theories of his older countryman Thomas Reid by linking both thinkers to the extraordinary proto-cognitivist music theory of their contemporary John Holden, in particular the latter’s conceptualization of the faculty of attention. The innovative contributions of these writers constitute a compact and suggestive case study in the circulation of ideas about perception and listening between philosophy and music, and suggest that the Scottish Enlightenment attitude to psychology enabled a new kind of theorizing about the musical experience: one that foregrounded the importance of the faculty of attention in the process of perceiving music and sound.