

Sounds Like a Baby

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Blog post published April 24, 2010 in *Sounding Out!*

<https://doi.org/10.59350/q7gem-11442>

Abstract

I am pregnant with my first child, and as any other first-time mother will tell you every step of this journey is littered with little discoveries. Something as simple as perusing a baby registry gets me thinking about all sorts of things that I probably would not have encountered ever in my academic career.

Keywords

Music (Subfield), Acoustics, Article, Listening, Medicine, Memoir

Recommended citation

Silva, L. M. (2010, April 24). Sounds Like a Baby. *Sounding Out!*. <https://doi.org/10.59350/q7gem-11442>

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I am pregnant with my first child, and as any other first-time mother will tell you every step of this journey is littered with little discoveries. Something as simple as perusing a baby registry gets me thinking about all sorts of things that I probably would not have encountered ever in my academic career. (For example: what's with all the bibs and outfits displaying "Daddy's Little Princess" slogans? Gender studies, anyone?)

One of those new sites of discovery are my doctor appointments. At every appointment it seems like not much goes on: usually we discuss my overall health, new symptoms, and questions I may have. My doctor also monitors the baby through a Doppler instrument to make sure it is doing well inside the uterine home. For a few seconds, we are both very very quiet as we strain to hear a quickly beating heart. And then it's there, clear as a bell: beatbeatbeatbeatbeat. Interestingly enough, very few people talk about this aspect of the pregnancy; they prefer to focus on the ultrasound, which is where you get to see a visual image of the baby. Is it because ultrasounds are so few and far apart in a pregnancy, or is it because the visual is the preferred representation of reality, of the concreteness of a thing?

My first encounter with my baby-in-the-making was the first trimester ultrasound. It was meant to certify the pregnancy; I had yet to see my OB at this point and didn't know what to expect. It was certainly exciting to see this little kidney bean of a baby beating on the screen, and I couldn't wait for the next one where I would see something resembling more a baby than a legume. In the meantime, at every monthly appointment my doctor and I would tune in to the little one's heartbeat; every time I'd hear the quick palpitations I would secretly sigh in relief that the baby was still there. (I couldn't feel the baby moving at this point, so the only evidence of the baby was my day-long nausea, tiredness, and belly popping out.) However, it wasn't until [drjsa](#) told me I should record the baby's heartbeat that I really thought about the magnitude of what was going on at each appointment. Sure, the ultrasounds are impressive (have you ever seen a baby on an ultrasound? It is beyond belief!) but listening to the baby's heartbeat is the real indicator that all is well in there.

All of a sudden, it wasn't the visual representation I was excited about, but rather tuning in every few weeks to that little heart beating inside of me. The ultrasound pictures are amazing and I'm looking forward to my third trimester ultrasound, but hearing that heartbeat at every appointment is the reassurance that the baby is still there. Sound becomes the manifestation of the baby. To hear is to know.

P.S.: I have yet to record the little one's heartbeat, but I will soon find out how to do so and share it with you, the reader.

LMS

[Added by JSA on 5-7-10: Here's our recording of Martin's heartbeat, made fittingly on 8-8-08]

[01_8_8_08_1_34_PM_Baby's_Heartbeat](#)



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