

Music makes us feel fully alive, says Queen's professor

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Rena Uptis feels people may not realize how important music is to the world.

The education professor — who specializes in arts education and developing online tools to support arts learning — is giving a lecture titled “Life in 2030” to explain how her research will impact people two decades from now. She thinks life will be so frantic in the future that music-making may be one of the few ways of staying sane.

“There are hundreds of studies that show us children who take part in music are likely to be more engaged and it is an important predictor of school achievement,” says Dr. Uptis. “But music matters in much more life-changing ways. Music makes us feel fully alive.”

Dr. Uptis argues music contributed to human evolution and making art is essential to human life. The desire to create art emerges in every individual as they develop. Art has helped give people the ability to think, feel and create. Music is also important because it reaches across cultures and time and can bring about social change.

Dr. Uptis’s research is trying to improve the way people teach and learn music. She is currently working on developing [iSCORE](#), a digital tool available to the general public that provides online support for music instruction. iSCORE enables students to set goals for their music learning. It also features an embedded recorder that allows students to record and save practices and performances; links to composition and sequencing tools; and interactive plans for teachers.

Dr. Uptis enjoys giving lectures about her research because she thinks it’s important for the public to know how research will impact their lives.

“I tell my grad students you have to be able to clearly explain your research to someone you meet at a party or to a taxi driver who is taking you to the academic conference where you are presenting. We have to be able to communicate our research and tell people why it is important to the public we serve,” she says.

The [Life in 2030](#) lectures are part of an event series hosted by the Council of Ontario Universities as part of their “Research Matters” campaign. The event takes place in Oshawa on Wednesday, April 3.

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