

**“Magic Numbers and persuasive Sound”:
Musical Enlightenment in Revolutionary America**

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This paper will explore connections between music and rhetoric in revolutionary America, focussing on the work of Thomas Jefferson, Francis Hopkinson, and Philip Freneau. It will analyse early American attitudes towards sound and its effects (intellectual and emotional), with particular reference to reinterpretations of the Orpheus legend. I define the term ‘musical enlightenment’ in relation to eighteenth-century theories of the progress of society and the progress of the arts. As a force for emancipation, musical enlightenment will be shown to be partial and conflicted, developing out of the interrelated cognitive domains of music, science, and magic.