Ling-Lie Chau Graduate Student Award for Brain Research

Lauren Fink 2016 Award Recipient

Lauren Fink is a third year PhD student at the University of California, Davis, in the lab of Dr. Petr Janata. She uses music – a stimulus found in all known human cultures – to probe the neural mechanisms of attention and sensorimotor coordination. Previously, Lauren completed a Masters of Philosophy in Music Studies: Music & Science from the University of Cambridge and a Bachelors of Music in Percussion Performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Lauren specializes in eye-tracking and electroencephalographic techniques and hopes to pursue a career in academia that will allow her to continue to combine her interests in music and neuroscience.

Impact of Philanthropy

The Ling-Lie Chau Graduate Student Award for Brain Research enables Lauren to attend the International Conference for Music Perception and Cognition in San Francisco, Calif., where she co-authored and presented a research poster and expanded her scientific network, greatly enhancing her graduate training and research experience at UC Davis.
Thank you for the generous donations that allowed me to attend the International Conference for Music Perception and Cognition (ICMPC) in San Francisco. I was co-author on a poster "Predicting temporal attention in music with a damped oscillator model," and was first author on a poster, "Pupillary and eyeblink responses to auditory stimuli index attention and sensorimotor coupling," that received a significant amount of attention. Perhaps most notably, at the conference I made contact with Dr. Elke Lange from the Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics who is one of the few other scientists conducting similar research. The two of us, along with Dr. Richard Ashley of Northwestern University are planning to organize an eye tracking symposium at the next ICMPC two years from now in Austria, and perhaps our own separate conference even sooner.

Also of note, I reconnected with former colleagues from the University of Cambridge who are now at Technische Universität Dresden and Columbia University, respectively. We are planning a collaboration combining our three areas of expertise – functional magnetic resonance imaging, electroencephalography, and eye tracking – that will hopefully lead to quite a novel publication.

Attending ICMPC allowed me to establish myself as a member of the music & neuroscience research community. It truly reinvigorated me and fueled my excitement about my research. I am overwhelmed by the great reception my work received and by all of the possible collaborations that were catalyzed at the conference. It is amazing how much happened for my career in a span of five days; none of it would have been possible without your kind philanthropy.

Sincere thanks,

Lauren Fink