



The Music of Life: Biology Beyond Genes

By Denis Noble

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The gene's eye view of life, proposed in Richard Dawkins acclaimed bestseller *The Selfish Gene*, sees living bodies as mere vehicles for the replication of genetic codes. But in *The Music of Life*, world renowned physiologist Denis Noble argues that, to truly understand life, we must look beyond the "selfish gene" to consider life on a much wider variety of levels.

Life, Noble asserts, is a kind of music, a symphonic interplay between genes, cells, organs, body, and environment. He weaves this musical metaphor throughout this personal and deeply lyrical work, illuminating ideas that might otherwise be daunting to non-scientists. In elegant prose, Noble sets out a cutting-edge alternative to the gene's eye view, offering a radical switch of perception in which genes are seen as prisoners and the organism itself is a complex system of many interacting levels. In his more expansive view, life emerges as a process, the ebb and flow of activity in an intricate web of connections. He introduces readers to the realm of systems biology, a field that has been growing in strength in the past decade. Noble, himself one of the founders of this field, argues modern systems biology may be the view we need to adopt to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of life.

Drawing on his experiences in his research on the heartbeat, and on evolutionary biology, development, medicine, philosophy, linguistics, and Chinese culture, Noble presents us with a profound and very modern reflection on the nature of life.

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Editorial Review

Review

‘Review from previous edition A beautifully written book... After the great successes of molecular biology, the time has come to re-assemble the organism. Denis Noble tells us why this needs to be done. He also tells us how we should go about it. Strongly recommended.’ Sir Patrick Bateson, F.R.S., Emeritus Professor of Ethology, Cambridge

‘highly evocative essay’ Steven Poole, The Guardian

About the Author

Denis Noble is Emeritus Professor of Cardiovascular Physiology at the University of Oxford. He was Chairman of the International Union of Physiological Sciences World Congress in 1993, and Secretary-General of IUPS from 1993-2001.

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