

Étienne Abassi, Ph.D.

Postdoctoral Researcher — McGill University

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CURRENT AFFILIATIONS

- Montréal Neurological Institute (The Neuro) — McGill University, Montréal, Canada
- Centre for Research on Brain, Language and Music (CRBLM) — Montréal, Canada
- International Laboratory for Brain, Music and Sound Research (BRAMS) — Montréal, Canada
- Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Music, Media and Technology (CIRMMT) — Montréal, Canada

EDUCATION

2026 – Present	Master's Degree in Psychology, Psychopathology and Development Paris 8 University, France
2017 – 2021	Ph.D. in Neuroscience Claude Bernard Lyon University, France <i>Thesis: <u>The two-body dyad in visual perception: a new category of social objects</u></i>
2015 – 2017	Master's Degree in Neuroscience and Behavioral Sciences Caen University, France <i>Thesis: <u>Neurofunctional basis of non-verbal body language perception in dance</u></i>
2012 – 2015	Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Neuropsychology Montpellier University, France <i>Thesis: <u>Synesthesia, a novel approach for cognitive remediation</u></i>
2008 – 2010	Higher National Diploma (BTS) in IT & Software Development EPSI Montpellier, France

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

2022 – Present	Postdoctoral Researcher Montréal Neurological Institute, McGill University, Montréal, Canada <i>Research Topic: <u>Enhancing Music Perception Through Vibrotactile Feedback: Training-Induced Plasticity and Neural Mechanisms</u>. Supervised by Prof. Robert Zatorre. Laboratory: Auditory Cognitive Neuroscience</i>
2017 – 2021	Doctoral Researcher Institute for Cognitive Science Marc Jeannerod (CNRS), Lyon, France <i>Research Topic: <u>Visual Processing of Social Scenes: Behavioral Effects and Neural Mechanisms</u>. Supervised by Dr. Liuba Papeo. Laboratory: Cognitive Neuropsychology and Development</i>
2017	Master's Research Internship Maastricht University, Netherlands <i>Research Topic: <u>Visual Processing of Movements in Dance: Neurofunctional Mechanisms</u>. Supervised by Prof. Beatrice de Gelder. Laboratory: Brain and Emotion</i>
2016	Master's Research Internship Caen University, France <i>Research Topic: <u>Anxiety Across Stages of Alzheimer's Disease: Cognitive and Neural Correlates</u>. Supervised by Dr. Gaël Chetelat. Laboratory: Multimodal Neuroimaging and Lifestyle in Aging and Alzheimer's Disease</i>
2015	Bachelor's Research Internship Institute for Neurosciences of Montpellier (INSERM), Montpellier, France <i>Research Topic: <u>Chronic Neuropathic Pain: Modulation of Neuronal FLT3 Receptor in Rodents</u>. Supervised by Dr. Jean Valmier & Dr. Cyril Rivat. Laboratory: Somesthesia and Physiopathology</i>

FELLOWSHIPS

2025 – 2026	Brenda Milner Postdoctoral Fellowship (\$40,000) Montréal Neurological Institute, McGill, Montréal, Canada
2022 – 2024	Fondation Pour L'Audition (FPA) Postdoctoral Fellowship (€90,000) Paris, France

PROFESSIONAL & PERSONNAL DEVELOPMENT

2026	When music becomes data: Modeling structure, culture, and performance CIRMMT (Workshop)
2026	Arts, Culture, Society and Health – Artistic Intelligence IUGM, Montréal (CA) (Summer School)
2026	Touch beyond sound: Haptics and tactile enhancements for music and inclusion CIRMMT (Workshop)

2026	Computer Music: Artificial Intelligence in Creative Contexts University of Montréal (CA) (Course)
2025	Immersive Sound Creation Société des Arts Technologiques (SAT), Montréal (CA) (Course)
2025	Scripting for Immersive Experiences Société des Arts Technologiques (SAT), Montréal (CA) (Course)
2025	Generative Audio for Music-Making (GAMMa) CIRMMT, Montréal (CA) (Workshop)
2025	Montréal Open Tools Symposium (SpeechBrain, GrFNN, SocialEyes, ...) CRBLM, Montréal (CA) (Workshop)
2024	The Best of Haptic Worlds CIRMMT, Montréal (CA) (Workshop)
2024	Tech-Enhanced Music Education CIRMMT, Montréal (CA) (Symposium)
2024	Living in the Acoustic Environment Acoustical Society of America, Ottawa (CA) (Course)
2023	Composing and Performing with Digital Musical Instruments CIRMMT, Montréal (CA) (Workshop)
2023	Exploring Machine Learning, Artificial Creativity and Human Musicality CIRMMT (Workshop)

TEACHING & ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

2026	Enhancing Music Perception Through Auditory-Vibrotactile Training CIRMMT-RCMS-BRAMS student colloquium, Montréal, Canada (Talk)
2024	Category-Selective Representation of Relationships in Visual Cortex Society for Neuroscience Annual Meeting, Chicago, USA (Talk)
2024	Multimodal Perception of Social Interactions Feindel Brain and Mind Seminar series, McGill University, Canada (Conference)
2024	Influence of Social and Semantic Context in Processing Speech in Noise ARO MidWinter meeting, Anaheim, USA (Talk)
2021	Social Perception: from Faces to Interactions Master NeuroConferences, Lyon University, France (Course)
2020	The Two-Body Configuration in Visual Perception Visual Science Society conference, Virtual meeting (Talk)
2019	Introduction to Multivariate Pattern Analysis (MVPA) Neurosciences and Cognition Doctoral School, Lyon, France (Workshop)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

2026	Music, Brain & Pleasure Timeless festival, Québec, Canada (Public Conference)
2026	Music, Brain & Pleasure Lucioles festival, Québec, Canada (Public Conference)
2026	Music, Brain & Pleasure Groove & Bass festival, Québec, Canada (Public Conference)
2026	Music Under Microscope Eurëka! festival, Montréal, Canada (Workshop)
2026	The Musical Brain in Motion Eurëka! festival, Montréal, Canada (Public Conference)
2025	Introduction to Sound Synthesis and Music Production Sutton Festival, QC, CA (Workshop)
2025	Brain, Bass & Music Sutton Fall festival, Québec, Canada (Public Conference)
2025	Introduction to Sound Synthesis and Music Production Timeless festival, QC, CA (Workshop)
2025	Brain, Bass & Music Timeless festival, Québec, Canada (Public Conference)
2024	Brain, Bass & Music Future Forest festival, New Brunswick, Canada (Public Conference)
2024	Brain, Bass & Music Lucioles festival, Québec, Canada (Public Conference)
2023	Brain, Bass & Music Timeless festival, Québec, Canada (Public Conference)
2021	Magnetic Resonance Imaging in Neuroscience Brain week, Lyon, France (Public Conference)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2011 – 2015	IT Technician / Network Administrator Occitanie En Scène, Montpellier, France Software and hardware maintenance / System and network administration
2010 – 2011	IT Technician Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD Occitanie), Montpellier, France Software and hardware maintenance

STUDENT SUPERVISION

2026 – Corina Samaha — Bachelor (McGill University)	2024 – Arielle Rabinowitz — PhD (McGill University)
2026 – Panagiota Moschonas — Bachelor (McGill University)	2024 – Jesse Chittock — Bachelor (McGill University)
2026 – Hélène Héneau — Bachelor (Caen University)	2024 – Aarti Advani — Bachelor (McGill University)
2026 – Leila M. Lambiri — Bachelor (McGill University)	2024 – Iza Tacala — Bachelor (McGill University)
2025 – Eli Shlimovitz — PhD (McGill University)	2024 – Mai Ababneh — Bachelor (McGill University)
2025 – Nadia MacGregor — Bachelor (McGill University)	2023 – Violette Munin — Master (Lyon 1 University)
2025 – Jesse Millman — Bachelor (McGill University)	2018 – Xi Wang — Bachelor (Lyon 1 University)

PUBLICATIONS

- Abassi, E., Albouy, P., Coffey, E., Sharp, A., & Zatorre, R.** (2026). Enhancing Music Perception Through Auditory-Vibrotactile Training. *JoCN Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.21428/8e6ba8ef.9e54160e>
- Molliex, M. & **Abassi, E.** (2026). Personalized Gesture-to-Sound Mapping for Accessible Digital Musical Instruments: An Interactive Machine Learning Approach. *The 7th Conference on AI Music Creativity (AIMC 2026)*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22256900>
- Abassi, E., & Zatorre, R.** (2026). The representation of speech conversations in the human auditory cortex: role of social and semantic factors. *Cerebral Cortex*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cercor/bhag023>
- Hébrard, S., **Abassi, E.**, Coffey, E., Merino, S. G., Zatorre, R., & Cohen, L. (2026). Brain Specialization for Music and Word Reading: a High-Resolution Precision Imaging Study. *European Workshop on Cognitive Neuropsychology*. <https://cnrs.hal.science/hal-05560047>
- Abassi, E., & Zatorre, R.** (2025). Influence of social and semantic contexts on phonetic encoding in naturalistic conversations. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*. <https://doi.org/10.1121/10.0039532>
- Goldford, L., Noble, J., Knight, J.M., **Abassi, E.**, Couturier, G., Nestorova, T., Traube, C. (2025). Evaluating Vocality in Orchestral and Mixed Works. *ACTOR's Timbre and Orchestration Resource*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15729385>
- Munin, V., **Abassi, E.**, Beuriat, P. A., & Papeo, L. (2025). The effects of spatial relations and motion information in social scene perception. *Scientific Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-07870-1>
- Abassi, E.**, Bognár, A., de Gelder, B., Giese, M., Isik, L., Lappe, A. & Vogels, R. (2024). Neural Encoding of Bodies for Primate Social Perception. *Journal of Neuroscience*. <https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1221-24.2024>
- Abassi, E., & Papeo, L.** (2024). Category-Selective Representation of Relationships in the Visual Cortex. *Journal of Neuroscience*. <https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.0250-23.2023>
- Gandolfo, M., **Abassi, E.**, Balgova, E., Downing, P. E., Papeo, L., & Koldewyn, K. (2024). Converging evidence that left extrastriate body area supports visual sensitivity to social interactions. *Current Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2023.12.009>
- Abassi, E., & Papeo, L.** (2022). Behavioral and neural markers of visual configural processing in social scene perception. *NeuroImage*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2022.119506>
- Spriet, C., **Abassi, E.**, Hochmann, J. R., & Papeo, L. (2022). Visual object categorization in infancy. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2105866119>
- Bellot, E., **Abassi, E.**, & Papeo, L. (2021). Moving toward versus away from another: how body motion direction changes the representation of bodies and actions in the visual cortex. *Cerebral Cortex*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cercor/bhaa382>
- Abassi, E., & Papeo, L.** (2020). The representation of two-body shapes in the human visual cortex. *Journal of Neuroscience*. <https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1378-19.2019>
- Papeo, L., & **Abassi, E.** (2019). Seeing social events: The visual specialization for dyadic human–human interactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xhp0000646>
- Vaessen, M. J., **Abassi, E.**, Mancini, M., Camurri, A., & De Gelder, B. (2019). Computational feature analysis of body movements reveals hierarchical brain organization. *Cerebral Cortex*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cercor/bhy228>