

Oregon Musician

Sharing ideas about music and the teaching of music

Why Music Makes Us Whole

The Editor's Comments



About the Editor

Dr. Diane Baxter, pianist, educator and consultant, is the editor of *Oregon Musician*. She is Professor Emerita of Music at Western Oregon University where she received the Faculty Honors Award for Outstanding Creativity and the Pastega Award for Excellence in Teaching. Dr. Baxter has adjudicated the Woodley Festival in Berkshire, England on four occasions, most recently in 2022. Each festival includes at least 300 pianists of all ages—she eats a lot to keep up her strength. Diane performs and teaches in France each summer, and in 2018 she began international annual workshops on the shores of Loch Etive in the Scottish Highlands. A few weeks ago, after the workshops concluded, Dr. Baxter went to Oxford, England where she was invited to speak for The Music Faculty at the University of Oxford on the topic “How to Prepare for Just About Anything: The Pianist as Athlete.” Closer to home, Diane writes the program notes for *Corvallis Piano International* and continues to perform as principal keyboardist for the Newport Symphony. She lives, writes, plays and thinks in Brownsville, Oregon.

If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere.

—VINCENT VAN GOGH

Welcome to this edition of *Oregon Musician*, where our topic is “Why Music Makes Us Whole.” I think about music all the time. I hear music in my head. I feel rhythms in my body. I sit at a table and realize I’m subconsciously practicing a piano passage. I catch myself humming. I get melodies stuck in my head for hours. I’m aware of music in films or when I’m shopping. As a human being, it is simply impossible for me to separate myself from music. The authors for this edition have articulated their relationships with music in vastly differing ways. Their lives are filled with and by music. In very real ways, music heals us.

Robert Philip’s writes, “Music has never been something ‘out there,’ separate from myself, towards which I direct affection. It is inside, and amounts to a way of thinking, and of reconciling thinking and feeling . . . Music is, you might say, a tool for reflecting and for examining human life and experience, interrogating it, analysing it, and looking at the world.”

Karen Huntsberger demonstrates how music is “wrapped up in history, including the history of our own lives. Music is passed down from generation to generation. That passing down is part of what connects us to each other, part of what assigns us to a larger space in the universe, part of what makes us whole.” She states that “Music reflects who we are, individually and in the broader context of culture and history.”

Linda Cheney wonders where we would be without music. “Music resides in the core of our souls . . . Music is survival . . . Music leads one on unexpected paths . . . Music encourages persistence. Music grounds us and connects us to ourselves.” Linda has long been a patron of the arts. Those of us who know her have heard this story. “I borrowed 1,000 dollars from my friend Roger and then he saw in the Bach festival program that I had donated 1,000 dollars to them. What a commitment I have to the arts!” Linda is dedicated to keeping herself AND music alive. (Linda wasn’t aware that Robert Philip has also contributed to this journal, so her reference to his work is a wonderful surprise).

Anita Sullivan’s article is a reprint from a collection called, “The Family Piano.” For many years, Anita was a commentator on NPR’s *Performance Today*, and this is one of those entries. She is a piano tuner/technician as well as a player. She says, “I think now how wonderful it is to compose, or to play, or to sing, in your lifetime, even one song.”

Jill Timmons speaks to the evidence that “the study and performance of music requires the whole brain and that musicians exhibit measurable anatomical differences . . . in 2016, neuroscientists at the University of Southern California completed a five-year study on the effects of music instruction on children. What they discovered is that ‘music instruction appears to accelerate brain development in young children, particularly in the areas of the brain responsible for processing sound, language development, speech perception and reading skills.’ Call me naïve, but with this cutting-edge data, I am surprised that everyone is not clamoring for music lessons! Musicians’ brains exhibit structures which are greatly expanded and diversified.” Jill makes a passionate case for music education in our schools.

Karl Paulnack's essay has been published previously in this journal, but he has graciously agreed to let me reprint it again. "I have come to understand that music is not part of 'arts and entertainment' as the newspaper section would have us believe. It's not a luxury, a lavish thing that we fund from leftovers of our budgets, not a plaything or an amusement or a pass time. Music is a basic need of human survival. Music is one of the ways we make sense of our lives, one of the ways in which we express feelings when we have no words, a way for us to understand things with our hearts when we can't with our minds." It is a powerful, profound and beautiful statement on why music makes us whole.



Why Music Makes Us Whole

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Music Means the World

by Robert Philip



About Robert

Robert Philip worked for many years with the Open University, first as a BBC Arts Producer and then as a Senior Lecturer in Music. His first two books pioneered the study of the history of performance on recordings, and helped to create an entirely new academic discipline. He has presented many programmes on BBC Radio 3. *A Little History of Music* is published by Yale University Press, and is his fourth book. Robert lives in Edinburgh, Scotland, with his wife, pianist Susan Tomes.

What is music to me? We talk about music-lovers, but I realise that, for me, 'loving' music is not an adequate way to describe what is involved. Music has never been something 'out there', separate from myself, towards which I direct affection. It is inside, and amounts to a way of thinking, and of reconciling thinking and feeling. When I hear a piece of music, whether playing it or just listening, I instinctively hear in it elements that occur in life: developments, events, outcomes, disappointments, achievements. Music is, you might say, a tool for reflecting and for examining human life and experience, interrogating it, analysing it, and looking at the world.

My earliest memories of listening to music go back to my grandmother's house in London. In the living-room was a gramophone, housed in a huge walnut box with a great

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hinged lid. This was before the days of long-playing records, and the greatest excitement was to use the auto-changer. Onto the tall spindle you piled the five or six 78rpm fragile shellac discs which made up the symphony or concerto you wanted to hear. If everything went according to plan, each disc in turn dropped with a light thump onto the turntable, the heavy 'tone-arm' settled in the groove, and off you went for another four minutes. When all the pile had been played, you turned the whole lot over and played the reverse sides. Sometimes four or five discs would crash down together—a heart-stopping moment until you discovered, as you usually did, that no damage had been done.

At home in Birmingham we had a little table machine with no sophistications, and just a few records—Schnabel playing Beethoven's 'Emperor' Concerto, Beecham conducting Rossini's *Silken Ladder* Overture and Handel's 'Arrival of the Queen of Sheba,' Danny Kaye narrating *Tubby the Tuba*, the most enchanting of all introductions to the orchestra.

Then we bought our first long-playing record-player and our first LP records—J. S. Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Now I could listen continuously to twenty minutes or more without stopping. I played these few records again and again, and they were my most important companions around the age of seven. I particularly remember the feeling as I set off into Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, the sense of embarking on a great voyage of discovery. And the thing I found, that remains true many decades later, is that the sense of discovery does not diminish because I already know every step of the journey and its destination. In my later music-studies and career I have learned many other things about music, including the technical terms that music specialists use to describe structure, harmony, counterpoint, and all the rest. But I have never lost that basic sense of music as a journey, to which one can return again and again, each time refreshed as if one had never travelled it before. Some music suggests a physical journey, but more important is the mental journey, those evocations of the emotional twists and turns of life—expectation, hope, doubt, determination, struggle, conflict, disappointment, failure, resolution, acceptance, anger, confusion, dawning realisation, sudden revelation.

These childhood experiences involved listening to music when the musicians were not present, through recordings and the radio. Of course, this has only been possible for the last century and a half, since Edison's invention of re-playable sound recording in 1877 and the development of broadcast radio from the 1920s. For all previous generations in human history, music could only be experienced by making it oneself or by being in the presence of a musician (apart from a few automatic instruments that were little more than curiosities).

My earliest memory of an actual musician is of my mother, who was a rather shy pianist. She attempted classical works of Beethoven and other composers, but she only really relaxed when playing popular tunes. This she did in the style of the cocktail pianists of her day—Charlie Kunz was her favourite, and she emulated his gentle rhythmic swing

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and rolled chords. I particularly loved to hear her play Frank Churchill's 'Some Day My Prince Will Come' from Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. One day when I was about eight, the piano tuner came, and I put the music of the song in front of him. He played it as it appeared on the page, without my mother's stylistic elaboration, and I told him it wasn't supposed to sound like that. This was my first adoption of the role of music critic, and I have often thought of the poor tuner's feelings on being castigated by an eight-year-old.

By now I was having piano lessons from a rather fierce Viennese lady, and beginning to learn that playing music oneself was a whole new challenge, physically and mentally. Around the same time I was taken to my first orchestral concert, in which Archie Camden played Mozart's Bassoon Concerto. Apparently I leaned forward, fascinated by the sound of the bassoon. A few years later, I took up the bassoon, and for many years it was my principal instrument. It gave me the opportunity to learn what it was to be inside an orchestra, helping to create the sounds that I had loved since my earliest experience of recordings. I learned that the discipline and sense of common purpose in an orchestra is a very subtle thing, and it started me thinking more deeply about the process of making music together.

Although I went to music college, studying organ, bassoon and piano, I never had the single-minded determination needed for a career as a professional musician. Instead, I pursued a life that related to music less directly. For a Ph.D., I studied early orchestral recordings, long before these were regarded as fit topics for research by most academics. This led me into broadcasting: I presented radio programmes and wrote about the insights I had gained into the ways that styles of playing change. I was appointed first as an Arts Producer at the BBC making television programmes for the Open University, then as a Music Lecturer at the Open University itself.

In 2023, all this experience reached what felt like a climax, with the publication of *A Little History of Music* (Yale University Press). During my years at the Open University, I had been exposed to new and broad ways of thinking, not just about music, but about literature, history, the arts and the world in general. Importantly, I had also encountered my first ethnomusicologist, Martin Clayton, a specialist in Indian music. He and I travelled to India to film the singer Veena Sahasrabuddhe and her musicians performing and teaching raga. It was my first attempt to get to grips with the music of a different culture, and I began to realise that I had, like most classically-trained musicians, spent my life ignorant of much of the world. My experience of music, that had been so important to me since childhood, was that of someone brought up in the West, and specifically with the great classical music from J. S. Bach through to the present day. If I had been born into a different culture, my view of music would also have been quite different.

When I was asked to write *A Little History of Music*, therefore, I was determined to try to encompass not just Western classical music, as in the history books I had read as a

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student, but the music of the world. This was, at first glance, an impossible task. The series of *Little Histories*, modelled on E.H. Gombrich's *A Little History of the World*, has a strict brief: forty little chapters of 2,000 words each, written in an accessible style that can be read with pleasure by young people and non-specialists, the 'curious of all ages.' Could one hope to cover the whole of music history? In the past, books on Western music had sometimes included a chapter or two on the rest of the world, and books on 'World Music' had sometimes included a chapter on the music of the West. But what I wanted to attempt was a coherent story of how the world's musical cultures developed over human history, how they interacted, and what the consequences were at each stage.

In the process of trying to do this, I have been made to think afresh about the Western classical music that has been so important to me, and about the evolution of jazz and popular music of different genres. I have had to learn how all these relate to the other cultures of the world, how the music of the West has, over time, come to impact on other cultures, and how they in turn have impacted on the West. I have tried to think clearly about the difference between music that relies heavily on notation, resulting in the great classical repertoire, and music that relies on improvisation by ear and memory. I have found myself considering the nature of rhythm. It is easy to rely on notation to guide us, with its seemingly strict twos and threes, dotted rhythms and triplets. One tends to forget about the basis of rhythm in the body and in the dance, which is often much more strongly evident in cultures with little or no use of notation. Notation tends to encourage us to regularise things, to think of them mathematically.

Recordings, too, have had their effect. All sorts of idiosyncrasies and regional characteristics tended to be ironed out as recordings became available in the early twentieth century. This didn't apply just to Western music. Traditions that involve improvisation had to adapt to the limits of the three-minute, ten-inch 78rpm side. Traditional tunings gradually tended more towards Western-style equal temperament. Western-style instruments and ensembles became more prevalent. Most of this would probably not have happened but for the fierce competition for attention and money generated by Western recording and radio organisations.

We live now at a time when the different musical cultures of the world hold each other in greater mutual respect than ever before, with the involvement of many different musicians in festivals, recordings, collaborations of all kinds. But this too comes at a price. The power of the market chooses what is most likely to attract a large audience and to make money. Musicians from different cultures working together in concert and recording naturally want to find common ground, in order to make music comfortably together without months of rehearsal. Indian musicians working with Western musicians, for example, make compromises that are not necessary when they are playing with their Indian colleagues. This has applied across the board, from Ravi Shankar's collaborations with The Beatles and with Yehudi Menuhin back in the 1960s, to today's encounters between Indian and Western musicians. The classical Indian approach to improvisation is not obvi-

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ously compatible with the predetermined, notation-based tradition of Western classical music, nor with the almost equally predetermined tradition of most modern pop music. In collaborations between Indian and Western musicians, therefore, compromise often leads to both cultures seeming somewhat diminished, meeting in some 'middle ground' which doesn't give the opportunity for either to find their own voice. Jazz, with its basis in improvisation, is another matter. Unsurprisingly, of all the genres of Western music, jazz is the area in which Indian musicians have made major contributions and found a distinctive voice—Nitin Sawhney is an impressive example. Of course, jazz has its origins in the blending of African and European traditions that emerged from the plantations of the southern United States, during and after slavery. So to think of jazz as 'Western' is to disguise its cultural complexity. Jazz itself has undergone cross-cultural synthesis and compromise over its history. But that is a topic for another day.

There are many possibilities for the future of music, from the preservation of the world's musical traditions (including the great Western classics) through the wildest of experiments, and the improvisations of jazz, to the exuberance of pop music. Each of these has its own range of character, from the excitingly strange to the undemanding and banal, and each of these has its practitioners and its audiences. Collaboration between musicians from the different cultures of the world is only at the beginning, and holds immense promise. It may meet practical limitations, but the possibilities are in theory endless. In the past, Western composers took an interest in music of other cultures, and 'borrowed' elements for their own use (Debussy, Messiaen, Bartók and others). There was no question of the donors of this material receiving any benefit from this cross-cultural activity. This kind of process still goes on, but there is also genuine collaboration, in which cultures really do meet, and everyone benefits. Despite the limitations and compromises involved, this fills me with hope. Mutual understanding of each other's cultures is what the world needs. Music in the past has so often provided a voice for bonding, community, protest, and sheer joie de vivre. Our fractured world is crying out for some sense of 'wholeness,' and music is once again playing its part in pointing a way forward.



We'll Meet Again

by Karen Berkey Huntsberger



About Karen

Karen Huntsberger, NCTM, has taught piano for over 40 years, currently in McMinnville. She has accompanied countless singers, choirs, instrumentalists, and ballet dancers, loved playing the organ at numerous churches, and is highly involved in OMTA. She currently serves as Co-President of the Tualatin Valley District, and is the OCF/OMTA Nellie Tholen Grant Coordinator, the Syllabus Bookkeeper, and a Syllabus adjudicator. She is the author of two non-fiction WWII books with a historical novel going to press in

2024. More information is available at her website: <https://waitingforpeace.com>

Does the title of this article evoke memories? Perhaps you are already hearing the next few lines of this famous song in your head.

We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day

Keep smiling through
Just like you always do
'Til the blue skies chase those dark clouds far away

And I will just say hello
To the folks that you know
Tell them you won't be long
They'll be happy to know
That as I saw you go
You were singing this song

We'll meet again
Don't know where
Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day

We'll Meet Again

Music is wrapped up in history, including the history of our own lives. Music is passed down from generation to generation. That passing down is part of what connects us to each other, part of what assigns us to a larger space in the universe, part of what makes us whole.

Music reflects who we are, individually and in the broader context of culture and history. Arguably the most important song of World War II, "We'll Meet Again," has endured as part of the history of a global conflict involving 63 nations. Over time, the most popular songs of the war have become songs of national pride, cultural symbols, reminders of dark days, and warnings to the future.

In addition to teaching piano, over the last fourteen years I have done extensive research on WWII and published two non-fiction books. A historical novel is going to press soon. The importance of music to those serving in the war and those waiting at home has been a persistent theme in my study of memoirs, letters, veterans' testimonies, academic papers, and military records. I encountered numerous stories that tell how music helped people during the war.

Music is always there at the big moments in our lives—birthdays, weddings, funerals, wars, and most recently the pandemic. I think we were all amazed, and grateful, for how quickly musicians figured out ways to perform together in spite of lockdown. The need for musicians to express themselves and for audiences to listen was intensified by our inability to attend live events. Worldwide, solo performers, choirs, and orchestras found creative ways to bring livestream performances and sing-a-longs to the global public. We saw example after example of mass choirs singing from their windows and balconies. Those events were advertised on radio stations, in newspapers, and on social media. The same was true throughout WWII—music boosted the morale of all whose lives suddenly departed from any semblance of normalcy.

In what came to be seen as America's "good war," music was used to lessen anti-war sentiments, kindle patriotic spirit, and most importantly to boost morale. Music was used as therapy for those recovering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), then called shell shock or combat exhaustion. Music was everywhere as radios played nonstop in homes, businesses, hospitals, factories, government buildings, and military camps. By December 1941, 96 percent of American households had a radio, a powerful tool delivering war news and uniting the country by broadcasting patriotic music and performances.

In March 1942, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt stated, "At all times music should be part of our lives, and I think in times of strain, such as this present period, it is more valuable than ever. Music is one of the finest flowerings of that free civilization which has come down to us from our liberty loving forefathers, and we have come to regard it as an essential of the heritage of a country that has cherished the genius of the great composers and the musical artists of all lands and peoples. Music is a force for morale, and it contributes to the happiness and well-being of the millions who turn to it for enjoyment, relaxation, consolation, and spiritual renewal. It should go on fulfilling its mission."

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Mrs. Roosevelt's statement was partially in response to a wave of sentiment across that U.S. that the music of German composers should not be played. Numerous editorialists responded, arguing that any ban on "enemy music" would emulate the book burnings in Nazi Germany. One writer said, "A good work of art should have a passport across all frontiers." Another wrote, "Up to date the American people have escaped most of the idiocies of the last war (WWI), when citizens of German ancestry were suspected of disloyalty without cause, when the teaching of the German language was banned in schools, and the most beautiful of German music was tabooed." A soldier writing home said, "Beautiful music should be regarded and cherished for what it is—just beautiful music. If it is written by an enemy sympathizer that is unfortunate. But if it is good music it will live and be loved long after our hates have become a thing of the past."

Waiting is inevitable in war. Soldiers waited in training, waited on transport ships, waited in assembly areas, waited for combat, and finally, waited a very long time for transportation back to the United States at the war's end. Music played a big role in keeping service personnel occupied—the soldiers as well as the women who served as nurses and Red Cross volunteers.



Shortly before disembarking into landing barges to carry them to the attacks on French beaches, troops packed the decks of a Coast Guard assault transport in the Mediterranean to hear a concert by the Coast Guard Amphibians Band. Courtesy of the National Archives, ID 205579348.

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The Army, deciding group singing would be beneficial for soldiers, published the Army Song Book in 1941 expecting soldiers to learn all 67 songs. Instead, the men made up new lyrics to the tunes, often sarcastic and frequently bawdy. One veteran recalled singing made it possible for soldiers “to feel comradeship, to be happy together without being emotional, or not visibly, and thus unmanly.” Through altered lyrics soldiers could complain about conditions, ridicule leaders, joke about their fate, and maintain some sense of individual freedom.

Music was vitally important as a shared experience for those serving in the military and those waiting anxiously back home. The U.S. government took great pains to deliver music to soldiers serving in all theaters of the war. Hand crank, spring-wound record players were widely distributed to military units, hospitals, and Red Cross facilities. V-discs—V for Victory—were phonograph records produced exclusively for the overseas forces and were not for sale in the United States. The armed forces produced 800 releases between 1943-1949 and distributed over 8 million twelve inch 78 RPM records. Each side of a record held 6½ minutes of music. Covering a wide variety of styles, the records included big band hits, jazz, symphony orchestras, top singing artists, and military marches. Many soldiers got their first taste of classical music from these recordings and developed a life-long appreciation. Against the stark setting of war, the recognition of beauty and value in previously unheard music would be forever imprinted on many men.



Courtesy of Remirus, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons.

Many enduring pieces of classical music emerged from the war years. Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" was composed as a response to the U.S. entry into the war. His "Appalachian Spring" and "A Lincoln Portrait" also came out of the war years. Richard Addinsell's "Warsaw Concerto" was composed for the 1941 film *Dangerous Moonlight*. While a prisoner of war in Stalag VIII-A, Olivier Messiaen composed "Quartet for the End of Time" for the instruments that were

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available—piano, violin, cello, and clarinet. The premier performance was in the prison camp for inmates and guards.

Those in concentration camps were often sustained by music. Czech-born Israeli classical pianist Alice Herz-Sommer, interned in Theresienstadt concentration camp, survived only because she was a musician. Along with other imprisoned musicians, she played in over 100 concerts performing works by Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Schumann, and Chopin. She later reflected, "We had to play because the Red Cross came three times a year. The Germans wanted to show its representatives that the situation of the Jews in Theresienstadt was good. Whenever I knew that I had a concert, I was happy. Music is magic. We performed in the council hall before an audience of 150 old, hopeless, sick, and hungry people. They lived for the music. It was like food to them. If they hadn't come [to hear us], they would have died long before. As we would have."

Music spared the life of Auschwitz survivor Anita Lasker-Wallfisch. She recalled when she arrived at the camp, "I was led to a girl . . . she asked me what was I doing before the war. And like an idiot, I don't know, I said, 'I used to play the cello.' She said, 'That's fantastic. You'll be saved.' I had no idea what she was talking about . . . [but] that was my salvation."

In less restrictive prisoner of war camps, the International YMCA was successful in providing some requested items. Prisoners of many nationalities were in some of these camps, hailing from any nation that was fighting the Nazis. Musical instruments and hymn books were always high on the list of requests.

Many of the most popular WWII tunes were very rhythmic and danceable. Those tunes had a kind of emotional contagion which helped bring together soldiers from all walks of life. A few of the favorite fast dance tunes were "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "In the Mood," "Pennsylvania 6-5000," "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo," and "Sing, Sing, Sing." As loved ones remained apart, sometimes for many years, songs imploring men and women to wait until service personnel came home were extremely popular. Top hits included



Aboard a transport somewhere in the Pacific, Marines provide a touch of jive to entertain the U.S. Coast Guard crew. Courtesy of the National Archives, ID 205583932.

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"Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree (With Anyone Else But Me)," "There's a Fellow Waiting in Poughkeepsie," and the Mills Brothers "Till Then." Hanging onto hope was easier when soldiers heard songs from home. Most service personnel experienced serious culture shock when they arrived in war zones. They were forever changed by their experiences and many struggled to reintegrate when they came home.

The opportunity for soldiers to dance with "a real live American girl" was a bonus. Those American girls were generally Red Cross volunteers. Requirements to serve in war zones were strict—only one in six made the cut. Women had to be at least 25 years old, be college graduates, and pass physical exams. Having an extroverted personality was a tremendous asset. The volunteers who drove their Red Cross Clubmobiles to military bases, hospitals, and camps close to battle lines served fresh donuts, coffee, and music to the troops. They were nicknamed "Donut Dollies." Besides equipment for making donuts and coffee, each Clubmobile had a phonograph with a loudspeaker and a large stack of records. The phonograph was in constant use when they were serving. A number of the volunteers were also singers who accompanied themselves on guitar. Some of the last music soldiers heard before their tragic deaths came from a Clubmobile record player.



American Red Cross Clubmobiles took hot coffee, doughnuts, candy, chewing gum, and cigarettes to soldiers in isolated camps where no Red Cross clubs were located. Library of Congress LC-USW33- 04248.

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In hospitals treating combat exhaustion cases, music could be a catharsis, something that finally got through to a non-responsive patient. Countless numbers of soldiers ended up in neuropsychiatric wards after seeing their best buddies killed. The reported combat exhaustion statistics are staggering: 17 percent of men broke after 1–10 days on the front lines, 20 percent after 11–20 days, and 37 percent during weeks 3–7. Music therapy was one of many treatments that helped return men to being whole. Music deeply engages with our primal instincts to survive, to love, and to protect others.

In a letter to her mother, an Army nurse serving in England wrote, "All kinds of creative and sensitive people come through our neuro wards. It seems like boys with these kinds of talents could have served their country by being in bands, USO groups, or the Signal Corps instead of the infantry where they couldn't cope."

"Victory Vertical" pianos were treasured by U.S. troops, lovingly cared for, often given names, and brought back to life when damaged. No new pianos were being made during WWII due to the diversion of metal for war purposes. Steinway & Sons' head of sales had the idea to create small, portable pianos with handles that could be used in military settings such as ships, hospitals, Red Cross facilities, and base recreation halls used for dances, concerts, and worship services. He sold the idea to the War Production Board in June 1943 and 405 pianos were ordered. By the end of the war, 2,000 Victory Verticals had been shipped to locations where troops were serving. Pianos came packed with sheet music, tuning tools, and instructions.

A Red Cross volunteer at an Army hospital in England wrote home, "You can't imagine how much the boys love to get around the piano and sing—morning, noon, and night."



The songs were a vivid reminder of the good things waiting for them at home.

The United Service Organizations (USO), chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1941, brought entertainers from back home to war zones and military hospitals. Most men could have never seen such an array of top name entertainers in the U.S. Soldiers were reminded of what they were fighting for. Bob Hope closed every USO show with his signature song "Thanks for the Memory,"

They hadn't seen one in 13 months, and I don't mean the accordion. Coast Guard troops aboard an invasion transport in the Pacific are treated to a USO show. They appear dazzled by singer and accordionist Babs White. Courtesy of the National Archives, ID 205586994.

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often changing the words to suit the situation. A member of Hope's USO touring troupe, actress Frances Langford sang, "Thanks for the memory, you're Uncle Sammie's crew, our men are far too few, I wish I could kiss each and every one of you." At that point, Bob Hope cut her off saying, "You want to get us trampled to death?" Langford, known as the "GI Nightingale," later recalled, "I'd sing a song, and I could just see the guys getting this faraway expression. I knew they were going home in their minds."

In the military, individual rights disappeared but soldiers found ways to maintain their own identity. Many soldiers escaped to a song in their head, a tune from childhood that was comforting, or a hymn with lyrics that helped combat fear. Like thoughts, a song in your head is private and personal—no one knows. It was a way to stay grounded. Music was always accessible to soldiers dealing with the stresses of the battlefield. In their minds, they could immediately access songs they knew. No record player, no piano, no audible voices. Imagine being in a foxhole on a snowy Christmas Eve singing "Silent Night" in your head.

Why does sad music sometimes make us feel better? Ultimately, we see music as a friend that's been with us at every stage of our lives. Sometimes, when our human friends are kind to us we cry tears of joy. Music affects us that way, too. The composer has done their job if you felt something. What music do you play when you're happy? When you need to cry? When you need comfort? When you need a reminder of a departed loved one? When you're in a stressful situation?

The expectancy of a well-known tune was vitally important to soldiers. Familiar tunes represented the peaceful life they once had, reminded them of loved ones, and of the faith in which they were raised. The unexpected in a piece new to them was exciting, too—a unique chord progression, a truly rich and wonderful chord in a surprising location, an unusual combination of instruments—all of that was thrilling in its own way.

The emotions connected with the music of the war years account for its enduring likeability. Interestingly, some of the most melancholy songs of WWII were composed in a major key—"I'll Be Seeing You," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," and "White Christmas." For those serving in the war, these songs linked positive and negative emotions—the longing for home and loved ones and the sadness of being trapped in a seemingly endless war. The visual imagery of the lyrics in these songs also brought back memories, sometimes happy and other times a deeply emotional reaction to a past event.

I'll be seeing you
In all the old familiar places
That this heart of mine embraces
All day through

The famous war era song, "I'll Be Seeing You," is fundamentally about love overcoming time and distance, and perhaps even death. It meant different things to lovers,

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parents separated from their children, and sons and daughters serving far from home. Service personnel abroad and Americans at home felt linked by the knowledge they were listening to the same tunes.

These few examples only touch the surface of the importance of music in WWII. Music then, as now, is necessary and vital for life. A world without music is unimaginable.

Conductor Leon Botstein summed it up succinctly in his *New York Times* article (3/3/91): "Music provided a tangibility and expression to the emotional turmoil of American citizens in the war, who clung to songs commemorating parted lovers, marching soldiers, and patriotic citizens. These tunes became anthems and mottos of their daily existence. The songs lifted weary spirits and gave them strength to move on. Through music, America was solidified in unity, strength, stamina, and determination, and the country was given a voice that was heard . . . around the world."

We'll meet again . . . don't know where, don't know when.



What Would We Do Without Music

by Linda Cheney



About Linda

Linda attended the University of Oregon, where she studied journalism and philosophy as an undergraduate, then interdisciplinary public affairs as a graduate student. She has lived in Lane County since 1964 and has been deeply involved in the community ever since. She has served on several Boards of Trustees, including the Maude Kerns Art Center, the Eugene Library Foundation, the McKenzie River Trust, and Volunteers in Medicine. A long time patron of the arts, Linda lives on a patch overlooking the McKenzie River. She loves gardening, music, reading and playing the stock market.

Music resides in the core of our souls. I have spent countless hours visiting friends and family in memory care facilities. On multiple occasions I have witnessed the joy that music brought. It is odd, in flashes of memory, the things that stay and the things that dissipate. Beyond the joy, residents who could not remember what day it was, even after asking multiple times and being answered each time, could remember the words to old songs. It was fascinating to join in. How could I (in my late seventies) remember the words, let alone these residents who were two decades older? Joan Baez talks about hearing a folk song at age 12 and 50 years later still knows all the words. Music appears to be the last remaining gift.

Music is survival. It pierces the soul. When I visited Cuba in 2002, I encountered people who had almost nothing in resources, but were experiencing joy as impromptu music erupted in the streets. Back home, an older friend with multiple health issues often visited and sat by my wood stove. The minute I played Bach's Mass in B Minor, she would say "That is healing music". It stimulates the brain and reduces stress. I was raised in both Anglican and Catholic churches, so my love for great Masses feels ingrained in my being and deepens my faith.

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Music leads one on unexpected paths. The existentialists tell us that even when a grain of freedom is not apparent, we still carry freedom of our mind. To hear music in our minds and heart is one of the greatest gifts life gives us. One evening in my twenties I attended an outdoor Baroque concert at the Hollywood bowl. That experience led to my being involved in the Oregon Bach Festival since its inception. I care deeply about it. I have attended the festival for years, taking many friends along to experience its beauty.

Music encourages persistence. Decades ago, I was desperate to hear Arthur Rubinstein play a piano recital in Portland, Oregon. I called and called the ticket office, day after day, only to hear repeatedly that the concert was sold out. I persisted. The day of the concert a ticket became available! Imagine my shock to learn that my seat was amongst chairs that had been added on stage behind the piano. To watch his magic hands and to witness his exuberance as he played encore after encore was an experience I will never forget.

Music is a conduit to our past memories. Old music evokes past loves and past experiences. Now in December, holiday music evokes memories of times with loved ones who are now deceased, and I feel their arms wrapped around me. Soon will come the “halcyon” days, the seven days before and seven days after the winter solstice. Halcyon evokes images of calm, carefree days. In its strictest interpretation, halcyon refers to a bird fabled to charm the wind and the waves during the winter solstice. Yet these holiday times are a period of least calm in most peoples’ lives. I believe music can be a salve for these times.

Music grounds us and connects us to ourselves. There is wisdom that comes from lyrics in a songs—universal wisdom, if you will. These great lyrics immediately come to mind. Peruse them and sing along by yourself. Or maybe better yet, find these artists on YouTube and sing along with them. Either way, you will have a fine time and will feel better for it.

Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans.

John Lennon

Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose.

Kris Kristofferson, via Janice Joplin

The story of life is quicker than the wink of an eye.

Jimi Hendrix

Get up, stand up.

Bob Marley

Don’t criticize what you can’t understand.

Bob Dylan

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There are places I remember all my life.

John Lennon/Paul McCartney via Bette Midler

Is this the real life, is this just fantasy?

Freddie Mercury for Queen

I've looked at clouds from both sides now.

Judy Collins

I read the news today. Oh boy.

Beatles

A long time ago I can still remember how that music made me smile.

Don McLean

You may say that I'm a dreamer but I am not the only one.

John Lennon

*You can't always get what you want but if you try sometime
you might find you get what you need.*

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, via the Rolling Stones

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

Judy Collins version

*Now the things that I remember seem so distant and so small though it
hasn't been that long a time what I was seeing wasn't really happening at all.*

Jackson Browne, via Joan Baez

*Perhaps love is like a resting place, a shelter from the storm,
it exists to give you comfort, it is there to keep you warm.*

John Denver

Take my hand, take my whole life too for I can't help falling in love with you.

Ken Darby, via Elvis

*I've lived a life that's full, I traveled each and every highway,
and more, much more than this, I did it my way.*

Revaux/Thibault/François/Anka, via Frank Sinatra

*I do not love for silver, I do not love for gold, my heart is
mine to give away it never will be sold.*

Glenn Yarbrough

What Would We Do Without Music?

I guess you never know, never know, and it's another day waking up alone.

Taylor Swift

The greatest love of all is easy to achieve, learning to love yourself is the greatest love of all.

Whitney Houston

Author and scholar Robert Philip explores the extraordinary history of music in all its forms, from our earliest ancestors to today's mass-produced songs. This is a truly global story. Looking to Europe, South America, Asia, Africa and beyond, Philip reveals how musicians have been brought together by trade and migration and examines the vast impact of colonialism. From Hildegard von Bingen and Clara Schumann to Bob Dylan and Aretha Franklin, great performers and composers have profoundly shaped music as we know it.

Martin Luther said "Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us." Berthold Auerbach wrote "Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." Plato wrote that "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything".

I am listening to the Pachelbel Canon at the moment. Next up, Rod Stewart. Whether I am attending a James Taylor concert or the Bach Saint Matthew Passion, my spirits are lifted.

Imagine, without music, where would we be?



One Song

by Anita Sullivan



About Anita

Anita Sullivan writes poetry and prose inspired by hours spent outdoors in the Willamette Valley, where she has lived for 40 years. Most recently she has published a second full-length book of poems *Original Flamboyance*. Her first essay collection, *The Seventh Dragon: The Riddle of Equal Temperament* was a look at the tuning system used on

keyboard instruments for hundreds of years. A more recent prose book *The Rhythm of it—Poetry's Hidden Dance* carries over some of the ideas from the tuning book to apply them to poetry.

I am not an eclectic piano player. That is, I don't have a large repertoire of pieces to play. In fact, I don't have a repertoire at all. I only play Bach. I used to play Chopin and Scarlatti and Beethoven, and Schubert. This, along with Hanon exercises, some Purcell suites which I xeroxed at the library, and a little Grieg and Brahms, was about it. But ten years ago when I inherited my grandmother's piano, I sloughed off the habits of childhood, and young adulthood, and early middle-age, and settle down to full-bore obsession. Now, not only do I specialize in Bach, but I specialize in his partitas, and in fact in the Second and Sixth partitas. I still play one of the two-part inventions, number nine, and I recently branched out to *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I*, the E-flat minor prelude, because I thought I ought to do something once in my lifetime with six flats.

The reason I am telling you all this is that I don't think it's so unusual, a fixation on one or two pieces of music. Of course, most of the time when I am tuning pianos I don't know what people are playing on them. I can see the music piled on the music rack, which I always have to take off and put onto the dining room table. I see impressive stacks of music, and I feel inferior, and this happens day after day, and it's very bad for my self-esteem.

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But I know somebody who bought a piano just so she could learn to play Beethoven's last sonata, the C-minor, opus 111. It's a big piece. She says she's learning a measure a week. "What will you do when you learn the whole piece?" I asked her. She shrugged. "I'll just play it and play it. I love the piece. It's the only thing I ever want to learn." She is a lawyer, and doesn't have time to really play the piano, she just wants this one accomplishment before she dies. And why not?

From my own experience there are certain advantages to concentrating on music from just one composer. I have played Bach so long that I sort of understand him in my bones—the love which comes from deep familiarity. In fact, when I bought a certain edition of the C-minor partita, and was playing through it for the first time, marking the finger, I came across one note which didn't sound right, and I checked it against the version of it I had copied by hand from an urtext in the library when I was a music student. Sure enough, the new version was wrong, so I crossed out the wrong note and wrote the correct one in. Also, now and then I find myself disagreeing with Bach. "Bach, old boy," I say, "you know, a B-flat instead of a B might have been preferable as the final note in the bass in the nineteenth measure of the Sarabande in the Second Partita," or "I think you switched from minor to major a bit too quickly in the twenty-fourth measure of the E-flat minor prelude, it's kind of tacky." These are the privileges of obsession.

There is something poignant, though, about the idea that across the whole United States there are people in rooms sitting down in front of pianos, playing their favorite song over and over again. I once tuned a lovely Mason & Hamlin grand for a retired math professor in his eighties who lived alone in a small apartment. When I was done we got to talking, and he admitted he had composed some music. I asked him if he would please play some of it for me, and he brought out a song, which he sang in his eighty-year-old voice, beautifully. "Oh, have you composed lots of music, then?" I asked. "No," he said, "Only this one song. It's the only song I ever wrote." I wondered then, what would have happened if I had just picked up my tools and walked out. And I think now how wonderful it is to compose, or to play, or to sing, in your lifetime, even one song.

Reprinted from The Family Piano, with permission of the author. This group of essays was from Anita's commentaries on NPR's Performance Today.



Music and Wholeness

by Jill Timmons



About Jill

Jill Timmons performs internationally as both a solo pianist and ensemble artist and has offered performances and educational residencies on three continents (www.artsmmentor.com). She has performed under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Arts and has recorded on the Laurel, Centaur, and Capstone labels. Ken Burns chose music from her Amy Beach recording with Laura Klugherz for the soundtrack to his PBS documentary, *The War*. As an NEA Fellow, she recorded the complete works for solo piano by American composer, William Bergsma. Timmons is a recipient of the Wilk International Literary Prize from the University of Southern California. The second edition of her best-selling career guidebook, *The Musician's Journey: Crafting Your Career Vision and Plan* (Oxford University Press, 2023) is now available. Timmons serves as the Artist/Teacher Affiliate with Classic Pianos in their seven locations throughout the US, and as a consultant to the Yamaha Corporation of America. In 2021–2022, she was a Visiting Fellow at Yale University. When she isn't making music or writing, you will find her exploring the natural beauty of Oregon!

She is a sensitive musician . . . Her playing is graceful, lyrical, detailed, and intimate.

—Tim Page, *The New York Times*

Timmons soars with the eagles. She plays with vitality and élan.

—*Fanfare Magazine*

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Most of us seek wholeness, consciously or otherwise. It's in our DNA—a kind of homeostasis. Let's face it, we know when we are out of balance, conflicted, or perhaps isolated in some dark corner of dualistic thinking. For me, it is music that can offer a clear pathway to the wholeness we seek. Music is an inherent integration of structure and artistic expression. The ephemeral melds with the eternal, where two disparate things can be true. Wholeness contains paradox, a quantum expression of things. Wholeness, a sense of personal integration, is something we can feel. True wholeness contains all aspects of the self: the dark and light, the serious and frivolous, the grief and joy, action and contemplation.

Moreover, the notion of wholeness is universal. Glynda-Lee Hoffmann, in her ground breaking book, *The Secret Dowry of Eve: Woman's Role in the Development of Consciousness* (Rochester, VT: Park Street, 2003, 54) beautifully describes a cosmic view of wholeness. "The pattern of wholeness is a universal constant and creates in the mind that understands it an awareness of cosmic organization. Such a mind leaps the boundaries of cultural perspective and begins to understand the nature of the cosmos. Such knowledge is neither humanly nor culturally based. It is a *recognition* of a cosmic pattern. That recognition has been termed *transcendence*."

Hoffman's thesis is a tall order, but one that musicians visit regularly. Who among us has not been transformed by this pattern of wholeness through the study, performance, or witness of an extraordinary musical work? When I was eighteen, I attended a performance of Olivier Messiaen's iconoclastic work for two pianos, *Visions de l'Amen*. Messiaen and his wife, Yvonne Loriod, over the course of 50 minutes, produced a mind-bending explosion of sound, imagery, emotion, and congruence. That performance became a touchstone in my work as a performing artist. Consequently, I expanded my exploration of music composed in the modern era, and eventually this became a focal point of my work as a pianist. Now, many years later, while composers and their works have come and gone, I have never wavered from my passion for contemporary music and the experience of wholeness and authenticity it continues to provide. In fact, this year, I am finally learning *Visions*.

Wholeness can offer us a powerful holographic model for life in general. It eschews an either/or perception and instead embraces a fecund middle ground where there are infinite possibilities. As musicians, we cognitively and intuitively already know this place. Can you imagine only one right way to play a Beethoven sonata? It's laughable, and yet, without fostering wholeness, we can encounter those righteous and authoritarian perspectives—one way, my way, I am right, you are wrong.

My former teacher, György Sebök, had great wisdom regarding wholeness. In developing mastery of a particular musical work, he taught that it required at least "three options." If you have only one way, there is a problem. With two, you have a dilemma. It is only with three and beyond that you *create* choices that eventually lead to a definitive interpretation and performance—definitely the realm of wholeness.

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Adding to our discussion, through current neuroscientific research available, we now have empirical evidence that the study and performance of music requires the whole brain and that musicians exhibit measurable anatomical differences. In the groundbreaking article “The Musician’s Brain as a Model of Neuroplasticity,” Thomas Münte, Eckart Altenmüller, and Lutz Jäncke describe how neuroplasticity allows the brain to adapt to environmental factors that cannot be anticipated by genetic programming (*Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 2 (June 2002): 476). “The neural and behavioural changes that are attributed to plasticity have been observed on different timescales, ranging from several minutes to the whole lifetime of the individual. Different processes are likely to support plastic changes at the extremes of this timeline. Accordingly, experience-driven neuroplasticity has been explained by both the de novo growth and improvement of new dendrites, synapses, and neurons.” In other words, our brains are capable of regeneration, renewal, and reorganization. Furthermore, according to their research, musicians’ brains are also a model of neuroplasticity, and the authors cite MRI evidence for anatomical differences in the brains of musicians compared with control groups—the primary motor area and the cerebellum differ in their structure and size in musicians. So not only is transformation physiologically possible, but musicians already have a predisposition for this process of expanded whole-brain function.

On other fronts, in 2016, neuroscientists at the University of Southern California completed a five-year study on the effects of music instruction on children. What they discovered is that “music instruction appears to accelerate brain development in young children, particularly in the areas of the brain responsible for processing sound, language development, speech perception and reading skills.” You can find the expanded report here: <https://news.usc.edu/childrens-brains-develop-faster-with-music-training/>. Call me naïve, but with this cutting-edge data, I am surprised that everyone is not clamoring for music lessons! Musicians’ brains exhibit structures which are greatly expanded and diversified.

Emanating from the individual, to the collective, music educators offer a healing modality. Through making music, we ignite the whole brain, create new neural pathways, and along the way discover wholeness. With mounds of data-driven evidence, children can acquire expanded brain function, resulting in enhanced academic performance within the curriculum in their midst. It’s a no-brainer! So why are we continuing to see music education programs systematically culled from our public schools? I have pondered this for years as I have fought vociferously to stem the tide. I suspect that the general population, led by school administrators and boards, is unaware of the concrete advantages of music study for their students. Enlightening the lay population about the benefits of music is a little like rolling the proverbial stone up the hill. Stay with me on this. The traditional arguments we have been making regarding the existential benefits of music are not working. We understand and value them, but we are speaking a foreign language to those who have little or no education about music’s application to a full

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brain/body workout, let alone any notion of wholeness. But we cannot throw in the towel on our advocacy.

If we look around at the results of our current *sales pitch*, we see scant results in expanding (or even retaining) the K-12 music programs that are so critical to the welfare of children and the future of our society. Yes, we can point to a number of impediments such as the heavily-weighted emphasis on standardized evaluation—teaching to the test. Sometimes district resources have been pared thin, and xenophobic educational reforms continue to create havoc not only for music but for all the arts. It can look like a withering path forward, and certainly one that does not celebrate wholeness.

Nevertheless, I believe that there is a hopeful option going forward, one that can be held firmly by educational leaders, teachers, parents, and the students themselves, all of whom have the power to transform how we advocate for music education. Rather than lauding the beauty of music, an encounter with the numinous, the intersection of collaboration and individual expression, the development of creativity and independent thought, and the joy and fun of making music—all things that we as professionals so dearly value—we must avoid power struggles with administrators and school boards. Instead, let's educate the populace as to how children, through the study of music, can quite simply do better academically! In a very real sense, they exhibit more highly developed brains. Studying a musical instrument is a full brain and body workout: auditory, fine motor, visual, linguistic, mathematical, cognitive, emotional, and enhanced memory, are just a few of the rewards. In short, as I have pointed out, the entire brain is working. According to the science available, music study and performance are singular in these claims.

We could turn to a new strategic approach in our advocacy for returning music to the mainstream of the K-12 curriculum. Our focus could be simply centered on how music study and performance can strengthen academic achievement and enhanced neuroplasticity. Brains on fire! Let's meet our audience on their turf, speaking in a way that is understood, and that meets their current goals and initiatives. Our case to be made includes an abundance of evidence. There is data to support this advocacy, the science involving brain imagining is irrefutable, and the ongoing research is broadly comprehensive. We can lean into what non-musicians may be more likely to hear: your students can have higher academic achievement through making music, and we can give you a picture of their new and improved brains!

Through music making we can experientially grasp our own innate capacity for wholeness. Here, for your consideration, is a brief video for parents, students, educators of all stripes, administrators and school boards. My clients and I have used this video for years and to favorable results, especially with parents. Here is Anita Collins' artful and informative TEDEd video: "How Playing an Instrument Benefits Your Brain." Currently, this video has had over 12 million views. Just under five minutes with clever animation, Collins indisputably and accessibly makes the case for the benefits of music study, and particularly for

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children. You may find this to be a simple yet powerful tool in advocating for music study. <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-playing-an-instrument-benefits-your-brain-anita-collins>

Early in my career as a music educator, I regularly conveyed to parents the importance of music as part of an overall stellar K-12 curriculum. All the while public-school administrators and boards were systematically razing the curriculum. It was the beginning of “teach to the test.” Conversations centered on reading and math achievement, grades, benchmarks set by the state, all the while faced with larger classroom numbers. At the risk of invoking “the good old days,” I had a very experience different experience during my grade school years. Our modest school district required music every day! Mrs. Nye, the K-5 fulltime music professional, meant business. We sang every day, students were required to read music (she made quick work of that), and we had public concerts several times a year. There was a sense of community—wholeness. At the end of the school year, classes combined for a blow-out choral concert. In making music together, divisions disappeared. Regardless of our cultural backgrounds, socio-economic conditions, and so forth, we were of one task—bring the music to the highest level. And yes, our brains were behaving differently. It may have been a sign of the times, but in this average public grade school in a midsize American city, there were no acts of violence. We were all choir members building community and learning how to rely on one another. Mrs. Nye wanted to “teach the world to sing, in perfect harmony . . .”

As we examine our nation today, we see the evidence of a fractured society hell bent on expanding divisions and isolation. There is a preponderance of dualistic thinking. I am right, you are wrong. Any notions of a workable middle ground are in short supply. Not to make light of this, but it seems to me that everyone could use a few music lessons! These days, I am ruminating a lot about wholeness. How can we as a culturally textured nation find that ephemeral wholeness that is so needed? It’s easy to think that as an individual there may not be much that one can do. Nevertheless, musicians hold the wisdom (and evidence!) to suggest otherwise. As a collective of musicians and educators, we have the power to advocate, educate, and demonstrate to K-12 leaders and parents the critical importance of music study as a weekly core curriculum (not just 20 minutes with a canned sing along). And to those students and families who want to explore further the study of music, we can provide access to private lessons through MusicLink, scholarships, and group lessons, thereby reducing the costs to families. You probably have your own well-honed practices.

Lastly, there are also new groundbreaking applications regarding music study that are emerging in the field of gerontology. Moreover, by 2030, “all baby boomers will be older than 65. Later that decade, by 2034, we project that older adults will outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history” (www.census.gov). Those of us who have private piano studios may want to plan for this demographic expansion.

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In short, music can bring us to wholeness. Both individuals and the collective can discover wholeness in ways that are experiential—that whole body/brain workout. Most of us want to scream from the highest mountain, this is what making music can do for you! But if that call is not enough, we can rely on concrete evidence that supports music's application in undergirding greater academic achievement and enhanced brain neuroplasticity. Our kids can simply do better in that "teach to the test" environment. Here's a secret, however. Once engaged in music study, students will discover community, collaboration, creativity, joy, and yes, wholeness. But you may want to save *that* information for later! I'm on my soap box about this and I don't intend to step down. I hope you will join me!



Welcome Address to Freshman Parents at Boston Conservatory (2003)

by Karl Paulnack



About Karl

Karl Paulnack lives in Ithaca, NY with his husband Dave and their dog Mato. Karl is a clinically trained interfaith chaplain at the Cayuga Medical Center and a peer mentor with the Cancer Resource Center of Ithaca. He is also a passionate but inexperienced potter and spends several hours most days covered in mud. Karl is a nationally recognized speaker, writer, workshop facilitator, and thought leader on the Power of Music. He has keynoted na-

tional conventions including Texas Music Educators Association, Organization of American Kodaly Educators, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Iowa Bandmasters Association, CBDNA, Michigan Music Conference, and many others. He retired as Dean of the School of Music at Ithaca College in 2020.

The speech that follows was given as a welcome to the parents of new freshmen at the Boston Conservatory on August 28, 2003.

One of my parents' deepest fears, I suspect, is that society would not properly value me as a musician, that I wouldn't be appreciated. I had very good grades in high school, I was good in science and math, and they imagined that as a doctor or a research chemist or an engineer, I might be more appreciated than I would be as a musician. I still remember my mother's remark when I announced my decision to apply to music school—she said, "you're wasting your SAT scores!" On some level, I think, my parents were not sure themselves what the value of music was, what its purpose was. And they loved music: they listened to classical music all the time. They just weren't really clear about its function. So let me talk about that a little bit, because we live in a society that puts music in the "arts and entertainment" section of the newspaper, and serious music, the kind your kids are about to engage in, has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with entertainment, in fact it's the opposite of entertainment. Let me talk a little bit about music, and how it works.

One of the first cultures to articulate how music really works were the ancient Greeks. And this is going to fascinate you: the Greeks said that music and astronomy were two sides of the same coin. Astronomy was seen as the study of relationships between ob-

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servable, permanent, external objects, and music was seen as the study of relationships between invisible, internal, hidden objects. Music has a way of finding the big, invisible moving pieces inside our hearts and souls and helping us figure out the position of things inside us. Let me give you some examples of how this works.

One of the most profound musical compositions of all time is the Quartet for the End of Time written by French composer Olivier Messiaen in 1940. Messiaen was 31 years old when France entered the war against Nazi Germany. He was captured by the Germans in June of 1940 and imprisoned in a prisoner-of-war camp.

He was fortunate to find a sympathetic prison guard who gave him paper and a place to compose, and fortunate to have musician colleagues in the camp, a cellist, a violinist, and a clarinetist. Messiaen wrote his quartet with these specific players in mind. It was performed in January 1941 for four thousand prisoners and guards in the prison camp. Today it is one of the most famous masterworks in the repertoire.

Given what we have since learned about life in the Nazi camps, why would anyone in his right mind waste time and energy writing or playing music? There was barely enough energy on a good day to find food and water, to avoid a beating, to stay warm, to escape torture—why would anyone bother with music? And yet—even from the concentration camps, we have poetry, we have music, we have visual art; it wasn't just this one fanatic Messiaen; many, many people created art. Why? Well, in a place where people are only focused on survival, on the bare necessities, the obvious conclusion is that art must be, somehow, essential for life. The camps were without money, without hope, without commerce, without recreation, without basic respect, but they were not without art. Art is part of survival; art is part of the human spirit, an unquenchable expression of who we are. Art is one of the ways in which we say, "I am alive, and my life has meaning."

In September of 2001 I was a resident of Manhattan. On the morning of September 12, 2001 I reached a new understanding of my art and its relationship to the world. I sat down at the piano that morning at 10 AM to practice as was my daily routine; I did it by force of habit, without thinking about it. I lifted the cover on the keyboard, and opened my music, and put my hands on the keys and took my hands off the keys. And I sat there and thought, does this even matter? Isn't this completely irrelevant? Playing the piano right now, given what happened in this city yesterday, seems silly, absurd, irreverent, pointless. Why am I here? What place has a musician in this moment in time? Who needs a piano player right now? I was completely lost.

And then I, along with the rest of New York, went through the journey of getting through that week. I did not play the piano that day, and in fact I contemplated briefly whether I would ever want to play the piano again. And then I observed how we got through the day.

At least in my neighborhood, we didn't shoot hoops or play Scrabble. We didn't play cards to pass the time, we didn't watch TV, we didn't shop, we most certainly did not go to the mall. The first organized activity that I saw in New York, on the very evening of

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September 11th, was singing. People sang. People sang around fire houses, people sang "We Shall Overcome." Lots of people sang *America the Beautiful*. The first organized public event that I remember was the Brahms Requiem, later that week, at Lincoln Center, with the New York Philharmonic. The first organized public expression of grief, our first communal response to that historic event, was a concert. That was the beginning of a sense that life might go on. The US Military secured the airspace, but recovery was led by the arts, and by music in particular, that very night.

From these two experiences, I have come to understand that music is not part of "arts and entertainment" as the newspaper section would have us believe. It's not a luxury, a lavish thing that we fund from leftovers of our budgets, not a plaything or an amusement or a pass time. Music is a basic need of human survival. Music is one of the ways we make sense of our lives, one of the ways in which we express feelings when we have no words, a way for us to understand things with our hearts when we can't with our minds.

Some of you may know Samuel Barber's heart wrenchingly beautiful piece Adagio for Strings. If you don't know it by that name, then some of you may know it as the background music which accompanied the Oliver Stone movie Platoon, a film about the Vietnam War. If you know that piece of music either way, you know it has the ability to crack your heart open like a walnut; it can make you cry over sadness you didn't know you had. Music can slip beneath our conscious reality to get at what's really going on inside us the way a good therapist does.

Very few of you have ever been to a wedding where there was absolutely no music. There might have been only a little music, there might have been some really bad music, but with few exceptions there is some music. And something very predictable happens at weddings—people get all pent up with all kinds of emotions, and then there's some musical moment where the action of the wedding stops and someone sings or plays the flute or something. And even if the music is lame, even if the quality isn't good, predictably 30 or 40 percent of the people who are going to cry at a wedding cry a couple of moments after the music starts. Why? The Greeks. Music allows us to move around those big invisible pieces of ourselves and rearrange our insides so that we can express what we feel even when we can't talk about it. Can you imagine watching Indiana Jones or Superman or Star Wars with the dialogue but no music? What is it about the music swelling up at just the right moment in ET so that all the softies in the audience start crying at exactly the same moment? I guarantee you if you showed the movie with the music stripped out, it wouldn't happen that way. The Greeks. Music is the understanding of the relationship between invisible internal objects.

I'll give you one more example, the story of the most important concert of my life. I must tell you I have played a little less than a thousand concerts in my life so far. I have played in places that I thought were important. I like playing in Carnegie Hall; I enjoyed playing in Paris; it made me very happy to please the critics in St. Petersburg. I have played for people I thought were important; music critics of major newspapers, foreign heads of

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state. The most important concert of my entire life took place in a nursing home in a small Midwestern town a few years ago.

I was playing with a very dear friend of mine who is a violinist. We began, as we often do, with Aaron Copland's Sonata, which was written during World War II and dedicated to a young friend of Copland's, a young pilot who was shot down during the war. Now we often talk to our audiences about the pieces we are going to play rather than providing them with written program notes. But in this case, because we began the concert with this piece, we decided to talk about the piece later in the program and to just come out and play the music without explanation.

Midway through the piece, an elderly man seated in a wheelchair near the front of the concert hall began to weep. This man, whom I later met, was clearly a soldier—even in his 70s, it was clear from his buzz-cut hair, square jaw and general demeanor that he had spent a good deal of his life in the military. I thought it a little bit odd that someone would be moved to tears by that particular movement of that particular piece, but it wasn't the first time I've heard crying in a concert and we went on with the concert and finished the piece.

When we came out to play the next piece on the program, we decided to talk about both the first and second pieces, and we described the circumstances in which the Copland was written and mentioned its dedication to a downed pilot. The man in the front of the audience became so disturbed that he had to leave the auditorium. I honestly figured that we would not see him again, but he did come backstage afterwards, tears and all, to explain himself.

What he told us was this: "During World War II, I was a pilot, and I was in an aerial combat situation where one of my team's planes was hit. I watched my friend bail out, and watched his parachute open, but the Japanese planes which had engaged us returned and machine gunned across the parachute cords so as to separate the parachute from the pilot, and I watched my friend drop away into the ocean, realizing that he was lost. I have not thought about this for many years, but during that first piece of music you played, this memory returned to me so vividly that it was as though I was reliving it. I didn't understand why this was happening, why now, but then when you came out to explain that this piece of music was written to commemorate a lost pilot, it was a little more than I could handle. How does the music do that? How did it find those feelings and those memories in me?"

Remember the Greeks: music is the study of invisible relationships between internal objects. The concert in the nursing home was the most important work I have ever done. For me to play for this old soldier and help him connect, somehow, with Aaron Copland, and to connect their memories of their lost friends, to help him remember and mourn his friend, this is my work. This is why music matters.

What follows is part of the talk I will give to this year's freshman class when I welcome them a few days from now. The responsibility I will charge your sons and daughters with is this:

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"If we were a medical school, and you were here as a med student practicing appendectomies, you'd take your work very seriously because you would imagine that some night at two AM someone is going to waltz into your emergency room and you're going to have to save their life. Well, my friends, someday at 8 PM someone is going to walk into your concert hall and bring you a mind that is confused, a heart that is overwhelmed, a soul that is weary. Whether they go out whole again will depend partly on how well you do your craft.

You're not here to become an entertainer, and you don't have to sell yourself. The truth is you don't have anything to sell; being a musician isn't about dispensing a product, like selling used cars. I'm not an entertainer; I'm a lot closer to a paramedic, a firefighter, a rescue worker. You're here to become a sort of therapist for the human soul, a spiritual version of a chiropractor, physical therapist, someone who works with our insides to see if they get things to line up, to see if we can come into harmony with ourselves and be healthy and happy and well.

Frankly, ladies and gentlemen, I expect you not only to master music; I expect you to save the planet. If there is a future wave of wellness on this planet, of harmony, of peace, of an end to war, of mutual understanding, of equality, of fairness, I don't expect it will come from a government, a military force or a corporation. I no longer even expect it to come from the religions of the world, which together seem to have brought us as much war as they have peace. If there is a future of peace for humankind, if there is to be an understanding of how these invisible, internal things should fit together, I expect it will come from the artists, because that's what we do. As in the concentration camp and the evening of 9/11, the artists are the ones who might be able to help us with our internal, invisible lives."

