

The Power of Music

By Liz Gibbons

Do you know that Orchestra conductors as a group often live well into their nineties? This is attributed to their daily upper body exercise which also helps move their lymph system and to continual doses of the elixir of music.

I don't have a particular song that I love. I like many kinds of music, and my mood seems to dictate what I want to listen to. I often enjoy listening to music that is very upbeat. It increases my energy and the sense of what I can do. At other times I desire something quieter and melodic. I often like to have a familiar classical piece playing in the background when I am eating a meal. For some songs it is the lyrics and message conveyed that I like as in the song *Imagine* by John Lennon and some of Michael Jackson's songs such as *Heal the World* and *Earth Song*.

Certain artists inspire me. Whenever I hear Andrea Bocelli I marvel at how magnificent his voice is. It sends shivers up and down me. I am inspired by Susan Boyle singing *I Dreamed a Dream* in her debut on Britain's Got Talent. No one can sing *God Bless America* with as much fervor as Kate Smith did. For an angelic voice, there is none better than young Jackie Evancho. Musicians who debuted in the 1960s that I like are Simon and Garfunkel and Peter, Paul, and Mary.

Some songs bring back memories such as the song *Autumn Leaves*. I remember hearing it at the coffee shop at the Union Building at The University of Michigan with my then boyfriend, who became my husband a year later. A Christmas Eve service with familiar Christmas carols can touch a deep chord in me and can bring me to tears. Hearing Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* brings back memories of attending the unique 4th of July concerts performed by the Colorado Springs Orchestra in Memorial Park when we lived there in the 1970s. The firing of several cannons brought in from Fort Carson provided the perfect accompaniment to the playing of the *1812 Overture* during the fireworks display.

Music and sound also have healing qualities. Sound therapy uses vibrational frequencies or audio tones to repair damaged tissue and cells in the body. The Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London regularly has live music performances for patients. A study showed that those patients who attended needed less medication and healed more rapidly than patients who did not experience live music. Several years ago the International Association of Sound Therapists, which is based in Atlanta where I used to live, invited the general public to attend one day of their annual convention for a nominal fee. I heard stories of practitioners who had used various sound therapies. One practitioner told how she used sound to heal the broken elbow of a professional tennis player. His doctor knew that if pins were used to mend the elbow the man would never play tennis again. He referred him to this sound therapist who was able to mend his elbow using sound currents.

Music can center us and bring us feelings of peace, joy, love, and motivation. It can aid in physical changes in the body that can promote healing. In addition to nutritious food and exercise, perhaps we also need a daily dose of music to keep us healthy. Have you had your

dose of music today?