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Events
Marketplace
Home

Newsletters
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Articles
Interviews
Discography
Bibliography
Resource Links
Quotes

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## What is Healing Music? A Closer Look

by Amrita Cottrell

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Since the beginning of recorded history, music has played a significant role in the healing of our world. Music and healing were communal activities that were natural to everyone. In ancient Greece, Apollo was both the god of music and medicine. Ancient Greeks said, "Music is an art imbued with power to penetrate into the very depths of the soul." These beliefs were shared through their Doctrine of Ethos. In the mystery schools of Egypt and Greece, healing and sound were considered a highly developed sacred science. Pythagoras, one of the wise teachers in ancient Greece, knew how to work with sound. He taught his students how certain musical chords and melodies produce definite responses within the human organism. He demonstrated that the right sequence of sounds, played musically on an instrument, could actually change behavior patterns and accelerate the healing process.

Plato shared this profound belief, "Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, gaiety and life to everything. It is the essence of order, and leads to all that is good, just, and beautiful, of which it is the invisible, but nevertheless dazzling, passionate and eternal form." Deepak Chopra has beautifully written, "Where is music? You can find it at many levels in the vibrating strings, the trip of the hammers, the fingers striking the keys, the black marks on the paper, or the nerve impulses produced in the player's brain. But all of these are just codes; the reality of music is the shimmering, beautiful, invisible form that haunts our memories without ever being present in the physical world."

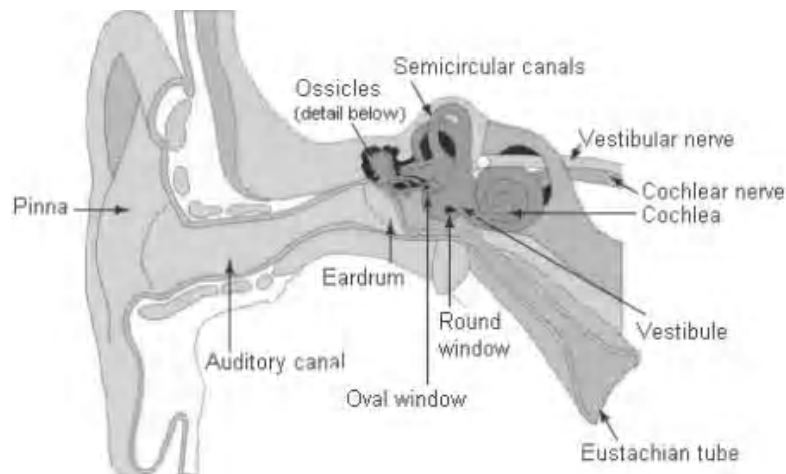
In 1993 Goldman & Gurin's work on psycho-immunology revealed that nerve fibers are contained in every organ of the immune system, which provide biological communication between the nerve endings and the immune system. They believe that there is a direct link between a person's thoughts, attitudes, perceptions, and emotions, and the health of the immune system. This being the case, we have the ability to be proactive in the health of our body, mind and spirit through music.

Music is a way to tap into the innate knowledge that resides deep in our cells. We live "in" music. Great music nourishes us in ways we don't even realize. It inspires us, relaxes us, energizes us—in short, it heals us and keeps us well. And music can be found everywhere in our world. While we may not always be listening to a Beethoven Symphony or a Mozart Sonata, the universe is a tonal symphony of many sounds interacting and vibrating together. Music is the pulse of the energy that courses in and through everything through vibrations.

Don Campbell, author of *The Mozart Effect*, says that music can be delicate and quiet, but never sedentary. Even a tone that extends for hours at a time, unvarying, carries a pulsing wave that affects our mind and body at many levels. What we bring to each sound is also of vital importance to our well-being. He goes on to say, "You, the listener, determine the final impact: You are an active conductor and participant in the process of orchestrating health through the listening process."

Felix Mendelssohn once said, "Music cannot be expressed in words, not because it is vague but because it is more precise than words."

### The Physical Process of Hearing



Our listening process starts with hearing. Beginning at the sixteenth week after conception and continuing until our death, hearing is a constant physical phenomenon. Sound waves are captured by the outer ear (known as the pinna), and travel down the auditory canal, through the eardrum and into the middle ear. There, the vibration of tiny bones called ossicles intensifies sound, and the amplified sound then travels to the inner ear through a maze of fluid-filled tubes, running through the temporal bone of the skull. Eventually the vibrations of sound reach the cochlea (a coiled chamber), which is lined with four rows of tiny hair-like acoustic sensor cells containing neurons. Each neuron is programmed to pick up a different frequency and the sound meets with the neuron that matches its own frequency. The cochlea then converts the vibrational energy to electrical impulses that travel to the brain, and from there, travel to the brain stem. This energy at the brain stem activates the limbic system. It is here that emotional and physical reactions are produced. Sound energy then moves on to the auditory cortex of the brain where we become conscious of the sound and can recognize what we are hearing.

As your brain comprehends the sounds or in this case the music, the electrical energy released by the neurons creates various frequencies of brain waves. The brain waves that are created (beta, alpha, theta, and delta) determine what "state of mind" you are in. Beta waves are most prevalent during focused and active thinking, alpha waves during relaxation and quiet creativity, theta waves during meditation and pre-sleep, and delta waves during our various stages of sleep (both dreaming and dreamless.)

Once through your brain, music in the form of electrical impulses make their way down your spinal cord causing an impact on the autonomic nervous system. This, in turn, can impact heart rate, pulse, blood pressure, and muscle tension. As an example, listening to the heavy metal will increase autonomic nervous system activity driving the heart rate and blood pressure up, whereas Brahms Lullaby will slow down the brainwaves and in turn lower blood pressure and hear rate.

### ***The Power of Chant and Toning***

Music of many different genres can help to enhance the mind/body connection. Healing mantras, chants, and incantations have ancient origins and are seen throughout history and in every major world culture-- Hinduism, Muslim, Judaism, Native American, Polynesian, Asian, Sufi, etc. The power of chant involves bridging the two worlds of humanity and eternity (spirituality.) It allows a person to touch a deeper world that is organic and flowing. Chant has no set rhythm, but rather it is based on the breath in combination with tonal patterns of sustained vowels.

Another powerful form of sounding is toning. There are many definitions of toning. Laurel Elizabeth Keyes, forerunner of toning as a healing art, and author of *Toning: The Creative Power of the Voice*, said, "Toning is an ancient method of healing...the idea is simply to restore people to their harmonic patterns." Don Campbell describes toning as, "Simple and audible sound, prolonged long enough to be identified. Toning is the conscious elongation of a sound using the breath and voice." John Beaulieu, author of *Music and Sound in the Healing Arts* says, "Toning is the simple and natural process of making vocal sounds for the purpose of balance...toning sounds are sounds of expression and do not have a precise meaning."

Keyes recounts in her book the time when she first started to experiment with toning. She said that it was more than just a release of tension. When she allowed the tones to emerge without trying to control them, she experienced a cleansing of her whole body. "I was convinced that there had to be a relationship between this natural body-voice and the mind without conflict, and with benefit to both."

Toning and chant have been making their way into mainstream culture over the last twenty years. Chant, the popular recording from the early 1990 by the Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos, Spain, sold over 4 million copies in forty-two countries by the Spring of 1994. These monks have committed themselves to a lifestyle that is based on cycles. Others do not experience these cycles in the world in the same way. The cycles revolve around the sacred liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, and include an intricate series of interlocking patterns within the organization. By submitting themselves to these cycles, the monks actually become part of this great tapestry of history and

sound.

Katherine Lee Mee, producer of the CD, says about this recording, "Time seems to stop. The darting mind falls still and attentive, arrested from its worldly concerns and preoccupations...like fire, each line has its own brightness and energy, a force that is called forth, raised and then surrendered. Like water, the music rises and falls in a gentle wave of love that bathes, cleanses, and caresses our spirits, leaving us buoyed up and restored."

The San Francisco Examiner music critic had this to say about Chant, "What we're talking about is inner peace, transcendence, a serenity, beyond mortal care. For a generation that frowns on organized religious movements (or organized anything), this is, without a doubt, the new soul music."

Powerful affective responses to music can be witnessed in the lives of spiritual masters. Their physical health reflects their spiritual health as well. They experience this power through practicing the art of music and chant as a means of obtaining spiritual enlightenment. Where did the ancient chants originate? Were they evolved from logical thought processes that were later transferred to a musical format? Or rather, were they birthed from those who had learned to harness the healing powers of their spirit, and given expression through their spiritual practice to bring the ecstatic experience into vocal and instrumental form through music?

Jill Purce, pioneer in the field of healing with the voice and author of "The Mystic Spiral" says, "One of the effects of chanting is the dissolution of boundaries, and when this happens something new can take place in the psyche and body of a person. Chanting seems directly to stimulate the emission of certain chemicals in the brain, such as endorphins, which give rise to states of enhanced awareness, blissful calm, and other deep meditative states." Jill teaches the practice of overtone chanting throughout the world. This form of chant is has its origins in Eastern cultures. The Tibetan monks seem to reach into the heart of Mother Earth with their deep toning and lift the tones to heaven as the beautiful overtones rise naturally from the powerful bass notes.

Mongolian overtone chanting comes from the nomadic culture of Siberia. The throat singing, part of the Mongolian folk culture, reflects many of the sounds heard in the nature around them. Often this type of chant resembles the sounds of birds and crickets and other sounds that can be a little unfamiliar to Westerners. However, Purce, says that, "Enchantment really means to make magic through chant." And that she does in the workshops she teaches about chant throughout the world.

### ***Music as Therapy***

Music allows us to transcend the everyday states of consciousness and travel to places that either a memory of to a place of creative imagination. This process of transcending the mundane evokes psycho-physiologic responses when people shift into altered states of consciousness. When an individual uses music for relaxation, their abstract thinking is slowed down while they remain in a normal waking state. As they continue with their process of relaxation, the individual moves through the remainder of the six states of consciousness, which are: expanded sensory threshold, daydreaming, trance, meditative states, and rapture.

In these states of consciousness, time takes on a different meaning for the individual. Often during music therapy sessions, people will lose track of time for extended periods, which in turn helps them to reduce feelings of stress, anxiety, fear, and pain.

Stress has become, in modern society, the subject of many best-selling books and is often a lead story in the news. Non-invasive and easily accessible ways to deal with stress have now become sought after by the mainstream society especially with the highly controversial use of illegal and prescription drugs and the potential hazards they pose with long-term use. People need to be educated about the remedial effects of music as therapy. Unfortunately, many people still feel that music used as therapy is just another liberal health fad. This notion comes from their ignorance on the subject. Despite this belief, music therapy continues to be a growing occupation. There are more than 5,000 certified and licensed music therapists in the United States working in hospitals, rehabilitation units, health-care and educational settings. The American Music Therapy Association now recognizes 68 schools in the United States who offer programs of study in Music Therapy.

Music Therapy is a non-verbal type of therapy, as opposed to other types of therapy where the client talks about feelings and experiences of life. Music Therapy presents an alternative to traditional types of therapy, and provides the following benefits to patients:

- ▶ More direct access to thinking and feeling states.
- ▶ Opportunity to "contain" feelings for periods of time so that these can be explored, examined, and worked through for the individual.
- ▶ Non-verbal expression of thinking and feeling states that are not yet within the verbal domain for the individual.
- ▶ Elicitation of imagery and associations that are not accessible through verbal means.
- ▶ More direct physiological benefits for the individual than verbal methods.
- ▶ Freedom to explore and try out various solutions to patient thinking and feeling problems through exploration and creativity.
- ▶ There are many applications of Music therapy in our everyday lives and the fields of treatment are very broad, encompassing psychotherapeutic, educational, instructional, behavioral, pastoral, supervisory, healing, recreational, activity, and interrelated arts applications.

Barbara Crowe, past president of the National Association of Music Therapy, suggests music and rhythm create their healing effects by calming the constant chatter of the left brain. "A loud repetitive sound sends a constant signal to the cortex, masking input from other senses like vision, touch, and smell," she explains. When sensory input is decreased, the normally noisy left brain with its internal conversations, analyses, and logical judgments subsides to a murmur, stimulating deeper parts of the brain that are throne-rooms of symbols, visualization, and emotions. "This is the seat of ritual in tribal societies," she observes. "There is a clear, distinct parallel between traditional shamanism and the practices we do in music therapy today."

Raymond Bahr, Director of Coronary Care at St. Agnes Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland contends, "Without a doubt, music therapy ranks high on the list of modern day management of critical care patients...Its relaxing properties enable patients to get well faster by allowing them to accept their condition and treatment without excessive anxiety."

Laurie Riley is the founder of The Music for Healing and Transition Program, a certification program that trains people to serve the critically ill and dying with live music to promote healing or assisting in the life/death transition. This program offers another level of certification in healing with music. Certified healthcare musicians play live music at the bedsides of the ill and/or dying in clinical settings, but no interaction is required of the patient, who may be unable to interact (comatose, noncommunicative, heavily medicated, or dying). The music is offered to enhance the environment, without the necessity of setting a specific goal for the patient.

These well-trained practitioners play in pre-op, post-op, neonatal, ICU, NICU, CCU, ER, oncology, obstetrics, and sometimes OR, as well as in general care areas. They are trained in clinical deportment, legal issues, infection control, appropriate repertoire, corporate compliance, music skills, resonance science, entrainment, anatomy/physiology, monitoring, observation skills, and so on. There are several training programs, overseen by a national standards board. Titles include Certified Music Practitioners, Certified Harp Practitioners, and Advanced Certified Clinical Musicians. (The latter trains its students in professional-quality musicianship as well as therapeutic-level music skills.)

Certified healthcare musicians' clinical expertise falls between that of a well educated sound healer and a Board Certified Music Therapist, thusly:

1. Sound Healers use music and/or sound for self-healing, and sometimes in private-client or group settings, and are not necessarily certified.
2. Certified healthcare musicians (CHP's, ACCM's, CMP's) offer live music at the bedsides of inpatients in hospital, hospice, and nursing home settings, as an enhancement to the healing environment and an adjunct to medical care.
3. Music Therapists use goal-oriented therapy, with music as the main tool, for private, group, and/or inpatient clients.

Healthcare musicians are carefully instructed never to attempt to do verbally or physically interactive work involving music, as this is the realm of the Music Therapist. We absolutely respect the marvellous work of Music Therapists. Likewise, I feel strongly that sound healers should be instructed that they may not call themselves Music Therapists, Music Practitioners, Harp Practitioners, Harp Therapists, or Clinical Musicians, and that certification is necessary to work in a clinical/medical setting.

### ***How Music Affects Us***

How does music affect our well-being? It seems that there is no definitive answer to that question. However, experts in the field of music and sound therapy feel there are two major ways in which music and sound can affect our lives. The first is the principle of entrainment. This refers to the phenomena of being in sync. In other words, our bodies automatically adjust to the pace, rhythm, or pulse of the music. How many times have you walked into a room with other things on your mind and heard music playing? You stop to listen for a few minutes and all of the sudden, your foot is tapping to the music or you are swaying your head or body with the beat. Or, a certain piece of music evokes memories of a time when you heard the music before, and the feelings of that time come immediately back into your awareness? How is it that we can hear a musical jingle in a commercial that we haven't heard for maybe 20 or 30 years and we can sing it as though we just learned it? In scientific terms, our psyches and bodies become entrained to the sonic environment created by the music. And what is more, the music becomes a part as it becomes stored in our memory.

### ***The Effect of Music on Society***

In the west one of the most memorable periods in popular music was the era of the Beatles. When they appeared on the scene in 1963, with lyrics like, "You say you want a revolution, well you know, we all want to change the world", that is exactly what their music did. Their powerful music accompanied us through the trio assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, the 10 years of the Vietnam War, and the nuclear threat and cold war. The world emerged from these powerful historical events in a different way. Somehow the innocence of the 1940's and 1950's was gone. The music of the Beatles offered us hope in a time of great despair, and to this day continues to brighten the lives of young people who find themselves singing along with the memorable lyrics and recognizable melodies.

### ***Music for Entrainment***

Entrainment is a powerful tool in behavior modification. In effect, the principle of entrainment directly relates to the Greek word isomorphic (commonly referred to as the ISO principle). Isomorphic means same form or appearance. Therefore, musical entrainment is actually a process of joining with feelings conveyed in the music and sensing the feeling of commonality with it. One might almost have an experience of feeling a connection with the composer or performer by sharing emotions and feelings conveyed in the music, either through its creation or through the performance itself. Music in this sense can be a powerful tool in both positive and negative ways to the listener. Music entrainment is more than just a tool to be used for behavior modification, however. Music has the power to integrate the whole, person allowing profound healing on many levels.

Music is one of the few experiences that can touch a person on all levels of consciousness. It is a powerful sensory stimulus that can work simultaneously on the body, mind, and spirit. Vibrational entrainment, as a result of listening to music, can bring harmony to the body by actually entraining the body with the music. It can have a transformative affect on an individual by moving through the body systems and bringing about harmony. Through the use of music, positive affects have been seen in the nervous system, affecting the endocrine system, which in turn enhances the immune system.

For centuries shamans have used drums and vocal sounds as an integral part of healing practices in indigenous cultures. They often went into a trance themselves through the power of music, which they used as a tool in assisting the healing process.

### ***Music for Diversion***

A second principle that music utilizes in affecting patients is the principle of diversion. This method of utilizing music and sound is helpful in taking the attention away from an unpleasant or unwanted situation. An example of diversionary music is the playing of bright, happy, energizing music when the listener feels down in the dumps. Music, in this sense, can be used in a therapeutic situation to reduce anxiety and pain, transporting the listener to another reality temporarily during the healing process.

The International Association of Pain has defined pain, "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage." In more esoteric terms, pain is a symptom of disharmony. Pain can be viewed as a series of sounds or vibrations that send messages to the brain indicating a disharmony in some part of the body. Think of this vibration as an alarm sounding to warn of a problem in the body. The mind and body can be re-programmed or harmonized to a place of harmony and healing by entraining it with soothing music.

### ***Music as Medicine***

Music enters into the body through the ear, and the bones of the body act like a tuning fork. The neurological fields of the body are then stimulated by music. Music is a means by which all people can feel these healing vibrations. Even people with profound handicaps can benefit from music's healing affects. Research in physiological responses to music supports the hypothesis that listening to music influences a person's autonomic responses. Science has proven that music focused in the higher register increases tension. Conversely, music played in the lower register reduces tension. Music that is played at a tempo of 80-90 beats per minute increases tension, while music at played at 40-60 beats per minute decreases tension.

According to Dr. Arthur Harvey, there are four distinct ways in which our brain responds to music: cognitive, affective, physical, and transpersonal. In other words we can experience music by analyzing its structure (melody, harmony, rhythm, tone, form, etc.), by feeling the music with our emotions, by noticing the affects of music on our heart rate, breathing, etc. or feeling a connection to God through music.

When Music is used as medicine it is used in a way that directly affects the health of the patient. An example is the use of music in "audio-analgesia." Music is used in this way to alleviate or lessen pain, and can be used, at times, in lieu of pain medications. When music is used in this way, it is a necessary component in affecting the outcome of the treatment.

Vibrational therapy sessions can be used to affect physiological changes such as lowering of blood pressure, heart rate, and muscle tension. Studies have shown that music used as medicine can increase the immune function and decrease ACTH (stress) hormones. Music and sound has also been shown to kill cancer cells. As outrageous as this may seem, studies have shown this to be true. I have first-hand experience with this because of my own miraculous healing from breast cancer by the use of sound.

Another benefit of "healing" music is to stir our emotions and feelings, to help us deal with grief, sadness, anger or other feelings. By allowing us to really experience our feelings, the intensity will eventually lessen and even dissipate, resulting in healing. When we avoid our feelings (consciously or unconsciously) they tend to build up inside. They don't just go away. Music and sound are wonderful tools for helping us to deal with feelings within us, whether we're aware of them or not.

"The powers that be can be communicated to earth by means of music are as yet scarcely suspected by the average individual. But the time is fast approaching when people will select their music with the same intelligent care and knowledge that they use to select their food. When that times comes, music

will become a principal source of healing for many individual and social ills, and human evolution will be tremendously accelerated." – Corrine Heline, Esoteric Music

### ***What Type of Music is Healing?***

After all this, you may ask yourself, "What type of music is healing?" When most people think about healing music they think only about music that relaxes them. While this is certainly true, it is not the only type of music that is healing. Someone who may be lethargic or depressed might feel like they could use a "musical cup of coffee." In that case, they would want to use music that has a fast beat or perhaps a distinctive rhythm. It is important to first determine what the desired outcome is, and then choose the music that fits the desired outcome. There are some important factors to take into consideration when choosing music for healing which include: speed, rhythm, instrumentation selection, volume, complexity, harmony or melody, pitch and tone, and last but not least, the lyrics.

**Speed:** Here you would focus on the number of beats per minute of the music. You can use 80 BPM (beats per minute) as a benchmark in determining speed. If you choose music with 80 BPM or less, the music will tend to induce relaxation. On the other hand, if you choose music that is more than 80 BPM you will find it is more stimulating. You can easily find the beat of a particular piece of music by using a watch or clock with a minute/second hand. Start the music and tap your fingers or feet as you feel a natural beat of the music. Once you have determined the beat, watch the clock and count until a minute has passed. This will give you a very close proximity to the BPM of the music. Some of the more meditative music, such as "New Age" may be very difficult to determine the natural beat, but you can feel pretty sure that it will be below 80 BPM. This type of un-metered music has been created for producing theta and delta brainwave states.

**Rhythm:** The rhythm of music is determined by the length and accent of the sounds. A good rule of thumb is that the more complex the rhythms in the music, the more stimulating affect the music will have on the listener. On the other hand, slower rhythms or constant beats will produce a hypnotic affect on the listener causing them to become more relaxed. You certainly have heard the loud booming base sounds coming from vehicles. This type of beat can be very over-stimulating to the nervous system. This booming beat coupled with the volume with which it is most often played, is not only not healing, it can actually be detrimental to your health.

**Instrumentation:** Instrumentation is an important part of the affect that music has on your physiology, your emotions, and your spirit. However, it is a very personal choice. All [instrumentation](#) can be healing in specific situations. And, the affect of the instruments is combined with the other factors we are listing here.

**Volume:** Sound waves are energy and they impact your brain with electrical pulse or pressure in the ears. The higher the volume, the more pulse/pressure, the lower the volume, the less pulse/pressure. Simply said, loud music will stimulate, soft music will relax. How soft should the music be? That will be determined by the activity or the outcome associated with the listening. If the idea of the music is for entertainment and the mental focus is on nothing else, the music can be louder. However, if the music is for relaxation, or pain relief, the music should be played softer.

**Complexity:** Have you been to a symphony where the orchestra is warming up. Each instrument may be playing a short piece of beautiful music, but each member may be playing a different piece. It sounds wild and frenetic and very stimulating. Your brain doesn't know what to focus on. The brain's job is to find order, and that is why it is so uncomfortable. The brain is reeling, trying to discern all the different sounds or instruments. Now think of a classic trio playing a guitar, flute, and cello. This is easier to listen to; you can follow one instrument or the other, or you can just take in the harmonies of all three together.

Remember this rule—the simpler the complexity of the music, the more relaxing it will be; the more complex the music is the more stimulating it will be.

**Harmony:** Harmony comes from two or more musical notes being played together, which sound like they go together and complement each other. A beautiful chord played on a piano or guitar is examples of harmony.

Complementary sounds or harmonies create consonance, while notes that sound like they don't go together create dissonance. Lots of music is made of up consonance and dissonance dancing together creating tension and resolution. Another consideration is whether the music is played in either a major key or a minor key. Music that is played in a minor key is said to feel more poignant, moving or emotional. This type of music can be used for meditation or emotional healing. Remember that music from other world cultures will reflect their own scales, keys and harmonies, which may be very different that of western music.

**Melody:** Melody is the line in music that we find ourselves humming or singing along with. We know the tune from listening to it previously, or by hearing something similar in the past. A simple melody can be quite relaxing; however, a complex melody can be quite stimulating. Music that has no definable melody known as anxiolytic music and is used in medical situations for deep relaxation and pain management. The reason that this type of music is so effective in these situations is that the brain can't think ahead and anticipate what notes will come next in a melody that isn't there—instead the brain tends to just disconnect it's desire to consciously listen and it relaxes into the experience.

**Pitch and Tone:** The pitch and tone of instruments and voices are what distinguish a flute from a trumpet or a bass from a soprano. Music that has many variations of pitch and tone are more stimulating, while music that has a narrow range of pitch and tone will be more soothing. Music that

uses a drone instrument or instruments will be very relaxing. A drone is a continuous tone that serves as a foundation for the rest of the music. Many cultures around the world use a drone as an important base to their music.

**Lyrics:** The lyrics in music can make all the difference in whether music is healing or not. You might have a piece of music that has a slow melodic and simple melody, with the steady and gentle beat, that contains words full of hate. This music is not healing. Hateful or disrespectful lyrics are not healing. In order for a piece of music to contain healing qualities, the lyrics must be uplifting and loving words. Words can heal or they can destroy. Dr. Masaru Emoto, an alternative medicine physician in Japan, has conducted years of research on the affect of words and music on the quality of water. The implications of his research create a new awareness of how we can positively impact the earth and our own personal health by the words that we speak.

### ***Music for Healing or Healing Music-What's the Difference?***

We've now learned about the many ways that music can be healing, through the tempo, the tone, the volume, the complexity, etc. About thirty years ago, a new type of music was born—healing music. You might ask what makes it different and why. The main difference is that the music was composed and performed or recorded with the specific intention of healing the listener. Again, you may ask how this could make a difference. Earlier I referred to the work of Dr. Masaru Emoto and his research on the effects of words and music on water. Dr. Emoto also did studies on the effect of words and music on cooked rice. He found that un-refrigerated rice that was prayed over and sent thoughts of love and healing stayed sweet and fresh for weeks longer than rice that was either left alone or was sent thoughts of hate and disrespect.

We know in our everyday life how important our thoughts are and the words we either use to describe ourselves or the words that we use in conversation with others can be. Which situation do you feel more healing: 1) someone who puts you down all the time and criticizes you; or, 2) someone who tells you how wonderful you are and how much they love you? If you are like me, you will choose the second scenario every time over the first.

This new type of music is like that; it is created with a "healing intention." Many of these musicians and composers will actually go into a meditative state when they compose or perform this music and hold a thought and vision of healing coming from the music. While this may not be able to be scientifically measured on a daily basis like Dr. Emoto's work, the feedback from many people is clear. This type of music has a tremendously healing affect.

### ***Which Type of Music Do We Use and How Do We Use It?***

Moviemakers seem to be the experts in this arena, don't they? And, often we are completely unaware of its effect on us. Try watching a movie that you've seen before with the sound off. When the story gets to a particularly scary or tense moment, turn the sound off and see if you have a similar reaction as you did the first time. Of course, since you know already know what is about to happen, it won't be the same as if you never saw the scene before, but you will get a sense of how powerful the music was in setting the tone for the scene. If you ever saw the movie Jaws you know what I am referring to. Music can be used to intensify fear, induce laughter, create tension, or make us sad and so forth. The industry actually has a term for this type of music. It is called mood induction procedure (MIP) music.

Now that you know a bit about the different factors of music, you can put conscious forethought into the music you use for yourself and others. Are you agitated by the traffic, stressed from work, sad about a relationship, worried about your health, or some other situation in your life? You can actually choose music that will take you from one mood state to another.

We referred to the ISO principle earlier, and that's what you will apply when selecting music in these instances. You can think of the ISO principle of music selection like a train or a bus (leaving from one location, taking a journey, and arriving at another destination.) With the ISO principle you match music at the beginning of the process to the current emotional/physical state, and then gradually change the music to faster or slower, or music that is more complex or more simple, or music that is in a minor key or a major key as a way of changing mood to a more desired mood.

As an example, when you are feeling anxious, if you just put on some dreamy New Age music, your mind and emotions will probably resist, which can actually amplify the undesired mood. But, if begin the music selection with music that reflects the undesired mood (so you can identify with it) and then gently change the music, song-by-song, you will gradually find that your mood changes. Try it and see if works for you. With a little practice you will find that you can actually make music compilations that you can use therapeutically for yourself and others.

With music all around us, in our lives at work or home, try to pay more attention to what you hear and what you play. Use music as a tool to balance and manage the mind and body. Think of music as a wonderful therapeutic tool that can be very enjoyable. Music has many qualities; learn to use them to your advantage.

Music used in the appropriate way can be healing. The key is to use wisdom and listen to what our inner healer tells us about how music makes us feel. There is no one type of music that is healing music in every situation. Listen to a wide variety of musics and pay attention to how you respond with your whole being (mind, body, and spirit). The Healing Music Organization ([www.healingmusic.org](http://www.healingmusic.org)) has compiled a large listing of music that can be used in various situations. You can find these listings in

the discography section of their website.

By no means are these the only pieces of music that are healing, and the lists may change dramatically over time as more and more people become involved in this exciting field of health and healing. We also would like to take this opportunity to say that music should not take the place of seeking sound medical and spiritual advice about your health. On the other hand, some type of music can always be beneficial whatever the situation. Happy listening.

### ***What Kind of Music is Healing?***

Music that energizes our body

Music that stimulates our brain

Music that awakens our feelings

Music that ignites our soul

Music that relaxes our body

Music that calms our mind

Music that unwinds our emotions

Music that restores our soul

Music that motivates our actions

Music that helps us unwind

Music that wakes us up

Music that helps us sleep

Music that expands our thinking

Music that helps us not to think

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### **MORE INFORMATION**

In May, 1999, Amrita was diagnosed with breast cancer for the second time in two years. She knew that "conventional treatment" was not the journey she wanted to take again. Amrita entered a shamanic journey into the spirit realm, trusting her own process as teacher and healer. With no handbook or physician to guide her, she entered an unknown world of intuition and trust. She followed

her own spirit essence and inner knowing to an astonishing experience of eradicating the cancer within two months by using the sound of her own voice, breath, and emotional release.

Amrita uses sound and music in a private and group healing practice throughout the San Francisco Bay area. She is the founder and director of The Healing Music Organization in Santa Cruz, California and is on the faculty at California Institute of Psychoacoustics in San Francisco and Vox Mundi School in Emeryville, California.

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*Music without words means leaving behind the mind. And leaving behind the mind is meditation.  
Meditation returns you to the source. And the source of all is sound. — Kabir*

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