

Natural Healing Express Weekly

Column Volume 74 Vitamin M, The Healing Power of Music, Part I

As I sit here writing, ironically enough on National Margarita Day, the snow is falling in massive amounts and can't get the lyrics Let it Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow out of my mind. This song written by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne performed by Bing Crosby, Dean Martin and most recently by Harry Connick, Jr.

So, I took that as a sign it is finally time to begin writing about The Healing Power of Music or as I have decided to label this therapy – Vitamin M. I hope to do this justice since I am not an expert in this category, but as a rabid music lover and I have personally witnessed the many different types of healing that music has brought about. Think about the times we use music to heal and enhance our lives as we celebrate our fortunes and lament our losses.

We can easily recall the blessed wedding song of “Here Comes the Bride / The Wedding March from the Opera Lohengrin written by German composer Richard Wagner. Everyone recognizes this as the moment in time while attending a wedding to stand out of respect for the bride as she walks down the aisle.

On the other end of the spectrum, have you heard the moving Vince Gill tribute, “Go Rest High on That Mountain” played for those leaving us behind at a funeral?

How about the simple blessing of celebrating birthdays with those you love singing in group, “Happy Birthday to You” written by Patty and Mildred Hill in 1893. Everyone knows the lyrics of that song and a high percentage of the time, many of us make up our own final verse.

So, let's go on to those old time Christian Hymns such as “Amazing Grace” by John Newton written in the 1700's. Newton was an ex- slave trader turned minister. Amazing Grace is based on his life changing epiphany of bringing God into his life. While we're on Christian Hymns, think about “How Great Thou Art”. This fantastic hymn was written by a Swedish Pastor having a very difficult experience with a storm while at sea.

If you're one of the hold outs that still don't believe that music has made an impact on your life, let's take a jog memory lane as suggested by Trisha Yearwood's, “The Song Remembers When.” One lyric is “we were headed straight for Eden, It was just around the bend, and though I have forgotten all about it, the song remembers when.”

Let's put this to practice for a moment. Where were you when you first heard the American Anthem “The Day the Music Died” which is actually entitled “American Pie” by Don Mclean? How many of you actually know why he wrote this? Do you remember what car you were driving at the time? This is called cellular memory and music is a huge part of this.

Here's another. How about Alabama's “Play that Mountain Music or Feels So Right”? Does that instantly remind you of another decade, another place, another season but still twinges your heart because it's part of your soul?

How about your first love song or the first time you thought about a boyfriend or girlfriend? Not sure about you but I am instantly transported into the lyrics of John Mellencamp's, "Little Ditty about Jack and Diane." Wasn't that the way it was supposed to be done?

And no matter where I am in this beautiful country of ours, if some live blues musician starts playing Robert Johnson's "Sweet Home Chicago," you betcha I am singing along. Although Chicago is a little bit of a drive, we still pay homage because we're not from Detroit, so we're calling it good.

All I am attempting to do in this article is make the association between music, its moments in your life and how it becomes ingrained into your cellular memory without any effort on your part. And from that place, it became part of your healing.

Some stick with you simply because they were unbelievable performances such as Joe South's "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden" performed by Liz Anderson. How about Dolly Parton's "I Will Always Love You" – the spectacular and chilling rendition by Whitney Houston? Remember the Bodyguard?

Or in 1964, anyone heard of the Beatles? I bet if you're in that age group, you can remember the living room layout and television set model (yes, black and white, kiddies) where you first witnessed the Fab Four.

Still don't think music plays a huge role in your life and helps you to record moments in time?

I will always and forever remember exactly where I was when I watched my friend Toby Keith belt out, "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue, The Angry American Song," shortly after 9/11. Yes, it was a bit controversial but it instantly became a ballad for our servicemen working their butts off to defend this country. Still gives me chills on recall, and yes, Trisha, the song remembers when.

While I am on a patriotic rant, I must mention of course, our National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner", written by Francis Scott Key regarding the war of 1812. What fierce and beautiful writing it took to pen out a ballad we, as Americans find sacred. As it endures, so should we.

And as a shout out to race fans everywhere, just like Happy Birthday, we add to the last verse which goes something like this, "Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave....Gentlemen, Start Your Engines."

Next week, the mechanics and history of Music Therapy.

Enjoy! Hope to see you soon and as always, please contact us via one of the following methods. Natural Healing Express: Phone 815 990 8732, email: skscham@aol.com 204 W Main St, Lena, IL 61048.

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