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How to Think Music
   (Schirmer)

The Philosophy of Music
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Home Music Lessons
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HARRIET AYER SEYMOUR
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How To Use Music For Health

Nowadays practically everyone uses music in some form or other as a means of health. A friend of mine was recently speaking of this fact and she burst forth with: “Oh yes, I know because I always use Spanish music to cure my depressions.” Since our depressions come from our fears, and music is an antidote to fear, this is understandable. But most people use music for health without realizing it. They either find relief in playing the piano, or in singing, or by tuning in to a radio broadcast, or using a record.

One young friend of mine who suffers from fits of ill-temper dashes to the piano and gets relief. Think of the people who go to concerts and so unconsciously find a remedy for their restless minds and bodies!

But you can get far better results if you know what music to prescribe for yourself, and for others. For instance, we would hardly use The Ride of the Valkyrie to cure insomnia, and
a case of depression would scarcely be dispelled by the playing of a funeral march.

Musical therapy, or the Music Cure as the ancients called it, is as old as the hills. Haven’t mothers always soothed their babies with soft lullabies?

Today, due no doubt to our great need of release from tension and fear, music is playing an important part in the lives of men, women and children everywhere. But there is a scientific way to use music for health, and this is what we are talking about. Children need the right kind of music as much as they need fresh air and sunshine. They need it even when they are well, and more so when they are ill. For children unconsciously absorb what is about them. The conversation at home, the voice of the radio harping on economic depression, the war scare, and so on, create an atmosphere of misery, and children feel it. “Thoughts are things,” and even scientists are telling us that thought has form and color, and is as real as the table or the chair.
The healing power of music will dispel these fear producing thought forms, and it is easy to apply. If a mother is unable to play or to sing, records and the radio are at hand. She can begin the day happily by putting on a gay folk dance record, and repeating it a number of times. Then in the evening she can use lullabies, and repeat them. This is when the children are well.

But when they are ill, a modern mother can work magic with music. If she is one of the thousands who have studied and stopped, here are a few suggested records:

(1) For Happiness and Stimulation
- Strauss Waltzes
- Sousa Marches
- Gay Folk Dances
- Ballet Music
- Allegros from great Symphonies

(2) For Quieting and Healing Pain
- Lullabies—Sung by Great Artists
- The Swan—Saint Saens (instrumental)
- Sky Blue Water—Cadman (sung or played by strings)
- Beethoven’s Minuet in G
- Schubert’s Serenade
(3) Just for Listening and Enjoying

Opus 68 — Schuman, played by Bauer, Cortot or some great pianist

Sousa Marches
Strauss Waltzes
Selections from Gilbert and Sullivan
Mendelssohn’s Spring Song
Lohengrin—Wedding March
Parts of Haydn and Mozart Symphonies
Some Victor Herbert such as Naughty Marietta

Record of bird calls
Ol’ Man River—Kern
Negro Spirituals

When a child cannot settle down to sleep, music will often do the trick. Most children are very sensitive and need a great deal of rest. They often resist a nap. But if you will darken the room and turn on soft music, and be quite casual about it, before you know it a little curly head has relaxed on the pillow and is off to the land of nod.

When illness has weakened a child, the record to use is one of Sousa’s Marches, played
by a good band; or a fine recording of a Strauss Waltz. This music will energize and strengthen. Play it often, for this purpose.

Babies of two will rock back and forth peacefully to music, and older children forget their ills by singing along with familiar songs.

Use music as an important part of life, like air and sunshine. It will quiet the nerves, cure the "dumps," and really help to maintain health, and prevent disease.

Everyone is interested in the tired and har-assed business man. He often complains that when they were first married his wife used to play for him every evening, and it rested him. A woman need not be a brilliant performer in order to do this. Indeed, the average man dreads "performance." What he wants is some familiar air, something calming, like the Schubert Serenade—something to relax him physically and mentally.

People often ask: "Well, just what is the process—how does music do us so much
good?” It can be explained in this way. Music can reach us on three levels. The first, of course, is purely physical. Sound pours through the bones, the nerves, the whole organism. It gives us what has been called a molecular massage. It is really a vibratory treatment.

Here is a true story of an actual occurrence in one of our New York City Hospitals:

**MAN AND DEAFNESS**

A man who had been blinded and deafened by a recent accident was a patient in one of the hospital wards. He was being visited by his brother when the musicians appeared. During the music the brother came up to the leader of the trio and said, “Do you mind if I bring my brother up here? He can’t hear anything, but I’d like to bring him up close to the music.” The musicians arranged a chair beside them, and then the leader asked what his nationality was. When he learned the patient was Irish, they played “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling.” Suddenly the patient said, “I hear music.” The brother could not believe him and said, “Oh no, that isn’t possible. What are they playing?” “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling,” was the reply. The brother still could not be-
lieve, so the patient beat out the time of the song. The nurse came over, and then they told him to sing what was being played. He began to sing, "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." The brother emptied his pockets of money and said, "I am a poor man; this is all I have, but this is the most wonderful thing."

Needless to say, the musicians returned the money, glad in the knowledge that the patient was recovering from his shock.

Some doctors explain the healing effect of music by saying that the vibrations of sound reach the affected part and restore harmony. Science tells us that the power of sound will "kill disease germs, cook eggs, shatter glass" and so on. In other words sound is powerful. So we find that the vibrations of sound affect our entire organism. Here is a way of trying this out on yourself. Lie down on a comfortable couch and listen to some good music well rendered—say a Haydn or Beethoven Symphony. Since many of our troubles come from tension, and listening relaxes us, just mere
listening to good music is a positive help to the nerves. So, lie down, relax, let go of every worrisome thought, and let the music pour through you. You will feel rested and refreshed, if you do this. Just the vibrations of sound will help to give you a pause from worry and fear.

The second level is the emotional. We all know how powerfully music can affect our emotions. A Tchaikowsky Symphony has frequently caused hysterical weeping; military music puts glamour over war; and a wedding march or a funeral march will recall memories full of emotion and stir us to our depths. Elmer Gates (great authority on emotional life) says, "I have discovered that bad and unpleasant feelings create harmful products in the body, which are physically injurious. Pleasant, benevolent and cheerful feelings create beneficial chemical products which are physically healthful. It has been found that for each bad emotion there is a corresponding chemical change
in the tissues of the body, which is life depressing and poisonous; and every good emotion makes a life-promoting change.” Such is the finding of science.

We all know that fear, worry, hurry and anger are destructive emotions and cause disease. We know, too, that Faith, Peace, Love, Courage, Generosity and Kindness are constructive. Music is harmony and can lift us out of the effects of wrong emotion, if we know how to use it.

Try deliberately using music to wipe out emotional disturbances. You will notice the good effect. All that causes disease is dropped from the mind and peace is restored. In a recent article on mind treatment, by a noted psychiatrist, this statement is made, “If the patient can be made to listen attentively, he is likely to be cured.” How true this is. The first step in receiving the benefits of music is to relax and listen. The next is—choosing the right music suited to the result you are need-
ing. If you are playing for your own benefit and need stimulation, play marches, dances, bits from operas, jigs and you will be exhilarated. If, on the contrary, you need quieting, use soft melodies, such music as the Brahms *Cradle Song*, the Chopin *a Minor Waltz*, Mendelssohn *On Wings of Song*, Cadman *Sky Blue Water*.

The rendering of soothing music should be extra soft. If played by strings, they can well be muted. If you do not play an instrument yourself, tune in to the Marine Band concert, or put on a good march record, and be sure to repeat it, until you feel stimulated and happy.

Doctors are now using music for quieting the anxiety of patients who are about to undergo an operation. And so, if you are contemplating such an event, ask for some music, either radio or phonograph. The effect is that instead of apprehension, there will be serenity and calmness. For this purpose any soothing music, such as has been suggested, is good, and
have it repeated over and over, until the anaesthetic has taken effect.

Coue had the right idea when he asked people to affirm that they were "better and better." Some children in a tuberculosis ward turned the Blue Danube Waltz into a song with words. The words are "I'm happy and gay." The nurses found that after a repeated dose of this waltz-song, the children were feeling decidedly better. During the war the return soldiers used to call the Chopin Prelude No. 1 the "courage prelude" and would hum the word "onward" to it. They said it helped them. Music and words of peace or power will work wonders. Just try this when you hear a fine symphony. It's really a sort of mental treatment you are giving yourself.

For insomnia there is nothing like music. If you are one of the many people suffering from this trouble, and do not want to take narcotics, you can find relief in music. There are hours of music on several radio stations, from 10 to 12,
perfectly adapted to this purpose. Try to let go of cares and worries and turn the dial so that the sound will be soothing. If you cannot stop thinking, dwell on some pleasant spot in the woods or by the sea, as you let go to the music. Little by little, you will be lured away from tension and worry, and sink into a deep restful sleep.

To sum up, we know what happens on the physical level when music is used therapeutically. We understand the effect of music on our emotions. There is a third level, known as the higher or spiritual plane. When the right music is played for patients who lie suffering and miserable in hospital beds, music comes in like an angel of comfort and hope. Sometimes a patient in pain will be moaning, or a child will be crying for its mother. Music comes in and the soft strains of muted strings play the Beethoven Minuet or a familiar folk song, like County Derry. The atmosphere changes, and everyone feels at least a little better. Doubtless, you have
all felt indescribable effect of lovely music, but you can deepen this effect if you consciously look for it. We then realize the presence of finer forces which sweep away the lower wave lengths, and transport us to a realm of harmony within ourselves. The music clears the channels.

This higher, and really healing effect, comes often from the simplest music if it is beautifully rendered. It has nothing to do with technique. The person who plays must not only be a good musician, but must really want to help.

This third level often restores balance and health, when other means have failed.

It has been found that the music of different composers is especially valuable for specific diseases. For paralysis and kindred troubles, Beethoven and Brahms are good. For nervous diseases, familiar melodies like the Melody in F, Liebestraum, Chopin’s simpler Preludes, Waltzes and Nocturnes (repeating the melody part over and over) and such songs as Song of India, are
useful. For tuberculosis, use out of door music, the wind, the tinkle of bells, sound of water. For cardiacs, use very rhythmic music, preferably in 3/4 or 6/8 time such as the Rhine music, repeated over and over, the first part of Kammennoi-Ostrow, and parts of Chopin Waltzes and Nocturnes.

Do not use modern music for people who are ill. The irregular pulse and lack of form is more disturbing than healing. Jazz stimulates, but on a low level, and a little goes a long way.

Popular music has some value, but a little goes a long way here too. The great exception, however, is humor. If a song is really funny, it is priceless. Laughter and joy create health. Great music awakens the best in us. Even the so-called unmusical person will derive more pleasure from the classics than from inferior, or soulless patter. But it must be heard over and over, in fact, repetition is a paramount factor in
getting definite effects. To create mood, and bask in it, is the healing magic.

If you will try these simple suggestions, you will find in music a release, a medicine which is always helpful, and sometimes a cure. When the therapeutic value of music is experienced and understood, it will be considered as necessary as air, water and food.

If you plan to listen to some music every day for your health's sake, you will surely increase your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.
Harriet Ayer Seymour is well-known as musician, teacher, author, and lecturer. She is now coaching and lecturing on Musical Therapy. She is Chairman of the Hospital Music Committee of the New York City Visiting Committee.