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Music to Soothe the Beasts in Us

BY JOY D. GRIFFITH

When a member of Golden Threads stated that she believes "Music Heals", I began thinking about sound, vibrations and the influence on the human body...sort of music through your ears leading to a healthy body not the blaring disco music where rhythmic decibel intensity incites dance movement leading towards physical exhaustion!

Sound can really help you when applied the right way, because it can release energy and help your body heal. Music therapy is used in dental offices to ease pain and reduce stress (one of my friends brings her own classical CD to her dental office) to the treatment of Alzheimer's disease to improve memory. Soft-tissue injuries can be healed through ultra-sound and photographs are taken of fetuses through this high-tech device.

Most of us already use music-sound therapy. Prevention Magazine ran a "music-health" survey and found that 82 percent reported that music eases tension and stress. I used to play Mozart in my classroom just for listening pleasure. Several years later, I read about a study made at the University of California at Irvine where that college found that students listening to Mozart for 10 minutes scored higher on intelligence tests than they did after listening to relaxation tapes. (It pays to be selective!)

We can actually harness the healing power of sound by listening to music that quiets our minds and relaxes our bodies. Why do you suppose recent CD's have the sounds of ocean waves lapping up to shore or gentle raindrops falling or the sounds of the forest with wind blowing through the trees? We can listen to the soothing strings of a symphony or learn toning...those series of elongated vowel sounds to ease tension and energize the body. The best part of all of this is that we can learn to do this for ourselves!

When I saw the movie *Winter Guest: Come in from the Cold* starring Emma Thompson and her mother Phyllida Law, I couldn't get the sound track fast enough, in fact the CD shops around Burlington didn't even have it listed on their computers so I had to order it from London, England. I used the entire sound track for a closing ritual to a weekend

lesbian gathering of nearly 200 women who needed that last reassurance of bonding, courage and strength for another year. It was this same CD, when placed into a car stereo, that caused the driver to cry 25 miles on her

sion and commitment. "Windows to the Sky" was waiting to be born. The melody flowed effortlessly and merged with what I consider a window to another reality, a stepping back from daily routine."

Whether I listen to "Blos-



The brain interprets and sends directions that help control breathing, heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension and even release painkilling endorphins.

way to work. She hadn't realized how much strain her body had been harboring until she arrived at work refreshed from the release given by this "tonal prescription".

Pythagoras developed 'prescriptions' of music for his students 2,500 years ago. He advised his students about the sounds that would help them in their work and aid them in relaxing and sleeping. These waves of energy have variables creating special qualities. The ear collects these waves and sends the impulses to the brain. The brain interprets and sends directions that help control breathing, heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension and even release painkilling endorphins. Perhaps when all of these factors are combined, it is then that the body begins to heal itself?

I was very fortunate to recently meet, Peggy Madden, a Vermont musician, composer and producer. In her very words she states: "Do I choose to write music, or does the music choose me as a vehicle for its own self-expression? A bass line, a melody, the timbre of a particular sound, a dream — any of these may be a worthy basis for a new composition. ... a relationship is formed between myself and the composition. There develops pas-

soms of Eternal Moments" or Peggy's "Moonbeam Chase" on her "Windows to the Sky" CD, I've not only become relaxed but refreshed with a smile coming from within. If the theory that sound waves can balance energy centers in the body thereby promoting health, then we need to be selective and "enjoy" music-healing.

Peggy's magic should be shared with everyone: Sistrum Records, P. O. Box 355, Randolph, VT 05060, email: peggy@madtrax.com or <http://www.together.net/~peggy>.

