

A LIGHT IN THE MIST

THE JOURNAL OF HOPE


A HEALING ENVIRONMENTS PUBLICATION
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*...music is a
medicine of the soul.*



PLATO





And music is a prime factor

in such a transformation,

for music is a medicine of the soul.

Music was bestowed on man

for the sake of effecting harmonious revolutions

of the soul within us whenever

its rhythmic motions are disturbed.

Thus when the soul has

lost its harmony, melody and rhythm

assist in restoring it

*to order and concord. **

We go to music for so many things. Joyful, sad, playful, lonely—music

has the power to arouse our passion or to still it, to validate and enhance a mood or to change it. But whether we want to deepen or lighten our spirit, when music gives form to feeling it relieves us of carrying the full burden inside. And with expression comes a certain freedom and sense of being more in harmony with ourselves. Paradoxically, as we listen to music we are also listening to ourselves. The music is a bridge between our inarticulate world of thought and sensation and the outer world.

All the elements of music combine to work their magic. A melody or harmony may suddenly move us to tears — or elation. Slow rhythms tend to relax and steady, faster rhythms to increase pulse and breath rate. If we're in physical or emotional pain, music can take us out of ourselves, reminding us there is another reality of beauty and sensuous pleasure. Outer harmony helps restore inner harmony. And we may never need this more than when we are hospitalized for an accident or illness.

I'm one of a new breed, a hospital musician. A few hours a week I tour the units of Stanford Hospital with a cart of portable CD players and an eclectic selection of CDs, helping patients choose music they like. Ten years ago it would have been unlikely that a volunteer with no medical training would have access to patients. But music has gradually become a presence at Stanford Hospital, and our arts staff includes two harpists, a guitarist, and an art therapist.

There are also several live concerts each week. I'm a classically-trained pianist and I sometimes sit at the piano in the atrium and play an impromptu concert. Inevitably people gather. Last week a doctor who'd come out of a difficult eight-hour surgery heard the piano and stopped to rest. He said the aria I was playing from Bach's Goldberg Variations revived him by reminding him of the larger picture. He said he felt more accepting of the outcome of the operation he'd performed. Nurses and aids often stop during their break to listen. Patients attached to IV stands, who hear the music as they're walking in the corridors, may come by for a few minutes. So do patients' families and friends, who may be holding bedside vigils. One husband of a very ill woman said that the music reminded him there was still beauty and meaning in the world. "At least there's this to be grateful for," he told me. Another time a social worker who'd been counseling a distraught woman whose husband was seriously ill told me that after listening to a few minutes of Schubert's Impromptus the woman said that life would go on for her and it could be a good life.

When I visit a patient's room with the music cart, I usually begin by asking, What music inspires you and gives you energy? or, What music makes you happy? As they browse through our eclectic collection I may make suggestions, depending on what clues I pick up from our conversation. Sometimes I'll let a patient listen to a piece such as the gorgeous *Andante* from the Rachmaninoff Cello Sonata without telling them what it is. They may be surprised to discover a new piece they love. I've had requests for everything from Bach to country western, classical Indian ragas, Christian music, James Taylor, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Broadway musicals, Louis Armstrong, Mozart, Enya,

Debussy, ocean surf, the Gipsy Kings, Duke Ellington, and hip hop. We will never have it all but our collection continues to expand in ways I would never have predicted. Still, our focus is on music that has healing qualities. From the same root as wholeness, healing means different things at different times. What guides me in selecting music? I look for music that is both the best of its kind and that is life-affirming and positive. Most people I meet in the hospital want music that is upbeat and cheerful, even when it is soulful. Cesaria Evora's singing is like this. On a different note, so are many arias by Handel, who's riding a wave of popularity. When suffering from serious illness or accident, people often turn to music that connects them with a transpersonal energy—God, a higher power, the ground of being. Many pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, and Mahler carry and support energy. Spirituals and hymns are strengthening too.



In general, healing music is that which soothes and gives rest to the heart. There is a place for dissonant music, which can express and move emotional or psychological blocks, but not when people are physically weakened. At difficult times we need strong images of beauty, meaning, and vitality—even moments of ecstasy and rapture—that can counter the debilitating effects of pain and loss. The simple-seeming, beautiful textures of Mozart's slower movements are favorites because they refresh and clear the mind. Stringed instruments such as the harp, guitar, piano, violin, and cello tend to have a warm, approachable sound that soothes; whereas the exciting effect of high pitched instruments or voices takes more energy to process. Low pitches and dark tone colors like that of the cello resonate lower in the body and seem to ease pain. Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* brought one woman to tears which were part of the healing process as she integrated the new reality of a mastectomy. On the other hand, patients sometimes want music that is lively and energizing, music that reminds them of the life outside. When appropriate, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, Beethoven's Symphony #7, Roy Rogers' rhythm and blues for slide guitar, the Beatles—whatever your taste and tolerance for music with a strong beat—gives the body patterns of rhythm that organize and motivate movement. Dance music such as Chopin Waltzes and Mazurkas or perhaps a Cajun stomp by Beausoleil has helped many patients through the necessary rigors of physical therapy. Neurologist Oliver Sacks, who has written about the benefits of music on people with problems ranging from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease to orthopedic injuries, calls music "the quickening art."

I've noticed that people usually know at once what they want and need from music—once they hear it. That's why, if they don't

know, I let them listen to a CD for a few seconds. If they break into a smile I know it's the right music. Seeing the smiles and tears that break through pain and fear are my reward for this work. I'm amazed at the courage and kindness of the people I meet, who are often seriously ill. And even if they don't want any music, people appreciate being asked. It makes them feel cared for. When patients are especially excited about our service, we encourage them to write a response on a comment sheet we enclose inside the Ziplock bag with the CDs and player. Here are a few of these:

From a man who'd received a new kidney earlier in the week:

"Beethoven's Ninth Symphony reminded me how much I want to live, how much I love life. After listening to the music I was able to pray again."

A woman whose legs had both been broken in an automobile accident wrote: "I was beginning to think I'd forgotten how to walk until the energy in Mendelssohn's exuberant Octet literally moved me along in its jet stream."

Another woman, recovering from a stroke: "Listening to Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music* just makes me feel better about the world, more hopeful and optimistic. There's so much joy in her voice."

An elderly gentleman who has Parkinson's wrote: "In *Paradisum* from Faure's Requiem brought me great consolation. I don't fear what's ahead as much as I used to."

From a man, recovering from heart surgery: "My chest has been feeling so numb and wounded. I've been trying to separate myself from it. But when I heard the 'Romance' from Chopin's piano concerto I was able to feel my heart still warm and capable of great feeling."

One young woman wrote that Debussy's music had taken her "to a place by a stream where I once spent an idyllic summer day. Just the thought that I could be there again had made me happy and anxious to recover."

Those who are responsive to music don't need studies to prove it helps them feel better; they know it. At times of loss, pain, and illness, music can be a lifeline, a connection to better times of health and well-being. I have seen people's bodies visibly relax while listening to music, and it has been shown to reduce anxiety before surgery and reduce the need for pain medicine afterwards. Dr. Raymond Bahr asserts, "half an hour of music produces the same effect as ten milligrams of valium." One study concluded that the immune system could be positively affected by music when it showed an increase in white blood cell count in those listening to music they liked. And many use music to ameliorate the nausea of chemotherapy. It's not just the sound but the power of music to stimulate positive imagery that brings healing. The imagination's ability to create its own reality is at the heart of healing.

Good music, like the best art of all kinds, can be redemptive. It not only relieves our absolute value by addressing the best in us, but points the way to transformation—as Beethoven proceeds to expand the first four notes in his Symphony #5 into something grand. The healing power is within each of us, but music is the great catalyzer.

—MAUREEN MCCARTHY DRAPER,
DECEMBER 28, 2002

Maureen is a pianist, teacher, and the author of *The Nature of Music: Beauty, Sound, and Healing* and two CDs by the same name. She is currently teaching a class for Stanford University's Continuing Studies program. If you are interested in attending a music and poetry retreat at her home, contact her by email at modraper@ridgewine.com

COURAGE

HEALING STRINGS

ALL ABOUT THE MELODY

For this young family, it had been a difficult and miraculous spiritual journey as 35-year-old Paul Parks battled Glioblastoma, a tumor in his brain. This devoted husband and father had

recorded his thoughts on video for his young daughters whom he said had already surpassed his hopes and dreams.

The family eagerly accepted the invitation for me to bring the harp into their home. Immediately, I sensed a unique awareness as I entered the bedroom where Paul lay. His young daughters joined his wife, Cindy, in the family bed to comfort him as the mid-size Celtic harp slowly entered the room. Fragility and intense love demanded my greatest respect and attention.

As I began to play hymns upon his parents' request, I noticed 7-year-old Sarah peering curiously at the harp. I sensed her true desire to contribute to her father's comfort. Responding willingly to my gestures to sit upon my lap, she quickly straddled my leg and embraced the harp. Sarah's fingers massaged the strings as if they had always danced among them. I asked her where her father might like to "visit" to offer him a musical retreat. "The beach!" she replied with surety.



After I set the musical background with few notes, Sarah intuitively played the waves, the birds, the wind and all she knew of that healing place of peace. I told her, "This is the best present you could give your Dad." She played on while bright-spirited sister, Rachel, watched and her mother beamed through misty eyes. We watched her father soften his expression, seeming to gratefully join her there in his favorite oasis.

Later in the living room, with relatives gathered around, Sarah and Rachel's hands devoured the harp. Two small hands on one side and two on the other, noses pressed against the strings nearly touched one another. They played in delight as if drinking from a musical fountain.

Beside their father's shell collection one year later, two spirit-filled girls take turns at their handheld stringed psaltery, dreaming of a harp in their future. The strings have become a safe and natural place for the outpouring of emotion and inner comfort, a place where each of us can find our inner thoughts and feelings, where we are never alone.

—CHRISTINE MAGNUSSEN

Christine Gilliland Magnussen founded the ACCHORD therapeutic music program in 1996. She continues to offer therapeutic harp music in hospitals, hospices and cancer centers. Her tribute CD, *On Wings of a Dove*, was masterfully recorded by cancer survivor, Ron Davis, in his A Wing and a Prayer Sound Studio in Oregon. The CD is being used in healthcare and grief programs throughout the country. Therapeutic music information and comments by cancer and hospice patients may be found with music samples at www.HarpSpirit.com

*Music should enrich the soul;
it should teach spirituality
by showing a person
a portion of himself that he
would not discover otherwise...
enrichment, that's the
function of music.*

BILL EVANS

VISIT OUR IMPROVED WEBSITE

*Remember the images, words
and Rumi poems in the
recent holiday issue?
Now you can print them out
in any sequence for
your own personal needs.
Once complete, our site will also
feature archived issues from past
A Light in the Mist newsletters
and an online portfolio of
projects that we have designed.*

Please visit us at our interactive website
at www.healingenvironments.org

Admittedly, I spend a bit more of my discretionary income on CDs than is probably wise. However, few earthly goods

give me more pure pleasure than the sounds of Stephane Grappelli's jazz violin, a Celtic ballad, or Blossom Dearie's rendition of *Someone's Been Sending Me Flowers*. My recent favorite, *The Melody at Night, with You* by Keith Jarrett, is, coincidentally, a perfect selection for this issue of *A Light in the Mist*. In its simple, evocative renderings of such standards as "I Loves You Porgy," the CD is somewhat of a musical departure for Jarrett, who is known for his consummate jazz improvisation and personal intensity.



COVER OF *THE MELODY AT NIGHT, WITH YOU* BY KEITH JARRETT

Recorded as a Christmas present for his wife, the CD is particularly interesting to me in this context because it was recorded in his home studio during a period when Jarrett was suffering from a tenacious case of chronic fatigue syndrome. Although Jarrett does not regard the making of the recording as therapeutic, per se, he does acknowledge that the whole process was quite transformative. In an interview with Josef Woodard in the May 2000 issue of *Jazziz*, Jarrett remembers: "I had the need to play, but I had an inability to be my old self. I had to reinvent how to play and get at least what I was used to getting from playing, and then I discovered that I was actually getting more from less. In theory, I always knew that could be true, that it could be all about the melody." And, for me, Jarrett's melodies in their spare lyricism are more than enough.

—DA

*Musical training is a more potent
instrument than any other, because
rhythm and harmony find their way
into the inner places of the soul.*

PLATO

DUOUS VOICES

THE POWER OF MUSIC TO HEAL

DJANGO

SPIRIT. GLORIOUS. CAREFREE. ROMANTIC. RHYTHMIC. LOOSE. BOP. SWING. FRESH.

Django Reinhardt with only three fretting fingers to play with is hailed as the single-most important guitarist in the history of jazz. In his late teens Django lost the use of two fingers in a trailer fire and a friend gave him a guitar to lift his depression. As he recuperated from his burns, Django invented a whole new fingering system that paralleled full mobility.

His work, especially with violinist Stephane Grappelli in the Hot Club of France in the 1930's has been recently rereleased by Mosaic Records. —SS

The Complete Django Reinhardt and Quintet of the Hot Club of France Swing/HMV Sessions 1936-1948 is available at www.mosaicrecords.com

To cast light into the
depths of the human heart—
the artist's mission.

ROBERT SCHUMANN

BACH CANTATAS

This superlative BBC DVD takes us to the abbeys, cathedrals, churches and chapels throughout Europe that mark Bach's history that ended 250 years ago. The DVD begins on Christmas Day 1999 in Weimar's Herderkirche and concludes in St. Bartholomew's Church in New York on December 31, 2000.



COVER OF BACH CANTATAS BY OPUS ARTE/BBC WALES

The sheer gloriousness of this choir along with the excellent filming of the environments that document Bach's life is a musical and visual experience that I highly recommend to you. The video explains Bach's overcoming of his personal grief and adversity as well as his devotion to the church and his professional pride in his craftsmanship. —SS

Opus Arte/BBC Wales, 2000.
Available at the Organ Historical Society website,
www.ohscatalog.org

GRACEFUL PASSAGES

We would like to make you aware of a remarkable resource. *Graceful Passages* is a unique companion for living and dying. A small book of beautiful selections addressing the challenge of serious illness and the final need to let go. It is a compassionate aid to patients, their families and professional caregivers.



COVER OF GRACEFUL PASSAGES BY GARY REMAL MALKIN

In addition, this healing tool comes with two companion CDs — one of comforting messages and one of soothing music. Also included is a booklet of clinical applications and additional resources entitled *Grace in Practice*. —KS

Available through Companion Arts L.L.C.
at 888.242.6608 or www.gracefulpassages.com

PARADISE ROAD

One of the greatest stories of the triumph of the human spirit over adversity is that of the courageous women who risked their lives to sing great choral works in a Japanese prison camp during World War II.

Bruce Beresford's movie, *Paradise Road*, tells the true story of British, Dutch, Australian and American women who were captured by the Japanese while trying to escape Sumatra and the Dutch East Indies.

Margaret Drysbury, a British missionary and teacher, and Nora Chambers, an English colonial, created a unique vocal orchestra. Together they arranged over two dozen classical works for a four-part women's choir.

Conditions in their camp were horrible and deteriorating rapidly. After a year and a half of internment, morale in the camp was very low.

It was then that the women created their vocal orchestra. Rehearsing in secret the singers risked their lives by daring a public performance.

But not even their militant captors could resist the power of music to transcend hardship and elevate the human spirit. —KS

Paradise Road
Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1997

See also *Song of Survival: Women Interned* by Helen Colijn which inspired the motion picture *Paradise Road*

Healing Resources

BOOKS

Creativity and Disease: How Illness Affects Literature Art and Music 12th Edition
Philip Sandblom M.D., Ph.D. h.c.

The Healing Forces of Music: History, Theory & Practice
Randall McClellan Ph.D.

The Healing Musician: A Guide to Playing Healing Music at the Bedside
Stella Benson, CMP

Music Therapy in Palliative Care: New Voices
Edited by David Aldridge

The Nature of Music: Beauty, Sound, and Healing
Maureen McCarthy Draper

The Power of Sound
Joshua Leeds

Song of Survival: Women Interned
Helen Colijn

The Vintage Guide to Classical Music
Jan Swafford

VIDEO / DVD

Bach Cantatas: Sir John Eliot Gardiner Conducts Cantatas BWV 179, 199 & 133 and Takes His Monteverdi Choir on an Historic Bach Pilgrimage
Opus Arte/BBC Wales, 2000

Chalice of Repose: A Contemplative Musician's Approach to Death and Dying
Therese Schroeder-Sheker
Sounds True Video, 1997

Paradise Road
Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1997

Song of Survival 58-minute documentary
201.784.8488

MUSIC

Graceful Passages: A Companion for Living and Dying
Music by Gary Remal Malkin

The Melody at Night, with You
Written and performed by Keith Jarrett

On Wings of a Dove: Harp Music to Soothe the Soul
Christine Magnussen

Quintette du Hot Club de France: 25 Classics 1934-1940
Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli

Song of Survival scores (published)
1.610.527.4242

Vision: the Life and Music of Hildegard von Bingen
Richard Sourher, Emily Van Evera,
Sister Germaine Fritz OSB

WEBSITES

American Music Therapy Association
www.musictherapy.org

The Forum at Grace Cathedral: Death, Dignity and Grace
www.gracecathedral.org

The Institute for Music and Neurologic Function: an Affiliate of the Beth Abraham Family of Health Services
www.musicaspower.org

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine
www.nccam.nih.gov

Patient Experience Standard
www.patientexperiencestandard.org

Spirituality & Health Magazine: Spiritual Practices for Human Being
www.spiritualityhealth.com

His own illness helped a brilliant neurologist and author discover the power of melody and memory to affect our nervous system in ways that seem "almost miraculous."

All of us have all sorts of personal experiences with music: We find ourselves calmed by it, excited by it, comforted by it, mystified by it and often haunted by it. It can lift us out of depression or move us to tears. I am no different. I need music to start the day and as company when I drive. I need it, propulsively, when I go for swims and runs, I need it, finally, to still my thoughts when I retire, to usher me into the world of dreams.

But it was only when I became a patient myself that I experienced a *physical* need for music. A bad fall while climbing a mountain in Norway had left me incapacitated by damage to the nerves and muscles of one leg. After surgery to repair the torn tendons in my leg, I settled down to await some return of function in the torn nerves.

With the leg effectively paralyzed, I lost all sense of its existence—indeed, I seemed to lose the very *idea* of moving it. The leg stayed nonfunctional for the longest 15 days of my life. These days were made longer and grimmer because there was no music in the hospital. Radio reception was bad. Finally, a friend brought me a tape recorder along with a tape of one of my favorite pieces: the Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto*.

Playing this over and over gave me great pleasure and a general sense of being alive and well. But the nerves in my damaged leg were still healing. Two weeks later, I began to get small twitches in the previously flaccid muscle and larger sudden, involuntary movements.

Strangely, however, I had no impulse to walk. I could barely remember how one would go about walking—until, unexpectedly, a day or two later the *Violin Concerto* played itself in my mind. It seemed, suddenly, to lend me its own energy, and I recovered the lost rhythm of walking—like remembering a once-familiar but long-forgotten tune. Only then did walking regain its natural, unconscious, kinetic melody and grace.

Music can have the same effect on the neurologically impaired. It may have a power beyond anything else to restore them to themselves—at least in the precious few minutes that it lasts.

For reasons we do not yet understand, musical abilities often are among the last to be lost, even in cases of widespread brain damage. Thus, someone who is disabled by a stroke or by Alzheimer's or another form of dementia may still be able to respond to music in ways that can seem almost miraculous.

After a stroke, patients may suffer from *aphasia*, the inability to use or comprehend words. But the ability to sing words is rarely affected, even if an aphasic cannot speak them. Some patients can even be "reminded" in this way of words

and grammatical constructions they have "forgotten." This, in turn, may help them start to regain old neural pathways for accessing language or to build new pathways in their place. Music becomes a crucial first step in a sequence followed by spontaneous improvement and speech therapy.

Some of my patients with strokes or Alzheimer's are unable to carry out a complex chain of actions: to dress, for example. Here, music can work as a mnemonic—a series of promptings in the form of verse or song, as in the childhood rhyme "One, two, buckle my shoe."

My patient Dr. P. had lost the ability to recognize or identify even common objects, though he could see perfectly well. He was unable to recognize a glove or a flower when I handed it to him, and he once mistook his own wife for a hat. This condition was almost totally disabling—but he discovered that he could perform the needs and tasks of the day if they were organized in song. And so he had songs for dressing, songs for eating, songs for bathing, songs for everything.



As a result of a brain tumor, my patient Greg has not been able to retain any new memories since the 1970s. But if we talk about or play his favorite Grateful Dead songs, his amnesia is bypassed. He becomes vividly animated and can reminisce about their early concerts.

I first saw the immense therapeutic powers of music 30 years ago, in the post-encephalitic patients I later wrote about in *Awakenings*. These 80 individuals all were victims of *encephalitis lethargica*, the viral sleeping sickness that swept the globe just after World War I. When I came to Beth Abraham Hospital in the Bronx in 1966, most of them had been "frozen," absolutely motionless, for decades.

Their voices, if they could speak, lacked tone and force; they were almost spectral. Yet these patients were able to sing loudly and clearly, with a normal range of expressiveness and tone. Among those who could walk and talk—though only in a jerky, broken way—music gave their movement or speech the steadiness and control it usually lacked.

We could observe this effect on the patients' electroencephalograms. If we found music that worked, their EEGs—often exceedingly slow, reflecting their frozen states—would become faster and more regular. We noted this when patients listened to music or sang it or played it—even when they imagined it.

Take Rosalie B., a patient who had a severe form of parkinsonism. She tended to remain transfixed for hours a day, completely motionless, stuck, usually with one finger on her spectacles. But she knew all of Chopin's works by heart, and we only

had to say "Opus 49" to see her whole body, posture and expression change. Her parkinsonism would vanish as soon as she even imagined Chopin's *Fantasia in F minor*. Her EEG would become normal at the same instant the Chopin played itself in her mind.

Clearly, human brains are able to tenaciously hold and replay musical stimuli. This is why tunes may repeat themselves endlessly, sometimes maddeningly, in the mind. Music hallucinations are far more common than visual hallucinations. There even seems to be a sort of "reminiscence" or "recycling" of early musical memories, especially in the aging brain.

To help, however, the music must be the right kind for each patient—music that has meaning and evokes feeling for the individual. Music therapists who work with a geriatric population often find that only old popular songs can bring such patients to life. While singing them, these patients are able to find a brief but intense sense of community and connectedness with their past lives—and perhaps a deep emotional catharsis.

This almost universal responsiveness to music is an essential part of our neural nature. Though analogies often are made to birdsong or animal cries, music in its full sense—including complexities of rhythm and harmony, of pace, timbre and tonality no less than of melody—seems to be confined to our own species, like language. Why this should be so is still a mystery. Our research is only now beginning to unlock those secrets.

Dr. Oliver Sacks is a neurologist in New York City. Among his many books are *Awakenings*, *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* and *Oaxaca Journal*. His autobiography, *Uncle Tungsten: Memories of a Chemical Boyhood*, was published last fall.

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Medicine, to produce health,
must know disease;
music, to produce harmony,
must know discord.

PLUTARCH, A.D.C. 46-120

9TH ANNUAL PICKER INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

If you were inspired by last fall's hospital issue, Volume 7, Number 3, consider attending the next Picker Symposium to be held in Boston, July 16th-18th, 2003.

For further information, or to receive a brochure, contact Tam Mahaffey at 1.800.388.4264 or www.pickersymposium.com

THE NATURE OF MUSIC

language has been my sanctuary, music has always been my solace. Yet when the tragedy of September 11th struck, my grief and distress seemed beyond even music's consolation. As

is often the case with my work at Healing Environments, however, there runs a current of synchronicity between what I write for *A Light in the Mist* and what I am facing or reflecting on in my personal life. And this was certainly the case when Kate asked me to introduce an excerpt from *The Nature of Music: Beauty, Sound, and Healing* by Maureen McCarthy Draper. In this wise and eloquent book, Draper "explores the ways in which stimulating music acts on us, viscerally and psychologically — why it can lift a dark mood or give rest to an anxious mind."



Beyond this, however, Draper gives us something more: she not only enhances our understanding of music's therapeutic power, but also deepens our capacity to hear, to listen, and to come to know the music itself. The following excerpt is an example of the "Music Breaks" which end each chapter. The asterisks indicate that the selection can be found on one of the two CDs produced to accompany the book.

We hope that during these unsettling times you will find Maureen McCarthy Draper a reassuring guide on the path to music's refuge and, in her words, to its "intimations of paradise."

—DA

HEALING EXERCISES

The God Is in the Wound

Nothing makes it easier to regard ourselves kindly, and with compassion, than music whose harmonies touch us tenderly. Write one or two sentences about how you feel at this moment; then, listen to Mozart's *Adagio* from the *Violin Concerto*, No. 3 in G major, K. 216* or Schubert's *Andante* from the *Piano Sonata in A major*, Opus 120,* offering your grief up to the music. Tears may come, and if you notice any tightness in your body, try to release it and be carried into the emotion of the music. Let yourself receive the energy of each

note, changing harmony, and rhythm. Move your hands or body or vocalize with the music if you wish. When the music ends, write a few words about what you're feeling now. Has there been change?

Transforming Darkness to Light

This may be done sitting or lying down, but requires concentration. Begin playing the *Adagio* from Ravel's *Piano Concerto* in G major,* inspired, Ravel said, by Mozart's music. Turn the volume low, following the breath in and out, allowing the body to be as comfortable as possible and taking care to expel the air fully with each exhalation. Visualize the beauty and spaciousness of the music coming into you in the form of rose and gold light. Watch the light move into the area of your chest and heart and spread throughout your body. Observe the light as it grows in power and gradually meets the dark cloud of your anger and grief. Like watching the sun break through a heavy sky after a storm, observe the light grow in intensity within you until it penetrates the darkness.

Healing with Beauty

This is a transformative exercise that can change the way we regard ourselves. Choose a musical selection such as the aria "O mio babbino caro"* or the Schubert *Impromptu* in G-flat, Opus 90,* whichever seems more beautiful to you. Sit or lie down and close your eyes. Breathe along with the music, feeling gratitude for the pleasure it gives. Then, with your breath, take the music into the heart area, allowing its warmth to spread throughout your body. Breathe the music deeply into the area that feels injured, unacceptable, or unforgiven.

Excerpted from *The Nature of Music: Beauty, Sound, and Healing* by Maureen McCarthy Draper, published by Riverhead Books, 2000. *Companion CDs available from Spring Hill Music, www.springhillmedia.com

CHALICE OF REPOSE

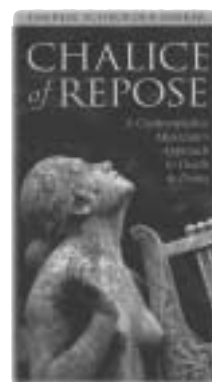
With the voice of a Gaelic angel, the clear, pure soprano lifts the listener heavenward. We are listening to Therese Schroeder-Sheker, founder of *The Chalice of Repose Project* in Missoula, Montana. For more than two decades, Therese has blended her passion for music with her intention to ease the passage of the dying. The result has been the practice of music-thanatology.

Based on the principles of monastic medicine in the eleventh-century abbey of Cluny in France, *Chalice of Repose* seeks to tend the dying with the healing harmonics of the harp and human voice. Therese was first called to this work shortly after graduation from music school.

Arriving for her shift in a geriatric home, she was informed that an elderly man with emphysema was about to die. He had been a difficult patient who had pushed all offers of help away. As Therese

entered his room and found him gasping for breath, she extended her hand. Rather than pull away, he grasped it tightly, and Therese understood his need of her. Crawling instinctively onto the bed, she cradled his emaciated body in her arms and sang to him as a mother might sing to a child, comforting him and enabling him to let go.

Today, musicians come from all over the world to minister thus to the dying in Missoula, Montana. Like doctors on call, they respond at all hours of the day and night to the bedsides of the dying. In hospitals, hospices and homes, they attune their melodies to the unique rhythms of the individual, easing both physical and emotional pain and thus enabling a conscious and peaceful death.



Therese chose the harp not only because she considers it an ethereal instrument, but because it serves as a metaphor as well. With its vertical strings forming an earth-sky axis, the harp requires constant tuning, just as we require constant spiritual attunement if we are to be of service. The symbol of the chalice was chosen as a sacred vessel which is designed to both give and receive. The gift of the chalice is repose, or deep, holy sleep.

Therese herself has experienced a great deal of loss. She has had to work through her own personal wounds in order to bring death into the fullness of life. She has learned that she needs the fall and the winter as well as the spring and the summer. In her words, "Transforming our sorrows (losses) into the substance of our lives is about reconciliation. We humans must reconcile love and loss, and the risk involved in becoming fully human and fully capable of loving."

Shortly after my mother's death from cancer, I saw Ingmar Bergman's film *Cries and Whispers*. In the film, the housekeeper holds her dying mistress in her arms just as Mary holds Christ in Michelangelo's *Pieta*. I grieved as I remembered my mother's lonely death in the hospital. If only all of us at the hour of our death could be cradled symbolically in the healing arms of music and compassion. May *Chalice of Repose* light our way.

—KS

Chalice of Repose—A Contemplative Musician's Approach to Death and Dying. The video may be ordered from Sounds True at 800.333.9185.

A GIFT OF LIGHT

D

ear Friends,

In this issue we seek to remind you of the healing power of music, as Plato called it “the medicine of the soul.”

We are delighted by the response to our holiday gift journal. Hospices called asking for copies for patients to help them prepare for death. Bereavement coordinators requested journals to help family members cope with loss. Other groups — journal classes, hospice training retreats, people living with AIDS, prisoners and even the homeless asked for more to help comfort the suffering. We were overjoyed to be of such service.

Our supply is almost depleted, but if your group could benefit from receiving a large quantity, please let us know. Or, if you are a potential donor, consider funding a larger distribution for the institution of your choice.

We thank you for your response and we thank the universe for guiding us in the preparation of something so blessed to comfort the suffering.

Kate



FAITH • HOPE • LOVE
GRATITUDE • TENDERNESS
TRUST • MERCIES • JOY
ESSENCE • ILLUMINATION
GRACE • ONENESS

TOGETHER
WE
WILL
COMFORT
THE
SUFFERING

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OUR MISSION

Our mission is to aid the current movement toward holistic medicine — toward treating the whole patient (mind, body, spirit) and encouraging hospitals, hospices and individuals to nourish patients, families and caregivers with healing environments. What is a healing environment? We believe a healing environment is one that offers sustenance to the soul and gives meaning to experience. It is one that enables those who are suffering to transcend their pain by connecting to the universal through the transformative power of beauty and art, and that gives comfort through this connection.

PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH
A LOVED ONE, COLLEAGUE OR PATIENT. PLACE IT IN
A LIBRARY, WAITING ROOM OR RESOURCE CENTER.