

# Music and Spiritual Direction

**What is it About Music That Helps People's  
Openness to God?**

**by**

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I can only think of music as something inherent in every human being - a birth right.  
Music coordinates mind, body and spirit. *Yehudi Menuhin (violinist, conductor 1916-1999)*

Music has the power to communicate where words often fail. It can release deep inner  
feelings which are essential for freedom and growth. It lets God speak.

*Margaret Rizza (musician, composer, retreat leader)*

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## Introduction

Music and openness to God are a marriage made in heaven. They mutually attract one another. One woman expressed it beautifully, “I appreciate that music calls me to a deeper place. It becomes a doorway into my own cathedral where I meet God.”<sup>1</sup> Spiritual Direction helps people be aware of and develop ways to connect with God, to be open to themselves and to God in an atmosphere of acceptance, warmth and hope. I am seeking to show that music has a significant place in Spiritual Direction, and it must not be overlooked. Increased accessibility through recent technology has brought new possibilities.

Even though I teach music to children and young adults, it is only since engaging in this project that I have intentionally used it in my own prayer time and in Spiritual Direction.

What is it about music that makes it so powerful? To address this, I appeal to musicology, the neuroscience of music (much of it as recent as the last 15 to 20 years) and the experience of several experienced Spiritual Directors (website and face to face interview ) and thirty-eight qualitative questionnaire participants aged 23 to 83, all of whom identify as Christians. (Appendix 3 & 4). Finally, I will consider how music can be used in a spiritual direction conversation.

## Why Music?

**Music is everywhere and for all time.** No culture discovered so far lacks music in some form. “Throughout most of the world and for most of human history, music making was as natural an activity as breathing and walking and everyone participated”.<sup>2</sup> Music, Levitin argues, is not simply a distraction or a pastime, but a core element of our identity as a species.<sup>3</sup> Since mid-1900s more people have listened to music than ever before. Technology has made it possible and is increasingly making it more accessible with YouTube, Spotify, etc.

**Music processing is distributed throughout the brain.** Our brains are made to receive and process music. “Music listening, performance and composition engage nearly every area of the brain that we have so far identified and involve nearly every neural subsystem.”<sup>4</sup> Different aspects of music are handled by different regions. Images in Appendix A illustrate this well.

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<sup>1</sup> Donelda Seymour *Using Music as a Contemplative Exercise* [spiritual-direction.com/2012/02/music-as-a-contemplative-exercise](http://spiritual-direction.com/2012/02/music-as-a-contemplative-exercise)

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Levitin *This is Your Brain on Music* Atlantic Books p.6

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Levitin *The World in Six Songs* PDF (WordPress.com) of a TED talk p5

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Levitin *This is your Brain on Music* Atlantic Books p.9

Different parts of our brain appreciate the structural aspects of music (pitch, melody, rhythm, harmony & tone colour) from the parts of our brain that appreciate the emotional aspects of music. Hence a “musical” person (competent in reading, playing and singing music) can be indifferent to music, and a person who has never played an instrument and who is not familiar with music notation can be deeply affected by music. “Music calls to both parts of our nature – it is essentially emotional, as it is essentially intellectual.”<sup>5</sup>

Listening alone, even without playing, “causes a cascade of brain regions to become activated.”<sup>6</sup>

**Music has the power to evoke emotions.** The connection between music and emotion is well known through contemporary studies of the brain. We all know this, experientially, from movie soundtracks where suspense, drama, mystery and many other emotions are intensified by the soundtrack. Lullabies have been around for hundreds of years. King David, around 1046BC, in Psalm 150, says, “Praise Him with a blast of the ram’s horn, with lyre and harp, tambourine and dancing, strings and flute, and loud clanging cymbals.” The Psalms reflect many other emotions – disappointment, despair, anger, fear, guilt, peace, gratitude, joy etc. and several questionnaire participants mention the personal value of Psalms set to music in connecting with God.

**Music has the power to heal emotions.** David soothed Saul in his depression and fear by playing his harp I Samuel 16:14-23. “Whenever the tormenting spirit troubled Saul, David would play the harp. Then Saul would feel better, and the tormenting spirit would go away.” I Sam 16:23. “Music can modulate levels of dopamine, the so-called feel-good hormone in the brain, elevating mood, boosting the immune system, and altering the brain chemistry associated with wellbeing and stress reduction.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Music is Transformative**

“Music explores/uncovers the depths – our personal depths – and allows us to perceive ourselves and situations in ways that we don’t normally see them.”<sup>8</sup>

Some quotes from participants in my survey:

It builds a sense of confidence, courage and strength.

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<sup>5</sup> Oliver Sacks *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* p285

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Levitin *This is Your Brain on Music* Atlantic Books p192 In a particular order: first auditory cortex for initial processing of the components of the sound. Then the frontal lobes identified as being involved in processing musical structure and expectations. Finally, a network of regions-the mesolimbic system-involved in arousal, pleasure, and the transmission of opioids and the production of dopamine, culminating in activation in the nucleus accumbens. And the cerebellum and basal ganglia were active throughout, presumably supporting the process of rhythm and metre .....Your brain on music is all about connections.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Levitin *The World in Six Songs* TEDxUSC 2012 You tube

<sup>8</sup> Helen Bonny *Music and Spirituality* music Therapy Perspectives (2001) Vol. 19

It allows me to more deeply understand myself.  
It allows me to express the previously inexpressible.  
I'm not in the same place as I was before hearing it.  
Gives me perspective.

### **Music is Transcendent**

"Many of us feel that great music connects us to something larger than our own existence, to other people, or to God."<sup>9</sup>

"I hear my soul touch God's spirit" – Questionnaire

## **Is Music for Everyone?**

### **Universal**

Almost all of us can intuitively perceive the basic elements of music: pitch, melodic shape, tone colour, harmony and rhythm.

### **Different degrees of perception.**

We are all exposed to language from the start of our lives, but not all of us to music. That can influence our understanding and enjoyment of it as adults. By the age of 5, infants have formed schemas for the music they hear, built on the scales they are used to. That is why, for example, Indian music may seem strange to a Westerner's ear and vice versa. Interestingly, of the seven "not really musical" people in my survey, only one did not find music helped them connect with God. They mentioned they had no exposure to music at home growing up and wondered if that might relate.

### **Different Preferences.**

Musical preference is diverse. In my survey of 38 people, everyone chose a different "significant" piece to comment on. All of these pieces contained lyrics; almost all were "sacred music" in genre. When asked what other music was significant to them in their relationship with God, the list was much more diverse. Several people, of all ages, mentioned that music across all genres, helps their heart, soul and spirit connect with God, especially classical music (no lyrics); but also, movie soundtracks, musicals, love songs, hip-hop and rock. It seems there is enough variety in music that individual preference can be respected.

### **Different degrees of Trusting Music's Emotional Power**

Some people are suspicious of the emotional power music can have over them and, for a variety of reasons, they don't want to surrender or "let go" to it. A participant of my survey, alluding to this, wrote, "I am aware that music has a power to move the emotions. So, I am cautious, as I seek more than an emotional

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel Levitin *This is your Brain on Music* Great Britain: Atlantic Books 2007 p242

experience – I am seeking God Himself and long that His Spirit would reveal Him. It is important to me that lyrics are biblical and based on truth. Otherwise I am unable to yield my soul and respond in worship.”

I know for myself as a young person growing up, I was taught the logical sequence “fact, faith and feeling”. They were very much to be kept in that order and I gained the impression that emotion was to be distrusted as being very unreliable.

Tolstoy adored Tchaikovsky's music but often refused to listen to it because of its power to make him feel emotions that weren't his own and not under his control. Freud similarly denied himself the pleasure of surrendering to music. “Some rationalistic, or perhaps analytic, turn of mind in me rebels against being moved by a thing without knowing why I am thus affected and what it is that affects me.”<sup>10</sup>

## Understanding How Music Affects Us

Within this diversity of preference for a variety of music genres, are there any aspects to our encounter with music that are more likely to help us open up to God? To attempt to understand this I will look at three components:

1. The nature of the music itself (**intrinsic**) – its melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, tempo, tone colours, repetition and structure.
2. The way music is received by us (**extrinsic**) – memories, ideas, concepts, associations represented by the music. The inclusion of lyrics will mean the religious experience will lean toward extrinsic to the music.
3. The **context** in which the music is heard i.e. church or concert, spiritual direction/retreat/small group or individual listening.

To help further illustrate these components I will share a recent experience for me which brings all these components together. I was feeling loaded with several challenging situations, and I asked my spiritual director if I could bring a piece of orchestral music, “Meditation” by Massenet, to our next session to be with God together as we listened and let Him speak to my heart, as part of our time together. It is a beautiful violin solo with orchestral accompaniment. A young friend serenaded his bride with this music a few years ago as she walked toward him up the aisle and I accompanied him on the piano – an extremely moving experience. So, in listening to it, I brought this memory with me and also the invitational concept of a bridegroom drawing his bride to himself, all of which is the extrinsic component. The music itself has many beautifully nuanced long sounds that rise and fall, create tension and resolve. Emotional intensity is created as the tempo and dynamics increase and the accompaniment adds fuller harmonic support.

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<sup>10</sup> Freud *The Moses of Michelangelo* Introduction Quoted by Oliver Sacs *Musicophilia* p.293

Occasionally a surprising, stronger sound pulls at the heart strings – all of which is the intrinsic component. All sense of time stops, and I want to lose myself in this space. I experience Jesus so tenderly, with his arms outstretched, inviting me, drawing me closely to Himself, bearing my loads with me. I feel both weak at the knees yet strengthened. I already knew this music and was familiar with the emotion evoked by it. The context made it a significantly different experience for me. I was intentionally allowing God to be with me. It was both very personal and yet shared as I felt very supported in my listening to God with another person present. I deeply soaked in Jesus's tenderness toward me. Kathleen Fischer says, "Emotions belong at the centre of spirituality, not at the edges. Spiritual direction nurtures emotional wholeness by inviting us to return again and again to this unconditional divine embrace."<sup>11</sup>

Some questions arising out of these three components that can inform the practice of spiritual direction are: Firstly, does the context in which the music is heard affect the strength of my experience? Secondly, how might these components affect the choice of music to facilitate openness to God? Why does some music move us more than others? Is there any music that appeals to almost everyone? To attempt to answer these questions I will draw on some research by Peter Atkins and Emery Schubert, "Are Spiritual Experiences Through Music Seen as Intrinsic or Extrinsic?"<sup>12</sup> I will also draw on results from my questionnaire, my own experience as a Spiritual Director in training and Margaret Rizza, musician and composer.

Atkins and Schubert concluded that the spiritual "comes to life" in music, whether it draws on both intrinsic elements of music and extrinsic association, or one or the other. They concluded that experiences were stronger, more spiritual and more emotional in a religious context, but that in a non-religious context experiences elicited similar features, just to a lesser degree.<sup>13</sup> Non-religious context examples given were at a concert or at home.

In my questionnaire, church context was significant for 9 out of 38 people and they were all over the age of 50. Context for 28 people was individual prayer time, for another a spiritual direction session (only 2 go to SD), another a spiritual retreat. My tentative conclusion, therefore, is that intentional time with God, wherever that might be, is important in opening up to God when listening to music.

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<sup>11</sup> Kathleen Fischer *Working with the Emotions in Spiritual Direction: Seven Guiding Principles* An article from Presence, an International Journal of Spiritual Direction, Vol 12, No. 3, September 2006, pp26 - 35

<sup>12</sup> Peter Atkins & Emery Schubert *Are Spiritual Experiences through Music Seen as Intrinsic or Extrinsic?* Religions 2014 ISSN 2077-1444

<sup>13</sup> Peter Atkins & Emery Schubert *Are Spiritual Experiences through Music Seen as Intrinsic or Extrinsic?* Religions 2014 ISSN 2077-1444

So, what about the choice of music for spiritual direction? When summarizing the responses to a questionnaire question, "What are the elements of music that affected you in your chosen significant piece?", I wrote, "Music that enhances the words, whether contemplative, triumphant, or anything in between". What specific elements of music were mentioned? Melody was most important – rising and falling, enabling heartfelt engagement. Repetition helped focus and a slower tempo allowed lingering. Dynamics profoundly affect emotions. "We are born with a predisposition toward interpreting sounds in particular ways."<sup>14</sup> Compare abrupt, short, loud sounds with longer, quieter sounds, which are so calming.

To illustrate, I will relate an encounter with a directee, and then a continuation of the story two months later. My directee arrived looking drawn and lifeless. He had nothing to talk about and was very anxious. So, I offered to play him "Calm me Lord, as you calmed the sea" by Margaret Rizza. (I tend to think Margaret Rizza is for everyone as her music so touches my heart). I gave him a copy of the words, though the words are few. God totally quieted his heart through it. He said, "I could listen to this all day." It created space for God to speak. Two months later he expressed to me that the music I had played him wasn't really his sort of music. Yet he said he loved it and it made him feel calm and peaceful. While I maybe should have first asked him if he had some music/song he would like me to play that he finds calming, there was much in the music, both intrinsically and extrinsically, that evoked peace. Margaret Rizza says of her music, "I continue to write in this contemplative vein because I have so much moving and humbling feedback. Letters from people who are in deep depression, people who are terminally ill, people in prisons, people who find that the music connects with their prayer life. And then people who are not Christian but find themselves connecting with the music in a perceptive way."<sup>15</sup> Perhaps some music is for almost everyone – simplicity, beautiful melody, floating varied instrumental descants, repetitive lyrics.

I have attached (Appendix 1) a limited list of music that people have found helpful. Given diversity of preference, and also possible cultural diversity, which I haven't attempted to address, there is much more music that could be included.

What extrinsic aspects could I consider?

In the questionnaire people have mentioned the following things as being important to them: the passion with which the music is communicated, the authenticity of the composer and the performer, quality of performance, lyrics

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel Levitin *This is Your Brain on Music* Great Britain: Atlantic Books 2007 p 92

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Rizza <https://www.margaretrizza.com/reflections-3.html>

being true to the scriptures, and lyrics not ringing true to experience. A listener's background, experience and preference are important extrinsic considerations. Regarding authenticity, of Margaret Rizza's music, Joyce Huggett, author of "Listening to God" and Retreat leader, in a review on Margaret Rizza's website, says, "Born of prayer and deep-down stillness, Margaret Rizza's hauntingly beautiful music transports the listener into the presence of God."

## **Using Music in Spiritual Direction**

### **An Invaluable, Accessible Tool**

Accessibility of music these days allows music to be readily available to us in a SD conversation without disrupting the focus. You tube and Spotify enable almost any song that enters the thoughts of the director or directee to be played.

### **Preparation**

In preparing my own heart for a conversation with a directee I find it helpful to listen to music. For me I use one of Margaret Rizza's chants e.g. Silent Surrendered.

### **During the Session**

Music/song may come to the mind of the director or directee to reflect an emotion or to deepen experience. Here are a couple of examples:

A directee wrote, "In a spiritual direction session I was drawing a picture to explore the tension between light and dark, hope and despair. God was inviting me to journey with Him through storms and beauty, together in a boat that provided a safe cocoon for me. God brought this song to mind – Sailboat by Brooke Fraser".

"Tell Him," the love song passionately performed by Celine Dion and Barbra Streisand, also came to mind and was listened to in a spiritual direction session as an expression of mutual love, devotion and deep sense of connectedness with Jesus. The directee pictured being in a dance with Jesus where "He was giving me courage to love others with vulnerability and celebration."

A directee may bring music with them. A spiritual director shared with me how a directee brought a recording of a piece of music she had written and then recorded, to a spiritual direction session. They played the recording and then sang it together. It was an "affirming of her gift" time, as their hearts were both touched by the music they shared together. The directee realized others could benefit from her gift. The director invited her to stay with the song recognizing it would become a portal for God in her life.

A directee may bring with them a personally significant piece of music, which allows for cultural diversity. A directee spoke of the poignancy of the lyrics in the

movie "Moana". This movie has themes of place and identity, or Turangawaewae, an important value in New Zealand Maori culture, recognizing our belonging place – marae, mountain, waterway – to be one where we are especially connected and empowered. At the time, facing two big losses, that of her personal safe place and also of her identity following the birth of her stillborn first child, the directee was able to continue to grieve in the spiritual direction safe space, as she and her director listened together to the Moana song.<sup>16</sup>

The director may offer the suggestion of the use of music with or without lyrics, as an optional idea for a directee's individual prayer time.

### **How to Use Music**

Listen together, then maybe silent reflection, staying with the emotion evoked, waiting for the directee's response. Music so often becomes prayer.

Possible deepening questions:

What particularly got your attention? (particularly if there are lyrics)

What emotions does that evoke for you?

Where are you feeling that - what part of your body?

Is there a colour you might link with this feeling?

What does the music help you appreciate about God?

What does the music help you realise/understand about yourself?

What image or picture comes to mind for how you and God are just now?

Would you like to have a go at putting it on paper? Is there a colour that matches the feeling? Is there a word you would like to add?

What is God saying to you?

How would you like to respond?

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<sup>16</sup> Moana Quote: "Sometimes the world seems against you. The journey may leave a scar. But scars can heal and reveal just where you are," were Moana's Grandma's words to her as she floated in a canoe in the middle of the ocean, abandoned, with her calling challenged. "I am a girl who loves my island. I am a girl who loves the sea. It calls me. I am a daughter of a village chief. We are descended from voyagers who found their way across the world and they call me."

## Conclusion

What is it about music that helps us to be open to God? It is very clear that for almost everyone, it functions in this way. Musicology and the neuroscience of music give us much insight into the nature of and pervasive effectiveness of music. Beyond science, people's experience of music strongly demonstrates that it has both transcendent and transformative effects. It helps us reach into a world beyond our own (transcendent) and it helps us reach deeply into our own hearts (transformative). Music, of a variety of genres, lets God speak and we do well to make a place for it in our Spiritual Direction practice, a place where hearts are opening up to God, and understanding of ourselves and experience of God is deepened.

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## Appendix 1: Some Music Possibilities

### Vocal

Audrey Assad  
Bethel Music  
Brooke Fraser  
Chris Tomlin  
Eden's Gate (Celtic folk, Pop, Rock)  
Hillsong  
John Michael Talbot  
Keith and Kristyn Getty  
Maranatha Music "The Praise Series"  
Margaret Rizza  
MercyMe  
Michael Joncas  
Michael & Lisa Gungor (experimental rock)  
Newsboys  
Ruth Fazal  
Salt of the Sound (Reflection & Restoration)  
Sons of Korah  
U2

### Instrumental

Daniel Jorgensen "A Search for Somewhere Else" (calming, transporting, minimalist piano)  
Phillip Keveren  
Secret Garden  
Taizé  
Ruth Fazal  
Salt of the Sound (Reflection & Restoration)

### Specific Themes

Grief: Braver Still (JJ Heller), Love in Every Tear (unknown), Winter Bear (Coby Grant), Be Still My Soul

Identity: Moana (movie soundtrack)

Hope: Jerusalem the Holy City (Stephen Adams), Hurricane (Michael & Lisa Gungor)

Anxiety: Calm Me Lord (Margaret Rizza) Psalm 121 (Sons of Korah), My Peace (Taizé), Be Not Afraid (John Michael Talbot)

Longing/expectation: As a Deer Pants, Jesus Lover of My Soul (Hollingside/Wesley), Calvary (Hillsong), Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus, I Can Only Imagine (MercyMe), Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, Waiting Here For You (Martin Smith)

Joy, Praise: How Great Thou Art, What a Beautiful Name, He Reigns (Newsboys), 40 (U2 Bono), How Deep the Father's Love (Selah), Gravity of Love (The Brilliance), The Lord's Prayer (Andrea Bocelli and Mormon Tabernacle Choir), So Will I (Brooke Fraser, What a Beautiful Name (Brooke Fraser)

Desert /Difficult Times: Blessed Be Your Name (Newsboys) + (Matt Redman), Love Came Down (Brian Johnson), It is Well with my Soul (Paul Bliss), Even When it Hurts (Joel Houston), Cornerstone (Hillsong), Abide With Me, Even If (MercyMe), Come Lift Up Your Sorrows (Michael Card), It is Well (Bethel)

Fatherhood of God: Good, Good Father (Chris Tomlin), Abba (Jonathan David Helser)

## **Classical Music**

Albinoni: Adagio in G minor

Bach: Chaconne in D minor, Air on a G String, Concerto in D minor for Two Violins, Toccata and Fugue in D minor for Organ, Brandenburg Concertos, Goldberg Variations, Mass in B minor

Barber, Samuel: Agnus Dei

Beethoven: Moonlight Sonata, Sonata Pathetique, Piano Trio No. 6, Symphony No. 6 (Pastoral)

Byrd Masses (Renaissance Choral Music)

Handel: Messiah – Hallelujah Chorus

Massenet: Meditation

Pachelbel: Canon in D

Purcell: Dido's Lament

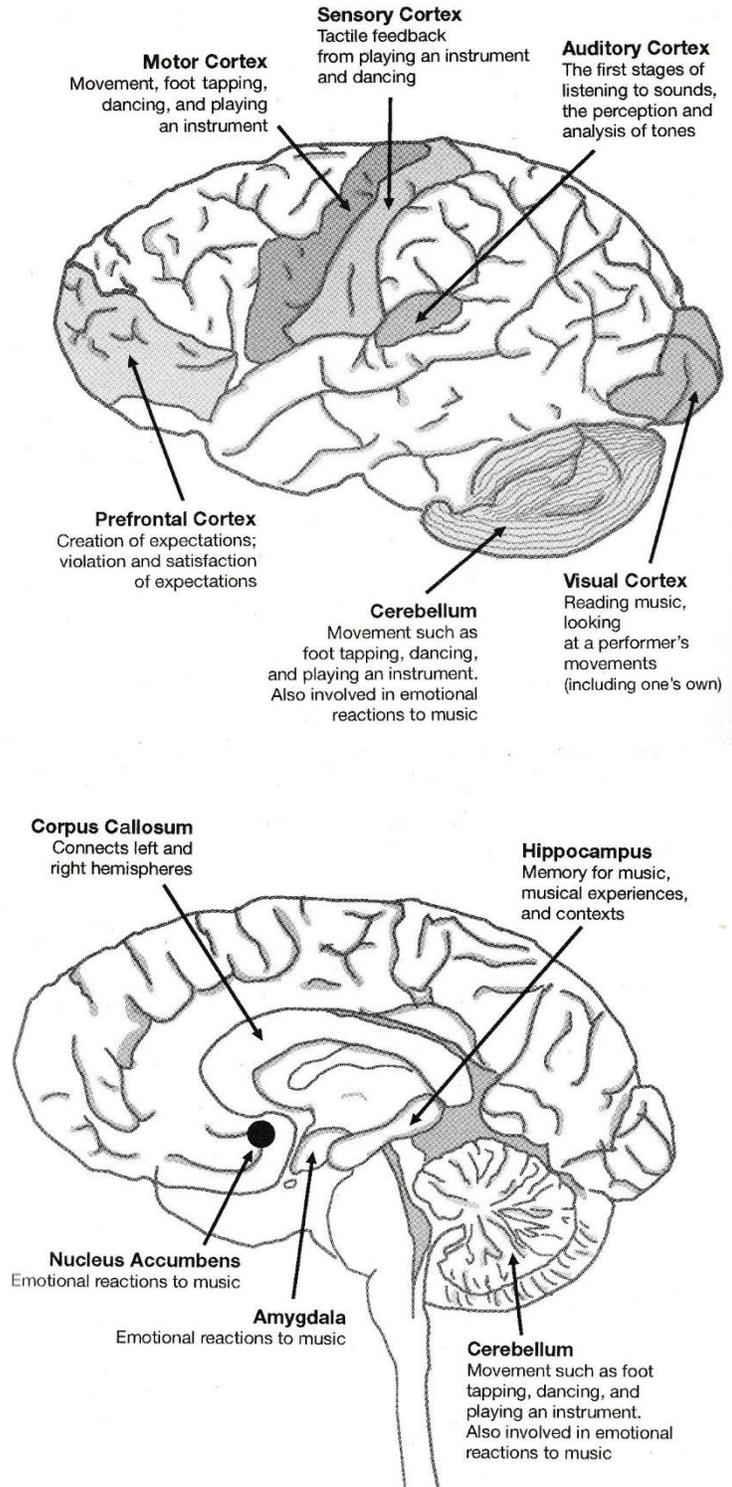
Saint Saens: The Swan

Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on a Theme by Tallis

Vivaldi: The Four Seasons

## Appendix 2: Processing of Music Throughout the Brain<sup>17</sup>

The first illustration is a view of the brain from the side. The front of the brain is to the left. The second illustration shows the inside of the brain from the same point of view as the first illustration.



<sup>17</sup> Daniel Levitin *This is Your Brain on Music* Appendix A pp 269-271

## Appendix 3: Questionnaire

### Music and My Relationship with God

**Gender:** M/F (please circle)

**Age Group:** Under 30, 30 – 39, 40 – 49, 50 – 65, over 65

**Would you describe yourself as a musical person?** (please circle) Yes Maybe Not really  
Comment if you would like to:

**Do you use music in your personal times of prayer?** (please circle) Often Occasionally  
Never

**Can you identify a piece of music (any genre) that is/has been significant to you in your relationship with God?**

- 1) Name (if you can) the piece of music, the artist(s), composer.
  
- 2) Please circle the elements of the music that affected you.  
Tempo, melody, rhythm, dynamics (soft loud), words, arrangement (instruments used), harmony, repetition, other.  
Comment:
  
- 3) Please comment on your context(s) when this music was/is significant to you? E.g. individual prayer time, small group, church worship, spiritual direction, concert, nature, spiritual retreat, browsing Spotify, etc.
  
- 4) What emotions does/did the music evoke in you? What did it help you realise/understand about yourself?
  
- 5) What does/did the music help you appreciate about God.?
  
- 6) How does/did the music affect your relationship with God?

**If music isn't or hasn't been significant to you in your relationship with God, please comment. Your thoughts are valuable.**

**Are there any other comments you would like to make about music and your relationship with God?** E.g. Preference for listening or participating (by singing or playing an instrument or moving); improvising, music coming from within you etc.

**Are there other pieces of music that are/have been significant for you? How have they helped you better understand yourself and/or appreciate God more deeply?**

## Appendix 4: Summary of Questionnaire Results

Musical Person	Use of Music in Personal Prayer	Elements of Music That Affected You in Chosen Significant Piece	Context of Significant Piece	Emotions Evoked	Self-Understanding	God Understanding	Relationship with God
Yes 23 Maybe 8 Not Really 7	Often 16 Occasionally 15 Never 7	<p><b>Lyrics</b> were significant for almost everyone in their chosen song. They reinforce the scriptures (special mention made of Psalms for several people) and make them easy to remember in times of joy and need. In addition, <b>melody</b> was very important. Rising and falling melody enabled heartfelt engagement.</p> <p><b>Tempo:</b> Slow allows lingering and meditating on words</p> <p><b>Repetition</b> helps focus and remembering the lyrics, allowing meditation and the lyrics to sink in.</p> <p><b>Arrangements</b> (choice of instruments) and <b>harmonies</b> added beauty and gave expression to the lyrics. Minor chords especially evoked feeling.</p> <p><b>Dynamics</b> added intensity &amp; often intensity of feeling</p> <p>All aspects of the music enhanced the meaning of the words</p>	<p>Church worship became more significant for people over 50. Otherwise individual prayer time/reflection time was most common context.</p> <p>Several people commented on feeling distracted during music in church settings</p>	<p>Peace, calm</p> <p>Stirred</p> <p>“Helps me access a space where I feel calm &amp; surrounded by God’s love.”</p> <p>Stillness, focus, reflectiveness</p> <p>Humility</p> <p>Gratefulness</p> <p>Longing for God and for love</p> <p>Closeness &amp; companionship with Jesus.</p> <p>Captured hurt, allowing expression of it to God</p> <p>Reassurance, comfort</p> <p>Joy</p> <p>Awe</p> <p>Hope</p> <p>Dependence</p> <p>Encouragement &amp; restoration</p> <p>Allowed grieving</p> <p>Excitement</p> <p>Relieve anxiety</p> <p>Felt cared for</p>	<p>Music reminds me of significant points in my life and the things God has said to me.</p> <p>My smallness of God’s greatness</p> <p>Sense of being joined &amp; delighted in by Jesus</p> <p>Build a sense of confidence &amp; courage</p> <p>Felt known &amp; loved by God</p> <p>Part of something bigger than me, see past myself</p> <p>Music creates a worshipful space for me.</p> <p>Undeserving</p> <p>Limitation of my resources</p> <p>Helped me to recognise my fear. I have a place in eternity.</p> <p>Powerless vs God’s power</p> <p>Trust him more through my senses</p> <p>Leads me to pray.</p> <p>Not alone.</p> <p>Gives perspective of what really matters.</p>	<p>Music allows a deeper understanding of who God is and His heart: kindness, love, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, faithfulness, hope, goodness, majesty, power, dependability, watchful protective presence, redeemer of the world &amp; all created beings (all of these mentioned by one or more people) mystery, constantly communicating with me.</p> <p>He has control of things beyond my control.</p> <p>Constant in my changing world.</p> <p>He too is vulnerable and has a broken heart and joins me in my broken heart.</p> <p>Creativity and beauty reflect His nature and are a gift to us.</p> <p>Immensity &amp; timelessness</p>	<p>Deep sense of Intimacy &amp; closeness, personally &amp; emotionally.</p> <p>God desires relationship with me, is wooing me and drawing me.</p> <p>Intensifies my longing for Him.</p> <p>Helps to wash away anything that has marred my view of His character e.g. doubting His goodness.</p> <p>Helps me to be less proud and puts me back in my place and He in His.</p> <p>“I hear my soul touch God’s spirit.”</p> <p>More deeply know that God was and always will be with me whatever distress &amp; pain I encounter.</p> <p>Puts me in a calmer deeper place helpful in feeling the presence of God</p>
		<p><b>General Comments</b> (not specific to the one selected piece)</p> <p>Music is helpful in getting the lyrics deep into my mind (stops overthinking and gets beyond a superficial level).</p> <p>It is the lyrics that really make it or break it regarding whether I appreciate a song. Music is the “transport” or the “container”, but the lyrics are the “passenger” or the “contents”.</p> <p>Songs using Scripture are a way of dwelling in scripture without the mind whirling with questions and tensions.</p> <p>Music enhances the words, whether contemplative or triumphant or anything in between.</p> <p>Several people mentioned how music across all genres (including without lyrics) helps their heart, soul and spirit connect with God, especially Classical.</p> <p>But also, Movies, musicals, love songs and for one person in their 20s, hip-hop and rock.</p>	<p><b>General Comments</b> (not specific to the one selected piece)</p> <p>I rarely find corporate music engaging, but often find private listening deeply engaging.</p> <p>Contemplative style individual, but energetic music I want to participate with others in singing and moving.</p>	<p><b>General Comments:</b></p> <p>Music enables me to re-enter intimate experiences.</p> <p>I experience emotion, but more than that I experience Him.</p> <p>Brings awareness of hidden emotions and allows them to surface</p> <p>Music helps the release of emotions e.g. grief, distress, joy and excitement</p>	<p><b>General Comments:</b></p> <p>Music resonates deeply within me.</p> <p>Music is the expression of the creative spark that we carry as part of God’s image.</p> <p>Allows me to more deeply understand myself and God.</p> <p>music helps me bypass my thinking defences and connect via my emotional side.</p> <p>Like a window to strong emotions in me, as if God is trying to speak to me, or my soul is trying to reach out to God.</p>	<p><b>General Comments:</b></p> <p>Music allows the truth to penetrate more deeply into my soul</p> <p>Musical expression is the heart expressing itself to God, whether joy, love or lamentation...which pleases God as he wants to connect with us.</p> <p>Sometimes in difficult times I have trouble praying and singing/worship seems to strengthen and restore me.</p>	<p><b>General Comments:</b></p> <p>Music has been and still is quite foundational to my relationship with God.</p> <p>In terms of contribution to my walk with God, music isn’t more valuable than the scriptures or fellowship for growth, but probably represents the easiest way to connect emotionally to God.</p> <p>We don’t need big theological discussions to find God – he can be found in the feelings and beauty of a song.</p> <p>Music &amp; lyrics tend to connect me with God in a unique way as Bible Study &amp; teaching tend to be more cerebral.</p> <p>Three people mentioned how music was an effective tool to pass teaching from one generation to the next.</p> <p>Only one of the 7 “not really musical” people didn’t find music helped them connect with God. Interestingly they had no exposure to music as a baby or child.</p> <p>One “musical” person didn’t find music helpful in their relationship with God: performance based, distracting, often poorly written &amp; arranged, poor theology, lyrics don’t ring true to my experience, put me at the centre and less honouring of God.</p>

