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"What I have in my heart and soul must find a way out. That is the reason for music . . ." Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

MUSIC ARTICLES

What is Healing Music?

by Shirley E. Kaiser, M.A.

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If you look on the Internet or go into your nearby audio store you're likely to find music labeled "Healing Music." The section may include music for relaxation, meditation, stress reduction, pain relief or tapping into one's soul. There may be a variety of instruments or sounds from a forest or the ocean.

So what makes this music "healing music?"

Music has a way of stirring our innermost feelings and all of our senses, of tapping into parts of ourselves unlike anything else. Music is a universal language that has the ability to speak to us deeply and uniquely.

If you've paid much attention to how you respond to a variety of music, you may have noticed that some music seems to energize you, some music can move you to tears or spark a special memory of a time, place, food, or perhaps a certain person. Some music seems to make you relax, feel less stressed, and feel happier. And some music fills us with deep spiritual attunement.

The following are some examples of what I mean.

1. Tapping into our innermost feelings:

Think about some of the movies you've seen. "Jaws" wouldn't be the same without its daunting, low, repetitive sounds that makes you sit on the edge of your seat waiting for the shark to attack from somewhere. Then there's "Titanic" and its gorgeous love theme that permeates throughout the movie and throughout ourselves with its bittersweetness, generating the beauty of love and the tragedy of the massive ship's sinking and loss of so many lives.

One aspect of "healing" music is to stir our feelings, to help us deal with grief, sadness, anger or other feelings. By allowing ourselves to FEEL those feelings, the intensity will eventually lessen and even dissipate, resulting in being healing for us. When we avoid our feelings (consciously or subconsciously) they nonetheless tend to

build up inside. They don't just go away. Music can be a tool to help us deal with feelings within us, whether we're aware of them or not. This is one of the wonderful ways music can be incredibly healing.

2. **Music for an energy boost:**

I recall the late 1970's when I did housework to the Doobie Brothers' latest album, "Minute by Minute." It would help keep me energized and cheerful while I did the laundry, dusted and straightened (not my favorite things in the world to do). Remembering that, I recently bought the CD and I find that it still works to energize me. Handel's Messiah is also a very energizing piece, or the last movement to Beethoven's 9th Symphony, the famous *Ode to Joy*.

In *The Mozart Effect*, [Don Campbell](#) talks about using music in a variety of ways throughout the day, in the morning to help energize us, throughout the day to help us focus or concentrate better, music to help our intelligence, and in the evening to help us relax.

3. **Music for relaxation:**

Sometimes I have trouble falling asleep, so I listen to relaxing music, which can be a tremendous help. Lately I've been listening to some wonderful Native American flute music by Scott Cunningham (visit his website at <http://www.oginali.com>) to help me go to sleep as well as recently during some very busy days to help me not feel so stressed out. I've also drifted off to sleep listening to a guided meditation by Ron Mann, Ph.D., *Sleep*. You can check out Ron's tapes at <http://www.ronmann.com/>. I've listed more listening ideas at the [Bibliography and Discography](#) section of my website.

What exactly is "relaxing" music? Whether we are aware of it or not, music that's relaxing tends to slow down our heart rates to about one beat per second. If we're feeling stressful, angry, anxious, or irritable, our heart rates tend to increase. Music can actually help our heart rates slow down to a more relaxing pace, changing our physiology. This phenomenon is what can help me fall asleep more easily. It's what is found with many meditation tapes or other music specifically designed for stress reduction or relaxation.

4. **Music for spiritual attunement:**

Chanting has existed for centuries. For example, there are wonderful recordings of Gregorian chants, chants from India, chants sung by Catholic or Buddhist monks and other religious or secular groups. They tend to be repetitive with the goal of deepening our spiritual lives, whatever they may be, or at the very least, to help bring peaceful feelings into our beings.

There is a large variety of music that taps into our souls. For example, I am almost finished recording music that I've written for a new CD (or audio tape), *Journey Within*. It has been a truly inspirational journey, one that has been incredibly healing. It was all written from my soul, and those qualities are heard throughout every piece. You can listen to sound clips at my website at <http://shirleykaiser.com/music/>. The recording should be available sometime this winter.

5. **Choosing Music**

How do we know what music to choose to be healing for us? What about the variety of musical tastes that we each have? I have some suggestions on my [Bibliography](#)

Music Articles - What is Healing Music? Music for Work, Learning, Relaxi...anist, Composer - Smooth Jazz Piano, Healing Music, New Age Piano Music page to help get you started. There are also several books listed there, such as Hal Lingerman's, [*The Healing Energies of Music*](#), which lists music categorically, a tremendously helpful resource.

If you don't already, I encourage you to pay attention to your responses to a variety of music - physically, mentally, spiritually. To refer to when you need it, jot down the music that helps you in different ways, such as some of the examples I've mentioned above. That can be a valuable tool to use when you need it.

Feel free to [contact me](#) if you have any questions, suggestions, or comments.

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