

## **Chapter Two. Origins and Lineage**

### **2.1 Overview of Chapter Two**

This chapter presents a selection of sources and relevant materials revealing the “roots” of various concepts and theories associated with “music and healing.” Examples also include various poetic excerpts which are more contemporary in creation but whose content references and resonates with a “lost” or disconnected tradition. Indeed one of the major questions is to what extent do the ancient authors articulate a tradition that reflects the reality of curative practices rather than employing the content as metaphors for a life-affirming process which existed in the spiritual, emotional, or aesthetic realms. Emerging from this idea for contemporary society is an overriding issue that seems to point to cultural loss and a broken lineage.

### **2.2 The Nature of the Challenge**

Many other questions also emerge. What exactly was the pedagogical tradition? What was the nature of Orpheus, the mythical musician prominent in ancient Greek religion and culture?<sup>18</sup> Who specifically taught Orpheus? What role did musical talent play in the healing process? When, how, and why did the world ignore the process and

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18. While most contemporary thought considers Orpheus as part of a mythological system, the ancient Greeks saw him as part of their belief system or religion. He was “real” for many believers and this point is crucial for a full appreciation of his position. A somewhat similar parallel exists today with the “Christ of faith” and the “Christ of history”— there are “believers” and “non-believers” on both sides.

practice? Why was the philosophy which underlays “music as healing” abandoned? How can the “lost” knowledge (skills, treatments, prescriptions, etc.) be “re-created” and can this knowledge serve modern society as a functioning practice or must it remain in the ephemeral domains of history, literature, and poetry? Was music limited to spiritual and emotional healing or were musical techniques prescribed to cure diseases and counter unhealthy physical conditions? Some of these questions have obvious and direct links to various traditions while others remain obscured and blurred by historical distortion and cultural and religious change.

Many ancient cultures believed that an individual was an integrated unity of body and soul and believed that music (sound and vibration) was akin to the soul and therefore the key to an individual’s healthy soul and body. Plato (c. 427–347 BCE) believed that gymnastics were important to exercise the body and that the body could only remain healthy if the soul were healthy. He maintained that the two principles of human nature, the spiritual and the philosophical, are served by gymnastics and music respectively. This concept of holism permeated the entire ancient world. In antiquity music was considered to be a necessity, not a luxury, or something that was dispensable. Music embodied schooling and religious ceremonies, public and private festivities. The civic theatres were places of singing, of hymn, paeon and dithyramb with instruments and dance. Ritual, an aspect of temple worship and everyday life, had a musical element.<sup>19</sup> “Indeed,” as Joan Breton Connelly concludes in *The Parthenon Enigma*, “music may have served to summon the essence of the divine... We must not mistake the primary function of music

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19. For a recent discussion see Francesco Pelosi, *Plato on Music, Soul, and Body*.

in sacred ritual: it is a means of communicating with the divine, bringing the community together in a shared experience that transcends the quotidian, an altered state of being.”<sup>20</sup>

### **2.3 Music in Ancient Greece and Other Ancient Cultures**

In Greece, music was woven into almost every aspect of life accompanying religious rituals and other ceremonies. Poetry and music went hand in hand, and poets were typically composers who sang and accompanied themselves. Famous early examples include the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and the oral traditions attributed to Homer.<sup>21</sup> There are numerous other works and fragments by artists such as Hesiod (c. 750–650 BCE), Proclus (c. 412–485 BCE), Sappho (c. 600 BCE), Alcaeus (c. 600 BCE), Pindar (c. 522–443 BCE), among others. The ancient Greeks saw music coming from the Muses and their arts (poetry, singing and/or playing music, interpretative dancing) were constructed on harmony (melody and rhythm) as major constituents. From childhood onwards the Hellene was steeped in poetry, singing, dancing and the playing of instruments. The aulos<sup>22</sup> was prominent, but the lyre was the principle instrument learned in schools, where children learned to sing and accompany themselves in “the cherished

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20. p. 258.

21. There is considerable scholarly debate and controversy concerning Homer's true identity and whether or not the poet was an actual individual - a “blind bard” or a woman or simply an “icon” representing the whole legacy of the bardic tradition. A parallel academic debate also exists concerning the true identity of the author called “Shakespeare.” Some scholars claim the name Shakespeare was used as a “cover” or *nom de plume* for some other individual such as the Duke of Oxford.

22. The aulos is often considered to be a double reed but this designation does not equate with the use of the term “double reed” as understood today. Visual depictions often show two “pipes” and one assumes both have a vibrating reed. There is also visual evidence of a single reed or flute-like aulos.

poetry of antiquity.”<sup>23</sup> Common string instruments were lyres (kithara, kitharis, phorminx, barbiton) which functioned much as the guitar for today's singer/songwriter.

Plato and other philosophers such as Aristophanes (c. 446–386 BCE) and Aristotle (c. 434–322 BCE) maintained that training in singing constituted the highest education that a state could offer a student. Aristotle believed that music could influence the ethos of the soul and therefore the young must be musically educated. He believed that music had the functions of education *paideia* or education, *katharsis* and diversion. Plato felt that the young souls of children must be enchanted by melody and that music should be employed as an educational tool to promote self-control and develop character.<sup>24</sup> Socrates (469–399 BCE) maintained that education in poetry and music was critical as “rhythm and harmony sink deep into the recesses of the soul and take the strongest hold there, bringing that grace of body and mind which is only to be found in one who is brought up in the right way.”<sup>25</sup>

The view of *paideia* meant good training in chorus singing, which embraced both singing and dancing. Plato maintained that chorus singing inclined men towards excellence and moral excellence and *paideia* enabled appreciation of the best in music. Damon, the Pythagorean philosopher, had a similar view; “Song and dance necessarily

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23. Anderson, *Ethos and Education in Greek Music: The Evidence of Poetry and Philosophy*, p. 10.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

25. *Ibid.* p. 68.

arise when the soul is in some way moved, liberal and beautiful songs and dances create a similar soul, and the reverse kind create a reverse kind of soul.”<sup>26</sup>

*Paideia* was treated as a lifetime activity spanning childhood to old age, and important for both the religious and secular dimensions of human existence. Plato believed that mimetic practices, the influence of habit, stimulated both physical and intellectual development especially if begun at an early age. These habits were best acquired through choric training and Plato “traced the beginnings of music back to man’s natural impulses ... in man this impulse is the origin of the dance, of choric song, and of play.”<sup>27</sup>

Music was thought to be an incitement to bravery. Athenaeus refers to the courageous Lacedaemonians who marched to battle to the accompaniment of flutes, the Cretans to the accompaniment of lyres, and the Lydians to that of panpipes and flutes. “Many of the foreigners also conduct peace negotiations to the accompaniment of flutes and citharas to soften the spirits of their enemies.”<sup>28</sup> When building the city of Messene, the Greeks worked to the accompaniment of music. Plato and Aristotle both noted that whole herds and flocks of animals responded to the melodious rhythms of music. In Egypt the sowing and harvesting of the crops was accompanied by flutes and dancing as well as singing, which “facilitated the rhythmical motions of the wine-treaders; the toil of rowing on the Nile boats was alleviated by singing; in general, every profession requiring a regularized rhythmic activity was facilitated by singing, such as the threshing of the

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26. Ibid., pp. 39, 91.

27. Ibid., p. 104.

28. Meinecke, “Music and Medicine in Classical Antiquity,” p. 62.

corn, the milling of the wheat, the work of the carpenter and the like.”<sup>29</sup> Trumpets, drums, and clappers accompanied warriors. Sendrey says this was common to the ancient practices of the peoples of the Orient in all epochs. Indeed it was in western armies as well. Music not only instilled courage, but the rhythm enabled large groups of soldiers to manoeuvre together in battle formation, while trumpet calls and drum beats were also an essential method to signal movements and pass intelligence in the era before radio communication and when the clouds of dust raised by battle made visual signaling ineffective.<sup>30</sup> Sendrey also notes that music “played an increasingly important role in courtly life and in the entertainment of the nobles and the wealthy.”<sup>31</sup>

Aristotle, the son of a physician, argued, more generally, that music was an important factor in achieving intellectual virtue, for “music in its melodies and rhythms contains images of anger and gentleness, of courage and temperance, and all their opposites, and other moral qualities that correspond most closely to the true nature of these qualities...music contains in itself imitation of character, reproduced variously by the different modes: the Lydian is decorous and educative, the Phrygian is violently exciting and emotional, the Dorian is more composed and manly.”<sup>32</sup> Pindar (c. 522–443 BCE), the first Greek poet to be a professional musician, described the Dorian mode as being the most dignified. “Mode expresses man’s reaction to outward circumstance. A belief in modal ethos supposes that the modes can qualify man’s nature ethically ...

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29. Sendrey, *Music in the Social and Religious Life of Antiquity*, p. 39.

30. McNeill, *Keeping in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History*.

31. Sendrey, p. 38.

32. Meinecke, p. 59.

music was credited with the double power of expressing and also of influencing our moral nature.”<sup>33</sup> The need for musical education as an influence on human nature was emphasized since the soul rules the body, appropriate melodies, harmonies and instruments must affect both soul and body. Thus musical training was all the more important if a society were to truly benefit. Aristotle states:

It follows from all this that music has indeed the power to induce certain conditions of mind, and if it can do that, clearly it must be applied to education and the young must be directed to music and must be educated in it and by it. And teaching music is particularly apt for the young; for they because of their youth do not willingly tolerate anything that is not made pleasant for them, and music is one of those things that are by nature made to give pleasure. Moreover there is a certain affinity between us and music's harmonies and rhythms; so that many experts say that the soul is a harmony, others that it has harmony.<sup>34</sup>

Plato was convinced of the importance of music for the entire nation. When the soul loses its harmony, it is melody and rhythm that can restore it to order. “He who is diligent in molding his body must in turn provide the soul with motion by cultivating music. When there is a coincidence of beauty in the soul and corresponding and harmonious beauties of the same type in the body, this interrelation of beauty leads to the philosophy of universal love, and the union of soul and body in one common motion one may properly call perception.”<sup>35</sup> Plato supported Aristotle's belief that young children would benefit from music education. “Must we not rather regard music as a stimulus to goodness capable of having an effect on the character, in just the same way as gymnastic

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33. Anderson, pp. 31-32.

34. Aristotle, p. 310.

35. Meinecke, p. 57.

training produces a body of a certain type. And so capable of forming men who have the habit of right critical appreciation?"<sup>36</sup>

Pythagoras (c. 570–495 BCE), while exploring the physical effects of music, discovered powerful mathematical relationships. Many of his concepts were based on the premise that man's soul is harmony, and that the most momentous thing in human life is to win the soul to virtue; for virtue is harmony, and likewise all good and health, mental and physical. Since order, proportion, and measure were to him the essence of life, he and his school devoted themselves ardently to music to attain ethical perfection. He believed that if one employed music in daily life according to a prescribed manner, it would make a salutary contribution to one's health. Pythagoras investigated the physics of sound and his research, his "discovery" of natural harmonic ratios (1:1, 2:1, 3:1, 4:1, 5:1, etc.) common to vibrating bodies<sup>37</sup> lay the ground work for the study of acoustics and music theory. The perfect consonances (intervals of the perfect unison, perfect octave, perfect 5<sup>th</sup>, and arguably the perfect 4<sup>th</sup>) remain fundamental as the structural units of the western tonal system and are common structural elements in many different music systems. Pythagoras used his knowledge of music for his daily singing and playing, which were an inseparable part of his process of spiritual catharsis or purification of the soul.

For the Pythagoreans, by whom Boethius was largely influenced, both music and the soul share a basis in number. Music is demonstrably numerical, as

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36. Aristotle, p. 306.

37. The story of Pythagoras noticing the sound of the blacksmith's hammer as it struck various anvils is well known. The monochord (single vibrating string which enables various lengths to serve as vibrating generators) served as his investigative instrument and enabled research which has, over the intervening centuries, informed everything from speaker design to alternative tuning systems.



experiments with the monochord had shown them. In the Pythagorean tradition the soul is also made from number because it reflects the structure of the World-Soul, whose mathematical formation is set out by the Pythagorean philosopher Timaeus in Plato's dialogue of that name.<sup>38</sup>

After Pythagoras the concept of the "harmony of the spheres" was central to the Greek view as a symbol of universal order. The principle is that the entire universe is divided into a double octave, with the sun at its centre. The octave (ratio of 2:1) and the fifth (ratio of 3:2) were considered to rule the universe and serve as the fundamental basis of music. The intervallic subdivisions represented the link between nature and the soul and revealed the direct relations between pitch and numbers. Sound (musical intervals) was physical and could be experienced as such. The number ratios correspond to particular feelings and have sympathetic capabilities. The biblical account of the destruction of Jericho through the use of a trumpet, although somewhat curious and at odds with empirical and scientific thinking re that specific instruments ability to generate enough vibrational force to facilitate a "sympathetic" collapse of the walls, seems to reference this aspect of acoustic phenomenon. The musical intervals have been found to correspond directly to the proportions of the human body.

Furthermore the proportions of the human body correspond to the mathematical relationships between the planetary cycles. If the nipples divide the body roughly in the ratio 4:3, this corresponds not only to the musical 4<sup>th</sup>, but also to the relationship between the synodic periods of Mars and Venus... Thus the two worlds of sound and planetary motion find in the human body a direct, visible

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38. Godwin, *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth: Mysticism in Music from Antiquity to the Avant-Garde*, p. 21.

expression. Here the links between man and cosmos are the musical ratios, which represent in the truest sense of the term a principle of universal order.<sup>39</sup>

There are other proportions of the human body from man's inner organs, glands and their "underlying chakras." Vibration, relating to the various levels of consciousness, is found in certain types of chanting, such as that of the Tibetan monks. These have been known to the Mongolian shamans and the Tibetan monks in their chants. The bodily proportions between their associated inner centres no doubt reflect the harmonic series as well. Hamel writes: "Tone-colour permits certain specific effects on the listener. If used correctly, music can heal, remove anxiety and bring relaxation through the linking of the inner tone-colour zones, in other words, the relative proportions of the 'upper sounds' of a harmonic series, with the corresponding parts of the body and of the inner man...tone-colour is the music of the elemental nature of sound."<sup>40</sup>

"One of the most enduring models for the relationship between music, consciousness, and the universal creation, was that of the lyre. The use of the lyre was based upon precise attributes and harmonic patterns that are physical rather than allegorical."<sup>41</sup> "Music is effective as a therapeutic agent because, under the right circumstances, it can realign patterns of emotion, structures of consciousness or psychic energy...Music has the power to move us out of rigid or self-devouring negative states of consciousness."<sup>42</sup>

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39. Hamel, *Through Music to Self*, p. 122.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

41. Stewart, *Music Power Harmony*, p. 54.

42. Stewart, p. 62.

The concept of the Four Elements, which dates from pre-Socratic times, had widespread influence on much of humanity throughout history. These elements correspond to and harmonically resonate within various energy centres in the human organism: Earth—Feet; Water—Genitals; Fire—Heart; Air—Throat. Elemental balance or imbalance was believed to exist in man in the manner of humours, or moods. These were energy patterns or subtle substances, energies of fluids within the body that corresponded to the four elements. So if one suffered melancholy, one of the humours, it was believed that this was because of an elemental imbalance. The octave, or next spiral was above the head and frequently attributed to the Spirit.

The existence of archetypal elements is recognized in the healing traditions of many cultures, all of which refer to sound. The ancients did not use the word “energy,” rather they used the concept of “sacred sound.” For example, Chinese healing is based upon the concept of the five elements of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water, all of which encompass natural phenomena. The Sufi, Hazrat Inayat Khan expresses sacred sound as the word “music” and it was Pythagoras, who having conceived of the universe as a musical instrument, called the sacred sound of the universe the “Music of the Spheres.” The seers, or ancient *rishis* of India, referred to sacred sound as *Shabda*.

Everything was a manifestation of the underlying frequencies of “sacred sound” or sonic vibration. Pythagoras explored overtones (the upper harmonic partials of the fundamental tone) and their relationship to and in nature, geometric proportion, and sound theory. The sound emanating from an activated string on a monochord represented the genesis of creation: pulse, wave, and form result. The fundamental pitch (or

frequency  $f$ ) and its organic overtones which are produced by the division of the vibrating body ( $2f$ ,  $3f$ ,  $4f$ ,  $5f$ , etc.) supported an explanation of the mysterious merging of the one and the many. The whole length of the sounding string of a monochord generates a fundamental tone (often referred to as the generating frequency, tonic pitch, or primary partial) which is the “goal” from which all sound comes and to which all sound returns, another manifestation of the creation myth. Healing attempts to facilitate a return to the fundamental and “normal” state of well-being—a sort of natural or fundamental level of existence. The individual needs to be able to resonate with a part of him/herself in order to remain healthy and not lose inner harmony and become dissonant or dis-eased.

*Harmony* is from the Greek word *harmos*, meaning “to fit together.” The partials must be in sympathy and in proper alignment with the fundamental. “The inner experience of this harmony is an experience of our own fundamental.”<sup>43</sup>

“In the *Li Chi*, the ancient *Chinese Book of Rites*, whose compilation was begun by Confucius (551–478 BCE) there is a long discourse on how music should be used in conjunction with ceremonies to bring civilization into a proper state of harmony and order.”<sup>44</sup> For the ancient Chinese the balance of the yin and the yang was the basis of all healing, all of which originated from the fundamental Wu Ch’I: “When the two poles yin and yang work together they create a balance.”<sup>45</sup> In dividing the string of the monochord, the 5<sup>th</sup> degree (dominant or fifth above) and the 4<sup>th</sup> degree (lower dominant or fifth below) work together as a yin and yang. Scholars are increasingly discovering parallels

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43. Beaulieu, *Music and Sound in the Healing Arts*, p. 44.

44. Godwin, p. 31.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

and affinities between ancient Chinese and ancient western societies. In this case, Plato seems to express the essence of Chinese thinking: “music is a heaven-sent ally in reducing to order and harmony any disharmony in the revolutions within us...because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul.”<sup>46</sup> This idea remained as part of western thought through the ages. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) stated the matter of existence in a simple phrase that vibrates across the centuries, “Do you know that our soul is composed of harmony?”<sup>47</sup>

To the Greeks and Romans “disease was a disharmony of the component elements composing his physical and psychological nature; a harmony of these elements indicated health, and were the embodiment of the whole man, whose medical ideal is pertinently expressed by Juvenal’s maxim: healthy mind in a healthy body. Homer, poet and singer, had already recognized a dual nature in man, and he ennobles the dignity of the Greek man...thinkers from Thales to Plato sought to integrate both soul and body.”<sup>48</sup>

Homer recommended music as a tonic to:

... avoid negative passions such as anger, sorrow, worry, fear, fatigue and to promote healthful recreation for elevating soul and body.” He urged that “minstrels from all men on earth win their reward of honour and reverence, since the Muse teacheth them the path of song, and loveth the tribe of minstrels. They spread cheer with the lyre when men feast, for music is the crown of the festive board...but their crowning glory lies in the moral power of their music, whereby they were charged to protect the chastity of Penelope and Clytemnestra, Phemuis the one, Demodocus the other, during the absence of their husbands.”<sup>49</sup>

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46. Storr, *Music and Mind*, pp. 24, 125.

47. “The reply of King Mathias to a poet who competed with a painter,” in Jean Paul Richter, *The Literary Works of Leonardo Da Vinci*, vol. 1: 66.

48. Meinecke, p. 52.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

Medical and musical functions were attributed to various ancient deities by the Greeks and Romans, but particularly Apollo and Aesculapius. The Greeks believed the healing powers of Apollo and Aesculapius to be a form of naturalism as both gods represented the healing powers of nature: Apollo preserved the harmony of life by divination, music, and medicine. He bequeathed all his functions to his son, Aesculapius. Apollo had more influence in Greek and Roman religion than any other god. “He represents the pure intellect, and is the god of mental and moral purity; therefore his godhood is the very essence of the Greek idea that the aim of life is the purest harmony of soul and of body.”<sup>50</sup> He was leader of the Muses and god of music and was also known as Musagetes and Citharoedus; as a health-giving deity named Apollo Iatromantis (physician and seer, or, physician of the soul). Medicine and music were united in Apollo's divinity as inseparable unity. One of his functions as physician and seer, was to purge the soul of man of guilt, cleansing his body of ills and preserving the harmony of life by dispelling evil. Bruno Meinecke, the American professor of classics and a musician, captured these ideas in verse:

Music, thou gracious, pure art,  
With thee vanish grief and pain;  
Thou dost adorn the spirit with joy and grace,  
Thee I clasp forever in my heart.<sup>51</sup>

The Romans dedicated many temples to Apollo and one early construction in 430 BCE was built as a means of countering a pestilence. In Roman times Apollo was a

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50. Ibid., p. 48.

51. Ibid., p. 47; “B. Meinecke: Memoir,” Proceedings of the Board of Regents [University of Michigan, 1957], pp. 94-95.

favourite god and his temples were often connected with medicinal waters. The hot sulphur springs at Aquis Granum where pilgrims worshipped Apollo Granus was famous for its therapeutic value in the cure of gout, arthritic ailments and scrofula. The magic melodies and captivating power of pure harmonic invention was represented by demigods such as Orpheus who discovered sonic mysteries, performed purification from transgressions, cured various diseases and possessed the means to avert the anger of the gods.

The man whose song moved Thracian swordsmen  
To surrender arms, who charmed alike wild beast and stone,  
Who summoned from the fresh-leafed hills whole herds  
Of forest creatures, great flocks of broad-winged birds.  
The man whom legend reminds us once intoned a chord  
So deep in the heart of the underworld  
The damned fell silent and the Furies wept.<sup>52</sup>

Like Apollo, Orpheus was associated with oracular gifts and purificatory ritual: through the medium of poetry, music (as medicine?) and he also administered remedies to soul and body through music. His power was sympathetic and resided in song and in the responses of nature.

As the tidal flats resounded  
With the pathos of his song,  
Unnumbering broad-winged  
Shorebirds circled overhead,  
And fishes leapt straight from the sea.<sup>53</sup>

The power attributed to Orpheus through his musical gifts generated a poetic tradition that resonates across the centuries taking lasting root in the minds of western culture.

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52. Damagetus (c. 300 BCE), trans. Santos.

53. Simonides (c. 556– 468 BCE), trans. Santos.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) often referenced the sympathetic relationship between music and the situation in which people find themselves. Though the Bard has “small Latin and less Greek” according to Ben Jonson, he was well aware of various Greek and Latin dramatic sources and was constantly willing to develop, adapt, and reinforce the ideas and concepts of past cultures, established themes, and extant work by authors. His take of the Orpheus myth and the power of music is telling.

Orpheus with his lute made trees  
And the mountain tops that freeze  
Bow themselves, when he did sing:  
To his music plants and flowers  
Ever sprung; as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play  
Even the billows of the sea,  
Hung their heads, and then lay by.  
In sweet music is such art  
Killing care and grief of heart  
Fall asleep, or hearing die.<sup>54</sup>

Aristophanes (c. 448–380 BCE) said that Musaeus, a priest, poet and physician introduced us to the complete cure of diseases and oracular responses. The close affinity between the two deities, music and medicine, is substantiated by Pindar, to the effect that Aesculapius delivers those who suffer from festering sores or wounds received in battle or whose bodies waste away with the excessive heat or cold of the seasons, and others who suffer diverse pains of body or soul, healing them with soft, enchanting strains,

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54. William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Oxford Shakespeare: Henry VIII, or All is True*, Jay L. Halio, ed., III/i.iii.



applying soothing potions to others or treating their limbs with simples or restoring them by surgery.<sup>55</sup>

The inseparableness of music and medicine in Roman times was authenticated by Cicero (c. 106–43 BCE). Cicero shared the belief that man is both soul and body, and he approved of music and song as therapies for mental health. The Greeks and Romans believed that it was necessary to create an ecstatic experience in the patient in order to activate or awaken the curative power of the soul. This situation would thus restore the harmony between soul and body and in this way, the recuperative powers of Apollo and Aesculapius merged into an elemental psychotherapy, which was efficacious because the patient believed in the process.

It was also felt that music could positively influence politics by softening the hardness in the character of a people and thus humanize a whole nation. Polybius attributed the brutality and criminality of the Cynanetheans to the fact that they had “abandoned” music, in contrast to the virtuous Arcadians who “cultivated” all forms of music and dance as central elements of public life.<sup>56</sup>

The ancient story of the artist Theon demonstrates the psychological effect of music as he attempted to use music to create mood and magnify the artistic impact and acceptance of his painting. “He stationed a trumpeter near the picture and had him sound

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55. Meinecke, pp. 49-50.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

a warlike melody such as was usually employed to stimulate the soldiers for an attack...At the proper moment, he unveiled the picture portraying the soldier in action.”<sup>57</sup>

Plutarch (c. 46–120 CE) believed that the musical education of youth inclines the individual to embrace traits that are noble and generous and to observe decorum, temperance, and to develop good habits. Homer's *Illiad* shows how the gods tried to inspire a hero's courage through music and poetry. Achilles, Hercules and many others made “use” of music for this purpose and to raise their spirits. Indeed in the *Illiad*, Achilles, his pride wounded due to the insult of his king, refuses to fight and remains in his tent by the hollow ships on the shores of Troy attempting to sooth his wounded pride and saddened soul with music.<sup>58</sup>

Music accompanied feasts and banquets in Greek and Roman culture as an aid for digestion and as a calming tonic for mind, soul and body. The positive effects of rhythm and melody produced by dancing and the music of the lyre effected physical behaviour. Plutarch claims Homer had music at banquets to “counteract the intemperance of wine, which weakens both body and mind; for music by its harmonious order and symmetry assuages and reduces these to their natural condition.”<sup>59</sup> There is the story of the intoxicated Sicilian youth who became enraged listening to music in the Phrygian mode. He was rushing to the house of his mistress and planned to burn it down as he had heard she had received a rival suitor. The music enraged him more and more. Observing this, Pythagoras ordered the flute player to change modes, and at once the youth calmed down.

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57. Ibid.

58. Homer, *Illiad*, trans. Mitchell, IX.183-188.

59. Meinecke, p. 70.

Pythagoras fully understood the use of music, poetry and dance as a means of generating emotional stability.

The Roman philosopher Seneca is quoted as proclaiming:

The care of the soul is man's most important duty, because from our soul issue our thoughts, from the soul our words, from the soul develop our dispositions, our expressions, and indeed our very gait... Whoever has no knowledge of music, knows other things to no purpose.<sup>60</sup>

The deep interrelation between music and medicine is also shown by the famous Alexandrian physician Herophilus (c. 335–280 BCE) who “regulated the arterial pulsation according to the musical scale correspondingly with the age of the patient.”<sup>61</sup>

Cassiodorus believed that the spiritual benefit of musical training was operative in every act of one's life, physically and morally:

Our speech is regulated by musical rhythm, and our pulse; and this in turn, through harmonious symmetry, is associated with our character. For music implies a harmonious relation with the Creator. His reflections on the curative influence of music as it affects the soul lead to the following characteristics of Greek modes: the Dorian influences to modesty and purity; the Phrygian stimulates to fierce combat; the Aeolian composes mental disturbances and induces sleep; the Ionian whets dull intellects and kindles a desire for heavenly things; the Lydian soothes the soul when oppressed with excessive cares.<sup>62</sup>

Boethius (c. 480–525 CE) agreed with Plato's ideas linking the universe and its soul with musical harmony; and all ages of mankind respond to its soothing strains. He also supported Plato's belief that the music of well-chosen modes will invade the heart and mind with proper morals.

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60. Ibid., p. 67.

61. Ibid., p. 67.

62. Ibid., p. 68.

The power of pure harmony to unify discordant elements and by sweet concords to restore tranquility to a soul rent asunder by different psychoses and phobias is symbolized as early as pre-Homeric times by such well-known demigods as Amphion and Orpheus. Their entrancing tunes becalmed the surging rage of wild beasts and caused rocks and stones, mountains and forests, to bow to their will.<sup>63</sup>

There are numerous other examples of music acting as healing. “From the Pythagorean Cleinias, who was well known for his exemplary conduct and character, who achieved this distinction by calming himself down by playing on the lyre; to Terpander, who invented the seven-string lyre, who appeased treasonable conduct among the Lacedaemonians ...” when this people became embroiled in civil strife, an oracle stated that they would again be reconciled if Terpander of Methymna should sing to them to the accompaniment of the cithara. He did sing to them and his harmonies so played on their emotions that he brought harmony again into their midst. They were completely changed, embracing and tearfully kissing one another.<sup>64</sup>

Music has charms to soothe a savage breast,  
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.  
I’ve read that things inanimate have moved,  
And, as with living souls, have been inform’d,  
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.<sup>65</sup>

In cases of mental and nervous disorder, music played a major role. Maecenas, Augustus, a vice-regent and arts patron, was cured of insomnia by hearing distant strains of music. Indeed, there are many forms of music that are concerned with inducing

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63. Ibid., p. 70

64. Ibid., p. 72

65. William Congreve (1670–1729), “The Mourning Bride,” I/i, in *Bell’s British Plays*, p. 13.

relaxation and even sleep—the healthiest of all activities.<sup>66</sup> Psychiatric cases of many types were treated by music among the Greeks and Romans. Boethius believed that the harmonious symmetry of soul and body were innate and understood how sweet lullabies charmed infants.

“Aristides believed that music shapes and fashions man’s moral ideas through harmonious experiences, and renders the body more harmonious through rhythm...music as a pedagogical element is ideally adaptable to all periods of life and to all of life’s conditions. In fact, no activities in human affairs are consummated without music.”<sup>67</sup> Aristides also said, “a sorrowful mood can plunge many into incurable diseases if relief be not applied ... the emotions of melancholy and of rage are cured by music ... and by degrees, through an unconscious purging, restores them to a normal state.”<sup>68</sup>

That music was regarded as a therapeutic agent for the body and for the soul can be verified by sources of evidence found in both medical and non-medical authors of the Greeks and Romans. In his work on *Deadly Infections*, Democritus, the pre-Socratic philosopher, stated: snakebites should be treated by the skillfully and melodious playing of the flute. Orpheus had the same effect with his magical lyre playing. Although he was able to “revive” his wife Eurydice, his music was unable to return her to life on this

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66. The lullaby, nocturne, aubade, serenade, vespers, evensong, and night music are common musical “evening” forms with a focus on relaxation. Mozart's *Eine Kluge Nachtmusik* and the piano nocturnes by Chopin are famous examples from the western classical tradition. Stephen Sondheim develops and expands this theme for his Broadway musical “A Little Night Music.”

67. Meinecke, p. 76.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

earth.<sup>69</sup> The Orpheus legend is perhaps most easily interpreted as a metaphor for a gentle passing into what Dylan Thomas called “that good night.”<sup>70</sup> Today harp music is used in cases of severe illness and in some sense this sonic blanket serves as travelling music that facilitates the journey of passing from one state to another—the physical to the spiritual or from this world to the next. “How strange the change from major to minor, every time we say goodbye.”<sup>71</sup>

Martianus Capella who played a major role in developing the liberal arts noted the use of music to cure fevers and treat wounds.<sup>72</sup> Asclepiades used the trumpet to treat patients suffering from extreme deafness. One might speculate that he focused and magnified the sound to employ tonal reverberation and sympathetic vibrations as part of the process. “The physical malady of ischialgia was very common among the Greeks and Romans and music was especially recommended to cure this. Theophrastus recorded in his work *On Inspiration* that persons subject to sciatica would always be free from its attacks if one played the ancient flute in the Phrygian mode over the part affected.”<sup>73</sup>

Theophrastus recommends music for relieving epilepsy with music of the flute. Theophrastus also recommended music for chronic cases of insanity and for various phobias. “For purposes of healing, the auloi were considered the most potent of all musical media. Their playing could heal madness as well as all the violent emotions, and

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69. E.g., Trsaskoma, Smith, and Brunet, *Anthology of Classical Myth*, pp. 19, 96.

70. “Do not go gentle into that good night,” Gardner, ed., *The New Oxford Book of English Verse*, p. 942.

71. Cole Porter, “Ev’ry Time We Say Goodbye” (1944), Wilder, *American Popular Song*, pp. 247-49.

72. Meinecke, p. 83.

73. *Ibid.*

even physical illness. In Homer we read how Odysseus, during a hunt on Parnassus, was attacked and severely wounded by a boar. His hunting companions, the sons of Autolykos, came to his rescue, and through their magic song were able to stop his bleeding, which led to his complete recovery.”<sup>74</sup>

The Greeks and Romans were able to dispel diseases and plagues from their people through music:

So Thaletas of Crete, poet and musician, Tyrtæus, who combined his energies with the music of the flute, as well as Terpander of Lesbos and Alcman, a flutist, were all summoned by the Lacedaemonians from foreign states, whenever they were smitten by diseases and pestilence, to allay the divine scourge by their several musical arts in accordance with Apollo’s oracle. Also, Arion, a celebrated cithara player for Methymna in Lesbos, and Terpander also rescued the Lesbians and Ionians from grievous diseases with the aid of their music.<sup>75</sup>

Music that cured sickness also had the power to chase away evil spirits. At sacrificial rites this was originally achieved by the loud outcries of women, called oloygo, and later by the piercing sounds of the auloi.<sup>76</sup> For moral purification (katharsis) the Apollian strings were used, but the auloi was also used for healing rage, madness, passionate love and bodily sickness. “Plato mentions the healing of corybantic frenzy through dance and the music of the auloi.”<sup>77</sup> In ancient Greece a shaman was called an *iatromantis* and Aristotle states:

This is a kind of excitement which affects some people very strongly. It may arise out of religious music, and it is noticeable that when they have been listening to

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74. Sendrey, p. 320.

75. Ibid., p. 81.

76. Sendrey, p. 352.

77. Ibid., p. 253.

melodies that have an orgiastic effect they are, as it were, set on their feet, as if they had undergone a curative and a purifying treatment.<sup>78</sup>

He develops this idea further by adding, “to them all comes a pleasant feeling of purgation and relief. In the same way cathartic music brings men an elation which is not harmful.”<sup>79</sup> Pindar’s odes were typical of Greek and Roman practice to use public singing, accompanied by flute and lyre and combined with dancing, to raise the “moral tone” of athletic competitions, increase the power of ritual in religious festivals, and also to soothe the public mood at moments of crisis, such as epidemics. While music thus served as a form of psychotherapy, it had the function of being both curative and preventative, both among groups and for individuals. Just as music inspired “harmony” in relations among people, it also strengthened a person’s constitution, to alleviate illness, or to ward it off.

The healing of psychic maladies through music was true of almost all ancient cultures. In Egypt the poets and musicians were considered to be “improvers of the mores.”<sup>80</sup> Playing the lyre or flute was a virtue that was considered essential as it was felt that this discipline developed character. Along with singing and playing instruments, dancing in all the religions of the ancient Orient was essential. Like the Greeks, the Egyptians believed in the harmony of the spheres. This belief may have even preceded the Greeks as: “there are traces of it in ancient texts found in burial chambers of the pyramids. In a hymn to the goddess Hathor, found in the temple of Dandera: To thee, the

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78. Aristotle, p. 314.

79. Ibid.

80. Sendrey, p. 41.



heaven and its stars make music, Sun and moon sing praises to thee, The whole earth is making music for thee.”<sup>81</sup> Plato, who had travelled in Egypt between 398 and 385 BCE, commented on the melodies that were meant to govern human emotions and to purify the spirit of men.<sup>82</sup> The British poet and scholar Alexander Pope (1688–1744) developed this theme in his acknowledgement of the patron saint of music, Cecelia. The link to the divine is never far from the surface.

Music the fiercest grief can charm,  
And fate’s severest rage disarm.  
Music can soften pain to ease,  
And make despair and madness please.<sup>83</sup>

Shakespeare again reveals his deep understanding of the relationship between music and the nature of the individual and returns to the wellspring of Greek mythology in Lorenzo’s speech to Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Therefore the poet  
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;  
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,  
But music for the time doth change his nature.  
The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not mov’d with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,  
And his affections dark as Erebus.  
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.<sup>84</sup>

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81. Ibid., p. 48.

82. Plato, p. 45.

83. “Ode for Music on St. Cecilia’s Day,” in William Roscoe, *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.*, p. 242, line 123.

84. William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare. The Merchant of Venice*. Jay L. Halio, ed., V/i.

The musical practices among the peoples of Near Eastern Antiquity such as the Phrygians and Lydians had an influence on Greece, and in all these ancient cultures it was known that music stirred the emotions and also subdued them. It was the Hebrews and Greeks of Antiquity who treated music as an art and who “pursued through their musical culture a higher, ethical and educational level.”<sup>85</sup> According to the Old Testament, Saul was periodically tormented by evil spirits and his servants recommended that David, a skilled performer on the lyre, serve as “the cure.” “And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp and played [it] with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”<sup>86</sup>

In numerous cultures across many traditions it was the job of the medicine man and shaman to treat the patient with healing chants. Along with rattles and drumming the evil spirits of disease were driven out. In many Eastern and African ancient cultures

the gods of wind, water, fire and war have their own special drum signals...which consist of minute rhythmic hesitations, short gaps and pauses between the beats and the minutest gradations of volume. These acoustic signs are detected with the bell, or rather in the human consciousness. The drum rhythm of the shaman appeals primarily to man’s centre of magical consciousness. In the early animistic cultures of Africa this centre in the human abdomen was associated with the heartwood of a tree. The hollowed out tree, which was also the original form of the drum, was never allowed to be seen by the uninitiated. For the African tribes, as for the Asian peoples of the Arctic, the drum is the voice of “the One above,” the Thunderer, the Father of all, the Almighty.<sup>87</sup>

In the early epoch of Egyptian history the sound of instruments, as in other primitive civilizations, had mainly magical connotation. Musical instruments were used to ward off evil spirits ...For the Egyptians, music was the way to the hearts of the gods of the higher and lower regions, as well as evils spirits...it was

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85. Sendrey, p. 76; see also Sachs (1943), pp. 59-62.

86. I Samuel 16:23, King James Version.

87. Hamel, pp. 77-78.

performed mainly by priests and priestesses, the latter functioning at the same time as sacred temple dancers.<sup>88</sup>

In many ancient non-Western cultures, the drum was the means by which the shaman was able to communicate with the world above and the world below. It was the instruments that made contact with god, spirits and demons as well as with the souls of ancestors and mythical beasts.

Not very far from the sing-song rendering of the sorcerer or Shaman, but nearer to the chanting of the priest, was the role of music in healing... This power attributed to music has remained unchanged throughout the history of early civilizations. "Music" in the sense of singing or playing of instruments has equal importance for healing ... For a long time witch-doctors as well as priests, perpetuated the idea that music had healing powers.<sup>89</sup>

Ethnomusicologist Curt Sachs, who did pioneering work on music in antiquity partially based on field work among contemporary aboriginal peoples with neolithic cultures, says that singing gave meaning to early existence and determined the nature of poetry, helped in healing, providing the necessary background for ritual magic and inspiring dancers and intoxicating warriors. The shaman invoked great spirits to heal and protect individuals, families, and tribes. It was believed that music and sound magically allowed the powers above and below to come together.<sup>90</sup>

Sachs observed the connection between primitive medicine and music: "When the medicine man (shaman) performs religious ceremonies, the music approaches the liturgical intonation. And from the chants of the witch doctor it has descended by a long

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88. Sendrey, p. 38.

89. Hamel, p. 26.

90. Sachs (1943), pp. 20-23; Sachs (1962), pp. 80-83.

chain of heredity to the liturgy of higher religions; it lives on in the Shaman of the Hindu as in the Leinen of the Jews and the Lectio of the Christian Churches.”<sup>91</sup> The Jews believed in the healing powers of music until late Talmudic times. “We even find in the Talmud the mention of a song (*Shir peg ‘ayim*) that was allegedly capable of serving as protection in times of epidemic.”<sup>92</sup> Of course issues of folkloric traditions often conjure images of superstition and ignorance and these sorts of attitudes tend to downplay the potential of music as a therapeutic process.

From the earliest times the shamans of Mongolia appreciated the secret of music, and consciously practiced the phenomenon of the “monotone.” The Chinese musical system is the oldest and philosophically most highly-developed in history. The ancient music of China influenced the music of Japan, Korea, Mongolia and Tibet. For over two thousand years many cultures in Peru had Peruvian “whistling vessels” which are believed to have played an important spiritual part in the Peruvian’s life, producing vibrations that induced an expanded state of consciousness.<sup>93</sup> Jonathan Goldman wrote: “Such vessels were undoubtedly sacred tools, used under the guidance of a shaman or priest and utilized only at specific times and for specific purposes.”<sup>94</sup> The Tibetan bells, or Ting-Sha’s, along with the Peruvian Whistling Vessels are examples of ancient Shamanic tools that employed the concept of sonic entrainment for the brain, which as a phenomenon has been used by shamans from different cultures since pre-historic times.

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91. Sachs, (1937), pp. 201-2; the point is further developed in Sachs (1943), pp. 21-23.

92. Sendrey, p. 244.

93. Wright in Campbell (1992), p. 156.

94. Campbell (1992), p. 229.

Goldman says, “the ability to create altered states of consciousness through drumming and chanting is probably as old as music itself.”<sup>95</sup> These as well as drumming and chanting were used by shamans to alter consciousness. Shamanism goes back to the very origin of our species. In the shamanic culture, illness or disease was viewed as being a result of disharmony and imbalance in the personal energy field of the individual. The ancient shaman’s purpose and belief was to bring the psyche of the afflicted person back to wholeness and health. Shamans viewed the human being as a part of nature and not as being separate from nature. This was true whether in Greece, India, Tibet, Africa, China or elsewhere in the ancient world.

The ancient cultures’ views of the interconnectedness of body and soul and the healing powers of music as a preventative and as a curative for psychic and physical maladies prevailed in Western culture until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was the 17<sup>th</sup> century philosopher René Decartes, who in his book *Traité de l’Homme*, portrayed the universe as being divided into two separate parts. The universe of man he claimed had two divisions that were separate from each other, those being the mind or spirit and the body. The body became the domain of the medical doctor and the soul, mind and life force, became the domain of the church and were not to be interfered with by medical doctors. Later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Sir Isaac Newton validated Decartes’ philosophy pioneering a physics based upon the principle that mass and energy constitute two separate closed systems. This philosophy of separateness endured until very recent times. So strict were the laws concerning this philosophy, that any doctor who went against the realm of the

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95. Ibid., p. 228.

church was punished by death or imprisonment. This was the fate of Dr. Wilhelm Reich, a scientist who had earned an international reputation as a scientist of integrity. Only a few decades ago his remarkable findings challenged the foundations of traditional medicine.<sup>96</sup> What he had discovered was nothing short of the energy responsible for the biological, orgiastic pulsation of life on Earth (and possibly the universe). Alfred Einstein is reported to have exclaimed that this would be a “bombshell” to physics.<sup>97</sup> Tragically, Reich was labeled a quack by the politically-motivated American government and by the American medical system. Rather than embracing his discoveries, it was ordered that his documents be destroyed and that he be imprisoned. He died in prison in 1957.<sup>98</sup>

“The ‘rational’ sciences of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries will be looked upon as temporary aberrations, aberrations for which we may yet pay the extreme price of self-destruction. This time may become known as The Very Dark Ages.”<sup>99</sup> Yet, even in 1997, as noted above, Steven Pinker of Harvard dismissed music as “auditory cheesecake.”<sup>100</sup>

The findings of present day philosophers, cognitive psychologists, ethnomusicologists and neurologists have verified conclusively the inestimable powers of music upon the human organism, including its enormous role in healing, and produced evidence that challenges Pinker’s view (Carroll was an early, powerful response; for a review of subsequent responses see Fromm). In Western culture today, many alternative medical practices exist, indicating a desire for a holistic approach, for the

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96. Beaulieu, p. 21

97. Mallove (2001), p. 6

98. Morton (2003).

99. Hamel, p. 38.

100. Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, p. 534.

interconnectedness of mind and body. Helen Bonny and Oliver Sacks have helped move the practice of music therapy from the fringes into the mainstream of medical science. It is now commonly viewed as a vitally integral part of the healing process in places such as hospitals, nursing homes, and psychiatric institutions. The American singer and songwriter Tom Waits speaks of a certain cultural “loss” when he states: “You know, in the old days they said that the sound of the guitar could cure gout and epilepsy, sciatica and migraines. I think that nowadays there seems to be a deficit of wonder.”<sup>101</sup>

As the ancient Greeks and ancient cultures knew intuitively, the human organism is an interconnected whole of mind/soul and body. They understood the tremendous healing powers of music and its undisputed role as a preventative of disease in the life of the individual and in the lives of societies and communities as a whole. The need for children to be educated in music from an early age is known by modern science and there are movements within our Western culture to that end, including “The Promise of Music” initiative in Venezuela. Music has been drastically reduced in most schools in our culture, with many schools lacking music completely, and apparently over 50 percent of other schools offering some form of music that is taught by teachers who themselves are completely uneducated in music.<sup>102</sup> Thankfully there are organizations here in Canada, including Euterpe (see Chapter Six: The Vision in Action), who are rallying to effect a return to the wisdom of the ancients who knew that music, and the education in it, is a

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101. Quoted in Richards, *Life*, p. 519.

102. Ingrid Whyte, Former Executive Director of the Coalition of Education, Toronto, Canada, quoted in Brown (2010).

necessary health-giving element that is vitally important to the individual and to the nation as a whole.

Hazrat Inayat Khan echoes the ancients in his writings: “Illness is inharmony either physical inharmony or mental inharmony. This inharmony is caused by lack of tone and rhythm...the mind and body stand face to face. The body reflects its order and disorder upon the mind, the mind reflecting at the same time its harmony and disharmony on the body. Man is music—life is music.”<sup>103</sup>

An individual need not be in an advanced stage of Parkinson’s disease, or of any illness or disease, to benefit from the curative and sustaining powers of music. Music appears to be a necessity, and evidence suggests a return to the philosophy and practice of the ancients would be beneficial to the health of the nations. One positive idea is that music be taught to all children and be allowed to penetrate their psyche and their souls enabling them to experience an integral oneness and wholeness within themselves through music.

The Greeks suggested that music is innate in our species, and from Darwin to present day scientific findings, a growing body of evidence suggests that this is not unfounded speculation. Further investigation, research, and information gathering are necessary to enable contemporary medical systems to fully consider embracing the power of music as part of a preventative and positive health process. A healing method that may become common practice in future visionary cultures—a means of enriching and

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103. Khan, *The Music of Life*, p. 267.



benefiting people throughout their lives thereby creating happier, healthier individuals and nations.<sup>104</sup>

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104. MacDonald, Kreutze, and Mitchell, pp. 17-31.