

Therapeutic effects of music ON OUR BODY AND MIND

The therapeutic benefits of music are abundant. It is the music that stirs our emotions, enriches our life with melody, and often times aids us to overcome our melancholia.

And the rhythm, melody, and harmony of music equally help us fight numerous mental health disorders through the process of complex psychological intervention. The melodious rhythm and intonation of music have been used in different medical treatments over the past couple of decades and several research studies have demonstrated the countless benefits of listening to music including its effects on our blood pressure, heart rate, and even oxygen level in the blood. Hence, many therapies nowadays count on the beneficial rhythmic effects of music as a complement to these therapies due to its direct benefits.

The role of music dates back to the beginning of human civilization, and music has been considered a gift from mother nature itself. The ancient Greek defined music as the 'art of the muses' and the venerable Philosopher Plato cited that 'music is for the soul what exercise

is for the body.' The hieroglyphic signs representing the word 'music' are similar to the signs representing the states of 'joy' and 'wellbeing.' Thus, more than a thousand years ago it was recognized that music has certain healing properties that influence our emotional and spiritual dimensions. In recent times, according to the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), "the usage of music as a therapy can be designed to enhance wellness, reduce or manage stress, express feelings, enhance memory, improve



communication, and facilitate physical rehabilitation." And we certainly cannot deny how listening to our favourite music helps us feel more relaxed and blesses us with many restorative effects on our body and mind.

Moreover, AMTA states that music therapy vitally contributes to improving the quality of life of healthy people and meets the needs of children and adults who are suffering from numerous diseases and disabilities. Therefore, if we are to consider a disease as some kind of disruption or imbalance, music therapy can be used as the bridge necessary for the communication that is blocked in order to flow. Today, music therapy has been applied to a wide range of conditions and the most common applications are in education (autism, hyperactivity), medicine (oncology, pain), and geriatrics (dementia). Moreover, music therapy can be an effective way to develop new coping strategies and shed light on our unconscious thoughts or emotions that usually stay hidden in the background of our mind, especially while meditating.

The very renowned neurologist Oliver Sacks had discussed the intricate relationship between music and the brain in his book, *Musophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. In his book, he showed us how music can awaken the damaged part of the brain, and in the book, we come across the case of Martin, a person with a profound mental disability who knew more than two thousand complete

operas by heart. Just as music produces feelings of joy, sadness, or melancholy, it can also activate both hemispheres of our brain (left and right) and can create new connections between them. Our right hemisphere is associated with intuitive and imaginative functions while our left hemisphere is responsible for logic, reason, and language. Our left hemisphere is largely influenced by listening to music, and skills that are developed by listening to music include fine motor skills, rhythm, and coordination. Furthermore, certain melodies can activate or foster emotions such as empathy in the human brain. This is how music extraordinarily helps us to maintain a healthy social life, and develop humane qualities like compassion, and understanding.

Music has the power to summon forgotten memories and through it, we frequently project our personalities and tastes. I, time and again, use music as the time capsule to visit the sad or happy days of my past; as a remedy to overcome my heartaches or let myself become oblivious while listening to the songs of Tagore. To sum up, music can greatly modify our emotional state, and it has the ability to change the mindsets of people—just as our national anthem unites us all collectively. Thus, we should utilise the melody of music as the harbinger to bring peace and harmony to our spirit.

By Ayman Anika
Illustration by Hamida Akter Mira

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)
You'll find involvement in small groups gratifying. Try to be honest when dealing with your spouse. Be creative in your efforts. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)
Discord may arise with someone you're close to. You must use discretion when talking to others. Taking chances should not be an option. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)
You need to take a good look at all sides of an issue. Don't take sides. Plan your social events carefully. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)
Be careful how you deal with colleagues. The knowledge you have will enhance your reputation. You can make sound financial investments. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)
Too much work and no play will only result in frustration. Coworkers may not be on your side. Your personal life will be disrupted. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)
Your ambitious mood may not go over well with loved ones. Someone you care about may let you down. Secret affairs may only cause complications. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)
You will find that social activities enjoyable. Your lover may not understand your needs. Home improvement projects will bring the family closer. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)
You may want to try your hand at creative writing. Don't let your boss get the better of you. You're in the mood to spend money. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)
You are ahead of your time. Tempers will mount if you are too pushy at work. Don't point your finger unjustly at others. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)
Don't be too quick to respond to a plea for help. Empty promises are evident. You may not be too pleased with the actions of others. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)
Unreliable people will be negative. You won't be well received by superiors. Try not to allow your partner to lead you astray. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)
You can make excellent investments. Don't get tangled a debate that could lead to estrangement. If the job gets done, let it pass. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.