

Music's Role in Human Development

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Abstract

This paper will discuss the areas of importance music has in human development. The first area that will be defined is cognitive development, especially during the childhood years. Specific elements of pitch and non-musical academic achievement will be explored in relation to music's impact on the brain. The importance of nurturing and treating music as a type of intelligence is also significant. Music helps children succeed academically, but should not be taught only for that purpose. Musical skills should be learned for the purpose of enjoying the beauty in music itself, instead of being learned to improve math or other academic skills. Beauty can be appreciated in a new way through music. Specific elements of aesthetic beauty in music and nature will be discussed. People do not only get increased cognitive development and appreciation of beauty from music, but music can be used to express emotions. We tend to associate certain types of music with memories or specific emotions, and use different types of music to express how we are feeling. Music is not only emotionally impacting on an individual, but spiritually impacting as well. The spiritual influence of music has occurred since God created the earth and is seen in many biblical passages. Music helps us understand doctrinal truths such as the Trinity, and provides aspects of self-actualization that are only found in God. This paper will specifically examine Abraham Maslow's concept of self-actualization and argue that an individual is not truly actualized outside of God. In the process of self-actualization music can be used, and each way of creating music has a specific and unique creativity. However, for music to be a way to achieve self-actualization it must be rooted in God and continually given to serve him.

Music's Role in Human Development

“As long as there are people there will be music.” said Harold Best, former dean of Wheaton College Conservatory of Music.¹ Music is a significant aspect of everyday life, surrounding us and impacting our lives in different ways. The presence of music has had a powerful and renewing influence on people, practiced and enjoyed throughout human history. Music plays an important role in life and human development, especially during the years of childhood development. Specific areas where music plays significant roles in childhood development are in academics and creativity. Music allows children to make connections between itself and other academic subjects, as well giving them creative outlets to express inner emotions and experience beauty. In the process of human fulfillment music also provides benefits. True fulfillment is found in God, and can be supported through the powerful effect music has on the human spirit. Through music people are able to connect with God and others on a deeper emotional level, as well as learn to express themselves. By studying music, aesthetic beauty is not only seen in music itself, but extends into other parts of life where beauty may not have been noticed before.

Thesis Statement and Paper Overview

This paper will discuss the influence music has in human development, as well as the role music plays during the process of self-actualization. Music is an essential part of human development- cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually. Through music, children become adults who can fully acknowledge the *Imago Dei*, achieving self-actualization by fulfilling their self-image in God.

¹ Best, Harold. “Music through the Eyes of Faith.” (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 6.

This paper will address the specific roles music plays in human development:

- Music's Contribution to Cognitive Development in Children
- Music's Role in Academic Achievement
- Music's Role in Appreciation of Aesthetic Beauty
- Music used to Express Emotions
- Music's Connection in Relationship with God and Understanding Spiritual Truths
- Abraham Maslow's Concept of Self-Actualization
- The *Imago Dei*
- Music's Role in Self-Actualization

Music and Cognitive Development

The brain's development begins at conception, where children begin learning and developing ideas and concepts. One of the strongest cognitive links is pitch. The ability to determine pitch, as in whether a singer is off key, begins and develops before a children starts elementary school.² Pitch is a sound frequency of vibrations that wiggle in and out of the ear drum. This is the only way the brain can analyze and figure out the pitch, through the vibrations of the pitch moving through the inner ear.³ When a child learns how to determine whether a pitch is correct, and receives musical exposure that allows them to distinguish between different sounds, pitch determination becomes almost as well defined as distinguishing a complaint from a question.⁴ Daniel Levitin, neuroscientist, musician, and author, described pitch in this way: "Pitch is so important that the brain represents it directly; unlike almost any other musical

² Levitin, Daniel J. "This is Your Brain on Music." (New York: Penguin Group, 2006), 20.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

attribute, we could place electrodes in the brain and be able to determine what pitches were being played to a person just by looking at the brain activity.”⁵ The brain responds to pitch in a unique way. If a pitch was played at 440 Hz the neurons in the brain would fire at precisely that frequency, causing the electrodes in the brain to produce electric activity.⁶ This also gives pitch a unique place in music, which is made up of individual pitches. In music pitch plays a central role; it is what is heard, manipulated, and created into melodic and harmonic structures. Pitches are the main determination of emotional representation in music, and performers can learn how to manipulate pitch to convey different emotions.⁷ Other musical attributes, such as rhythm, timbre, and musical structure, are also important in determining musical emotion through the use of cognitive connections.

These musical attributes need cognitive development and nurture, especially at the elementary school age where children take basic foundational ideas and learn how to develop and expand them. Children develop mental pathways (called synapses) in order to think abstractly about objects and ideas, as well as make connections from simple ideas learned in early childhood to make complex ideas. Sarah Sparks, education researcher, stated that new research is supporting: “... that music training may increase the neural connections in regions of the brain associated with creativity, decision-making, and complex memory, and they may improve a student’s ability to process conflicting information from many senses at once.”⁸ In order to help a child produce these mental pathways music needs to be taught and enriched in childhood development.

⁵ Levitin, Daniel J. “This is Your Brain on Music.” (New York: Penguin Group, 2006), 29.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid, 28.

⁸ Sparks, Sarah, “Music Training Sharpens Brain Pathways, Studies Say.” *Education Week*, Vol.33 Issue 13, November 25, 2013.

David Elliott, professor of music and music education at New York University, said there are five forms of musical knowing that develop musicianship: procedural, formal, informal, impressionistic, and supervisory music knowledge.⁹ The only type of music knowledge that is verbal is the formal music knowledge; all other types of knowledge are non-verbal action that involve thinking and knowing. Elliott denied the common dualistic view of actions following verbal thoughts, and stated: “...actions are nonverbal forms of thinking and knowing in and of themselves.”¹⁰ When musicians perform they are using forms of nonverbal intelligence, not following a pattern of verbal thoughts beforehand. The brain is responsible for all the types of “musical knowledge.” This is why it is important for music educators in elementary schools to practice playing or singing music together, to help cultivate the nonverbal knowledge of music instead of only contributing to verbal music knowledge.¹¹ When music is taught in this way both verbal and nonverbal aspects of music are enriched, and children are learning how to use and develop verbal and nonverbal knowledge in their cognitive thinking.

Howard Gardner, American developmental psychologist, created the Multiple Intelligence Theory. He considers music to be a type of intelligence, and those who have musical intelligence often have a strong sense of rhythm and musical ability. People with musical intelligence, according to Gardner, have it ingrained in them before they even start music lessons. Although music can and should be developed over time some people are more naturally inclined to music than others. Gardner provides two examples displaying musical intelligence in progress. The first example has to do with the performer, Yehudi Menuhin. Menuhin at age three desired to play the violin. His parents purchased him a violin, and he became a worldwide

⁹ Elliott, David. “Music Matters, A New Philosophy of Music Education.” (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 53.

¹⁰ Ibid, 55.

¹¹ Ibid, 72.

performer at the age of ten.¹² Gardner provided this example to indicate the strong preference Menuhin had for music at a young age to specify music as a type of intelligence. To provide further support Gardner described a child with autism who cannot verbally express himself but can play an instrument beautifully. Musical intelligence can act independently from other types of intelligence, instead of needing separate intellectual support.¹³ There is often desire to increase mathematical and language intelligence, but it is also important children are receiving education in the development of musical intelligence as well. By taking into account the importance of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory, focusing on the development of musical intelligence, the brain enhances areas of functioning that could only be nurtured through the study of music. Neglecting the study of music leaves certain areas of the brain under-developed. Daniel Levitin stated: "Music activity involves nearly every region of the brain that we know about, and nearly every neural subsystem."¹⁴ This should be refined during early childhood and elementary school years, when children are in their prime developmental stage.¹⁵

Secondary Benefits of Music Education

Ideally, music education in elementary schools holds a position of primary importance (learning music for its powerful implications in life) and secondary importance (learning music to help non-musical academic achievement). If music education is only focused on secondary benefits children are missing out on the worth music has in itself. If music education is only focused on primary benefits it neglects the support music provides in other areas of academic achievement. However, music education in general is getting neglected. Schools often cut music

¹² Gardner, Howard. "Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons." (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 8.

¹³ Ibid, 9.

¹⁴ Levitin, Daniel J. "This is Your Brain on Music." (New York: Penguin Group, 2006), 85-86.

¹⁵ Schellenberg, E. Glen, "Music Lessons Enhance IQ." *Psychological Science (Wiley-Blackwell)*, Vol. 15, Issue 8, (August 2004): 511, (Accessed March 12, 2015).

programs in order to save money and give support to other academic endeavors. A national survey done in 2006 by the Center on Education Policy in Washington D.C. stated: "...44 percent of districts had increased instruction time in elementary school English language arts and math while decreasing time spent on other subjects."¹⁶ A 2008 follow-up survey discovered: "...16 percent of districts had reduced elementary school class time for music and art..."¹⁷ Budget cuts from 2014 show statistics indicating the lack of money students are receiving throughout the United States. Since the year of 2008, in Colorado, students have lost 7.1% of per-student spending. With this effect in school budgets and lack of finances teachers are losing their careers.¹⁸ School programs could be cut and there could be a downward spiral in music education to save other academic programs. This is a problem because it is depriving children from a vital aspect of life, important for their overall development.

Music can increase academic achievement through the increase in a child's intelligence quotient (IQ). A study done in Toronto, Canada tested this idea. E. Glenn Schellenberg, with the department of psychology at the University of Toronto, took 144 six-year olds (through the process some dropped out so the number became 132) and put them in four separate control groups. Two groups had music instruction in either voice or keyboard, while the other two groups had either drama lessons or no lessons. The study consisted of 36 weeks of either lessons or no lessons depending on the group, and IQ tests were taken before and after the study. The post-study test results indicated the children who studied music had a higher IQ increase in all academic subjects, with the largest increases in verbal comprehension and perceptual

¹⁶ Smith, Fran, "Why Arts Education Is Crucial, and Who's Doing It Best." *Edutopia*. January 28, 2009. (Accessed April 8, 2015), 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁸ Leachman, Michael, and Chris Mai. "Most States Funding Schools Less Than Before the Recession." *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*. May 20, 2014. (Accessed February 26, 2015).

organization. The two non-music control groups had an IQ increase average of 4.3%, while the music control groups had an IQ increase average of 7%, almost twice as much.¹⁹ This study supports the claim that music cultivates and develops higher academic achievement in grade school, especially during the developmental years between six and seven years old.

Primary Benefits of Music Education

Even with these academic benefits they are not the main reasons why it is important to study music. English and math teachers are focused on how well their students are performing in English and math. However, this is often not the case with music. Robert Cutietta, author and educator at the USC Thornton School of Music, described what music's purpose is thought to have in public education: "...in music, how well a student learns in music is often regarded as secondary if the child does not also show an increase in some other academic area."²⁰ This view of music, serving to provide achievement in other academic subjects, neglects music's overall purpose and value. Music can improve academic skills, but parents should not put their children in music for academic benefits, believing if children learn music they will get better grades. Sharon Keeler, teacher and director of Puget Sounds Piano Studio with a Masters in Piano Pedagogy, expressed: "A secondary benefit is one that may be obtained through a course of study, but is not exclusive to it... By claiming music study is important because it improves our math skills, organizational skills or life skills, we are listing secondary benefits."²¹ It is important that these benefits are not the only reasons for studying music, or else music loses its powerful

¹⁹ Schellenberg, E. Glen, "Music Lessons Enhance IQ." *Psychological Science (Wiley-Blackwell)*, Vol. 15, Issue 8, (August 2004): 511-514, (Accessed March 12, 2015).

²⁰ Cutietta, Robert A. and Harvey Mercadoocasio. "Raising Musical Kids: A Guide for Parents." (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13.

²¹ Sharon Keeler, "Music for Music's Sake," *The American Music Teacher*, April/May 2009, 26-27 (accessed February 16, 2015).

meaning with intellect and emotions. Influenced by the Multiple Intelligence Theory, a group of teachers in the late 1980's formed the first elementary school in Indianapolis, Indiana which focused on teaching all types of intelligence. Their students submitted several projects each year from Kindergarten to 6th grade and kept a video portfolio of their projects so they could see their academic growth.²² Through this new school children were able to appreciate the value in all forms of intelligence, appreciating each intelligence individually instead of focusing on a select few. This allowed children with musical intelligence to discover the primary benefits of their intelligence instead of only the secondary aspects on their academic achievement in math or language arts. Through this school system a child's overall intelligence was increased and advanced because of the equal attention given to each type of intelligence.

Music should be studied in order to increase musical intelligence and ability, contributing to a specific form of intelligence that is often abandoned. By focusing on music as a particular intelligence people are educated to increase their musical talents, as well as growing into well-rounded individuals who understand the importance of each intelligence (musical, bodily-kinesthetic, verbal, etc.) individually. When people involve themselves in music, a new aspect and appreciation for life is seen through the discovery of emotional expression and aesthetic beauty in the world and music itself.²³ People can learn to develop aesthetic appreciation for all different types of music as well as for God's creation. This is the primary goal of music, allowing the influence of music to impact daily life.

²² Gardner, Howard. "Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons." (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 113-115.

²³ Elliott, David. "Music Matters, A New Philosophy of Music Education." (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 23-26.

Music and Aesthetic Beauty

Retired professor and author, Dr. Allen Schantz, described the importance of understanding aesthetic aspects of the arts in this way: “The *arts* focus on the *aesthetic* aspect of living (engaging the perceptions)...”²⁴ Music in particular contains aesthetic value that individuals often forget to notice. Some people no longer appreciate the work of aesthetically excellent music, but instead only appreciate what they enjoy. They do not notice the work an individual may have put into a piece. If it is not the genre they prefer, the talent is left unrecognized. Aesthetic appreciation is not only lacking in music, but also when viewing nature as well. 75 years ago, C.S. Lewis, author and theologian, noticed the trend moving away from observing objective beauty to focusing on subjective beauty. He described how elementary school textbook authors in the 1940’s taught children that admiring natural beauty is subjective rather than objective. Instead, when someone admires natural beauty, they are not discovering aesthetic beauty in nature itself, but are expressing their emotions of how they feel at the moment. Statements of beauty lose meaning because everything is now subjective, based upon one’s feelings.²⁵ Lewis brought up a story written in an elementary English textbook about a man who described a waterfall as sublime. The man from the story also agrees with the tourist who describes a cataract as sublime. The authors taught the children the man was describing his feelings at the moment but that is a wrong interpretation of this story. Lewis gave his interpretation by stating: “The man who called the cataract sublime was not intending simply to describe his own emotions about it: he was also claiming that the object was one which *merited*

²⁴ Schantz, Allen. “Arts in the Key of Joy.” 3rd edition. (Denver: Aesthetic Arts Press, 2015), 5.

²⁵ Lewis, C.S. “Abolition of Man.” (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 3-15.

those emotions.”²⁶ This is still an emotional response, but instead it shows people recognizing the aesthetic beauty that surrounds them in nature.

David Elliot described aesthetic experience in this way: “The term *aesthetic experience* refers to a special kind of emotional happening or disinterested pleasure that supposedly arises from a listener’s exclusive concentration on the aesthetic qualities of a musical work...”²⁷ This describes that when a person listens to music aesthetically their original thoughts and opinions are left behind so they can experience the quality the musical work provides. By learning how to listen to music aesthetically children can learn how to view the world aesthetically. Liberal arts colleges historically have cultivated the development of the whole person instead of only a specific vocation, including aesthetic appreciation that occurs specifically through the arts. This should not have to wait until college. For aesthetic appreciation to develop in children they need to be engaging with the arts and beauty. This engagement can be a reflection of God’s image and open a door into a deeper spiritual connection with him. Music should not only be taught because of the cognitive impact and development it produces, but for healthy emotional and spiritual development as well.

Music and Emotion

Music impacts emotions in a variety of ways. Listening to a classical orchestra play a piano concerto by Rachmaninoff or a Beethoven symphony can bring such enjoyment and appreciation it can move the audience to tears. A particular song or sound can remind someone of a movie, such as half steps representing the theme of *Jaws* or the song “*Let it Go*” from the

²⁶ Lewis, C.S. “Abolition of Man.” (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 15.

²⁷ Elliott, David. “Music Matters, A New Philosophy of Music Education.” (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 23.

Disney movie *Frozen*. Remove the musical soundtrack, and movies would lose a large emotional impact and influence on their viewers. Film score writers and directors know the emotional power music has on individuals, and use music to evoke certain emotions in their films. Songs can bring up memories of the past, such as a first date, a cross-country road trip, or a family tradition. Neuroscientists show the relation of the memory and emotional systems in the brain. The amygdala processes emotion and is adjacent with the hippocampus, which processes memory. This close relationship between the amygdala and hippocampus show the involvement each system has with the other. The amygdala shows activation when listening to familiar music, bringing pleasure and emotional satisfaction to the brain.²⁸ The power music has on emotions is astonishing.

Music is impactful to those who listen as well as those who are performing. Often the best way to learn how to play or perform a musical composition is to “feel the music,” to invest emotionally into the idea or story the audience is supposed to imagine. Each performer adds their own emotional expression and inspiration. Sharon Keeler described music’s connection to emotions in this way: “Music allows us to express ourselves artistically without words, in a temporal manner.”²⁹ Through developing a sensitive response to music individuals not only connect and express their emotions, but can connect and express their emotions with other people. Author Madeleine L’Engle said: “All children are artists, and it is an indictment of our culture that so many of them lose their creativity, their unfettered imaginations, as they grow older.”³⁰ The current culture is lacking contribution to the development of artistic expression among children and this is putting them at a disadvantage. Instead, culture is causing children to

²⁸ Levitin, Daniel J. “This is Your Brain on Music.” (New York: Penguin Group, 2006), 167.

²⁹ Sharon Keeler, “Music for Music’s Sake,” *The American Music Teacher*, April/May 2009, 27, (accessed February 16, 2015).

³⁰ L’Engle, Madeleine. “Walking on Water.” (New York: North Point Press, 1998), 51.

overlook their imagination, creativity, and emotions. However, it is often forgotten the strong role music plays in everyday life. Music involves imagination, creativity, and emotion and has been influencing society since biblical times. Without the presence of music, an essential part of human existence is lost. Therefore, cultivating music through passionate and artistic expression allows people to keep the power of music present in human existence.

Aaron Copland, American composer, teacher, and writer, described three levels of listening a person does with music: sensuous, expressive, and musical. People naturally listen to music on the sensuous level, meaning they are deciding whether they enjoy a particular song, making an emotional connection to the music. The expressive level is the next step in music listening, and this is where an individual needs some help developing this listening level completely. The expressive listener carefully listens to music and focuses on the point of emotion the music is trying to get across, such as whether a piece is major or minor in terms of its joyful or depressing sounds. The last musical level Copland presented is the “sheerly musical” level, which indicates the analysis of musical structure as well as appreciating music’s aesthetic beauty.³¹ This allows an emotional appreciation of music to go beyond what the listener enjoys, to an appreciation of the music itself. The actual aesthetic appreciation of music and musical style comes before the extra-aesthetic components, which are outside of a piece and based on individual experiences and preferences.³²

Music used in Praise and Relationship with God

People do not only relate to music on an emotional level, but may also relate to it on a spiritual level, feeling the impact of music in their relationship with God. The use of music for

³¹ Copland, Aaron. “What to Listen for in Music.” (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1939), 7-15.

³² Schantz, Allen. “Arts in the Key of Joy.” 3rd edition. (Denver: Aesthetic Arts Press, 2015), 5, 8.

the glorification of God is present throughout the Bible. One of the first biblical passages that displays connecting with God through music is found in the book of Exodus. When God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, Miriam and the other women of the camp praised God. They praised him with instruments and dancing, singing: “Sing to the Lord for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.”³³ David is another biblical figure who used music to praise and connect with God. David praised God through dancing and singing on the city streets when the Ark of the Covenant arrived and the people praised God with musical instruments.³⁴ David also used music to play for King Saul. “Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.”³⁵ When David played for Saul the music had a spiritual impact on him, causing relief and freedom from spiritual warfare. David used poetry and song to express his feelings to God through the Psalms. These poems were primarily written to music and contain many references to music throughout. David expressed emotions of joy and happiness, as well as anger, sadness, and fear throughout the Psalms. In Psalm 13 David expressed fear over his enemies as well as sadness because he did not feel God’s presence with him. He said “Look on me and answer, LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, ‘I have overcome him,’ and my foes will rejoice when I fall.”³⁶ In Psalm 30 David expressed the joy he has when God delivered him from his enemies and heard his prayer, saving him from death.³⁷

³³ Exodus, 15:21 (NIV).

³⁴ 1st Chronicles 15 (NIV).

³⁵ 1st Samuel 16:23 (NIV).

³⁶ Psalm 13: 3-4 (NIV).

³⁷ Psalm 30 (NIV).

Job states the morning stars sang and the angels shouted for joy when God created the earth, showing that music was heard at the beginning of God's creation.³⁸ We not only see music present at the beginning of creation but at the consummation as well. Revelation says the people of Heaven will sing how worthy Christ is with all the creatures throughout Heaven and Earth.³⁹ From beginning to end music is present in connecting with God. Often church services will open with music to help the congregation worship God and often these praise songs come out of biblical passages. There is a beauty that comes with music that is unique to music itself. The way music impacts emotions is similar to the way music can impact spiritual life. An upbeat song can have the congregation jumping for joy while a calm song can have the congregation on their knees. Music can also give a sense of freedom to the worshiper, as well as an expression of prayer. It allows people to give themselves to the working of God in their lives and express what they need to pray when words are not enough. Music is essential part to the Christian faith as well as to the development of a deeper spiritual connection to the Lord.

Music Helps Christians Understand Important Religious Beliefs

Music does not only allow a spiritual connection in a relationship with God, but also helps in understanding key religious beliefs, such as the Trinity, Incarnation, and God's creation. The Trinity is a difficult doctrine to understand, let alone describe. Visual images of the Trinity are commonly used to define the Trinity. However, many of these representations can be misleading to Christians and cause them to see the Trinity in the wrong way, such as God in three manifestations of one God (modalism).⁴⁰ Jeremy Begbie described a way music can give an understanding of the Trinity through auditory learning. He described the Trinity as three pitches

³⁸ Job 38:7 (NIV).

³⁹ Revelation 5:12-13 (NIV).

⁴⁰ Begbie, Jeremy. "Beholding the Glory, Through the Arts." (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 148.

played simultaneously. When three notes are played together they occupy the same space but remain distinctly different pitches. Each note is connected to each other in the three-note chord. With one of the notes missing, that chord does not sound the same because each note enhances the other.⁴¹ This representation gives a different view of the Trinity that Begbie believes is a “truer” interpretation. The Trinity in visual images gives a “static and still” description where music introduces a dynamic of the Trinity that is active, with each string “mutually resonating” together.⁴²

The Incarnation is another attribute of God that can be described through music. The Incarnation is a mystery to us; we do not understand how Jesus could be fully God and fully human. Explanations can lead to confusion or put a larger emphasis on the divinity of Jesus or his humanness. Although the Incarnation cannot be fully explained by music, music can provide a rich understanding of this doctrine. Harold Best said before Christ became human he could be compared to a symphony, containing extravagant power and complexity.⁴³ When Christ became human, he became a folk tune. This change did not cancel out the symphony or diminish it, but contained beauty in itself. Best described the connection to Christ’s Incarnation in this way: “Rather, it is an *emptied* symphony, completely possessed of its own wholeness, integrity, and uniqueness.”⁴⁴ Jeremy Begbie connected music and the Incarnation as well. In the same way Begbie described the Trinity the Incarnation can be described, but in the sense of two notes instead of three. Two notes played together is a way we can perceive the Incarnation. The two

⁴¹ Begbie, Jeremy. “Beholding the Glory, Through the Arts.” (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 147.

⁴² Ibid, 148.

⁴³ Best, Harold. “Music through the Eyes of Faith.” (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 33.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 33.

sounds overlap each other but are closely interacting without taking away from each pitch. Christ's divinity and flesh closely interacted, but did not take away from each other.⁴⁵

God's creation and music link together. We can make beautiful music displaying God's image and creation to the people around us. Harold Best called the artist a "created creator" and the artist should show the way they understand God's creation around them.⁴⁶ Musicians can create music from sounds that surround them in nature, but need to remember God created those sounds of nature first. Often music is evaluated by its musical complexity to determine whether music is "creative" or not. This is a mistake because simple music can also be creative. Harold Best compared simple and complex music to simple and complex creations of God. He compared musical simplicity to a blade of grass and musical complexity to the galaxy. The blade of grass and the galaxy are created in the same way, taking certain particles to create something that is small and something that is large. Each has a uniqueness and mystery in itself just as music does, whether simple or complex.⁴⁷ Music of all types display elements of God's creation and helps others appreciate it. Through creating music we are interacting in a deeper way with God's creation.

Music advances human development cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually but also provides a way to find self-fulfillment. Music opens the door for healthy communication, displays aesthetic beauty, and creative expression. Through music individuals find a glimpse of beauty that may not have been discovered before. However, music and art in themselves are not the complete fulfillment of individuals. Musical talent and skill must be paired with spiritual and personal fulfillment, leading to what developmental psychologists call self-actualization. If this

⁴⁵ Begbie, Jeremy. "Beholding the Glory, Through the Arts." (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 147.

⁴⁶ Best, Harold. "Music through the Eyes of Faith." (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 21.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 30.

point is missed, people are unable to find fulfillment, and begin wondering why their skills and abilities are not giving their lives purpose. The process of self-actualization must involve spiritual fulfillment to be true self-actualization.

Self-actualization

Self-actualization, coined by famous psychologist Abraham Maslow, means the fulfillment of human potential. According to Maslow, self-actualization is only achieved by fulfilling all the basic needs first which are: physiological, safety, belonging, love, and self-esteem needs.⁴⁸ When these needs are met individuals can naturally meet their full potential in self-actualization. It is a process of actively striving for purpose and consists of trial and error, tragedy, joy, and peak-experiences. Individuals can meet self-actualization in various ways. It can be within arts and athletics, as well as homemaking and participating in the business world. For musicians, their highest fulfillment is found in musical talent and creativity, impacting human history by their achievement. In a sense, musicians give and contribute to society and themselves; when they reach self-actualization, it is both a selfish and selfless endeavor. People who are self-actualized are considered to be “healthy” individuals and experience more peak experiences as well as joy throughout their lifetime. However, self-actualization is not achieved or pursued by all people, and this inhibits the individual because a vital part of the self is neglected. Abraham Maslow said there are “sick people” in the world who miss their fulfillment because they are unaware that they are sick.⁴⁹ In Maslow’s view, the emergence of a sick person occurs when the, “... (inner nature) of the person is frustrated, denied or suppressed, sickness

⁴⁸ Maslow, Abraham H. “Motivation and Personality.” (New York, Harper & Row, 1954), 150-151.

⁴⁹ Maslow, Abraham H. “Toward a Psychology of Being.” 2nd Edition. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1968), 8.

results, sometimes in obvious forms, sometimes in subtle and devious forms...”⁵⁰ They never realize they can live up to their full potential and instead are leading lives that do nothing to cultivate their abilities, lacking an important part of who they are.

Maslow Misses the Point of Self-actualization

Abraham Maslow said the human self is fulfilled by the process of self-actualization, which is the ultimate human fulfillment. While it is important to cultivate and pursue our abilities to the greatest capacity, Maslow is missing the main point of self-actualization. Human fulfillment is found when an individual is fulfilled through the *Imago Dei*, which is Latin for the image of God.⁵¹ It should naturally manifest out of individuals being so integrated into themselves that it is part of who God created them to be. People use their gifts as part of their fulfillment by using their abilities to glorify God and further his kingdom. If that is missing, true self-actualization is not achieved. Maslow emphasized the importance of peak experiences as the root of finding self-actualization. He described them to be a moment where people separate themselves from the world, a worthwhile experience, and an answer to suicide.⁵² While an answer to suicide may be a drastic assumption on Maslow’s part, the example of peak experiences allowing individuals to transcend themselves into a world beyond what is finite has some truth, even if Maslow misses it.

Ancient philosopher, Aristotle, discussed human flourishing as happiness. The definition of happiness is not the kind of happiness that relates to pleasure, but rather a happiness that

⁵⁰ Maslow, Abraham H. “Toward a Psychology of Being.” 2nd Edition. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1968), 193.

⁵¹ Livingstone, E.A. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. “Imago Dei.” New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. (Accessed March 17, 2015).

⁵² Maslow, Abraham H. “Toward a Psychology of Being.” 2nd Edition. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1968), 210.

relates to human flourishing or human fulfillment. Happiness is an end and the goal of human fulfillment, as well as the highest desire among people.⁵³ Theologian and philosopher, St. Thomas Aquinas, agreed with Aristotle's definition of happiness and expanded the idea into a Christian perspective. For Aquinas, God is the ultimate end to human happiness; outside of God, happiness is incomplete. People cannot truly have a fulfilling "peak experience" outside of God. Aquinas explained God and the relation to happiness in this way: "Ultimate and perfect happiness can only be in vision of the divine essence... Thus its perfection will be had by its union with God... only in this does man's happiness exist."⁵⁴ Maslow misses that the peak experiences and the happiness that matters occur through God in the spiritual realm. Perfect happiness is attained in the vision of the divine essence, but that is not possible outside the spiritual realm on the earth.⁵⁵ Therefore, Maslow has only touched the beginning of human fulfillment, leaving it incomplete. People who are using their musical talent to their greatest ability only for themselves in the finite world are not finding spiritual satisfaction. They are desiring more that can only be attained in their spiritual fulfillment.

The Imago Dei

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."⁵⁶ From the start humans have displayed the *Imago Dei*. God created people above all living creatures, giving them dominion over creation and caring for it as God cares for humankind. Humans are rational creatures that have the ability to reason. Etienne

⁵³ Joachim, Harold. "Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics." Book 1, Chap. 7, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11.

⁵⁴ Oesterle, John A, trans., "Treatise on Happiness: Saint Thomas Aquinas." (Norte Dame: University of Norte Dame Press, 1964), 39.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 57.

⁵⁶ Genesis 1:27 (NIV).

Gilson, historian of philosophy and expert on St. Thomas Aquinas, discussed the philosophy of Aquinas and described the ability to reason as an “intelligent nature”. Gilson explained Aquinas’s view on the *Imago Dei* in these terms; “This quality of being in the image of God is co-essential to man because it is one with the rationality of his nature.”⁵⁷ Because humans are rational, their ability to think and reason helps them know and love God in a way that is impossible for other creatures. When the fall happened in Genesis humans became separated from God. Although separated from God they did not lose God’s image, instead it was only corrupted, not lost. The *Imago Dei* remains in all people, but instead of manifesting perfectly within us our sin took away its perfection with our human nature. When Jesus Christ came to Earth he restored a part of the image of God. Gilson said this is one of the effects of grace.

The first effect of grace is to perfect our whole nature, allowing us to love God more fully. Through grace people can share in the divine nature of God through the *Imago Dei*.⁵⁸ However, sharing in the *Imago Dei* does not mean we *are* God. We are created in the image of God but he is still beyond us. On Earth we can live knowing we are made in the *Imago Dei*, but remember we are limited by our flesh. We are made in God’s image; we desire to seek him as well as find fulfillment through him. People who recognize their image in God desire to use their gifts for a higher purpose. Music is one of the greatest gifts God has given to humankind. By using music to fulfill our purpose in the *Imago Dei* we communicate beyond what we desire. It moves beyond immediate gratifications and sensations, leaving us with music that can be life changing and spiritually impacting to the world.

⁵⁷ Gilson, Etienne. “The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas.” (New York: Random House, 1966), 345.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 345 -346.

Self-actualization in the *Imago Dei*

People were made for more than fulfilling their desires. They find true fulfillment in a relationship with God, living for something greater than themselves. Through the unique relationship we are able to have with God we must seek him to understand where our fulfillment lies. Finding fulfillment in God has to be a choice. Maslow does not believe there is anything outside the physical Earth, eliminating the option of choosing fulfillment in God. He said: "...being in a state of Being (living) needs no future, because it is already *there*."⁵⁹ This statement is theologically inaccurate; the physical self is also a spiritual self. The self is represented in the *Imago Dei*. Etienne Gilson referred to Aquinas's definition of the self in this way: "...the person as a divine effect is to make it an image of God. And as the person is the very peak of nature, it is the most perfect image of God which we can contemplate..."⁶⁰ An individual's highest pursuit in life is spiritual intimacy with God and to live more completely in his image.⁶¹ True self-actualization reflects the image of God and is based on a relationship with him. If the spiritual part of the self is ignored, full self-actualization is impossible. Everyone *has* a future and if that future is non-existent self-fulfillment cannot occur. Our gifts are to be used through the *Imago Dei*, connecting with the spiritual part of the self that is present with us on Earth. Instead of self-actualization we are only getting a small glimpse of what the fulfillment of our spiritual self will be in Heaven.

This does not mean we need to wait until eternity to find meaning and fulfillment in life. We are called to live a virtuous life on Earth; to function effectively before we are perfectly

⁵⁹ Maslow, Abraham H. "Toward a Psychology of Being." 2nd Edition. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1968), 214.

⁶⁰ Gilson, Etienne. "The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas." (New York: Random House, 1966), 303.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 305.

fulfilled in Heaven. Robert C. Roberts, professor of philosophy at Baylor University, explained virtue as: "...an acquired base of excellent functioning in some generically human sphere of activity that is challenging and important."⁶² We want to function excellently here on Earth, and musicians can do that by using their music to the best of their ability. Christians have three central virtues they abide by: faith, hope, and love.⁶³ When music is used with these three virtues in mind, we are discovering a deeper part of ourselves. Achieving selfhood and being a Christian are one in the same.⁶⁴ However, it must be noted that virtues do not make us "superhuman" but "more human." Excellent functioning through virtues on Earth fits with our current human nature, not with a different nature or world.⁶⁵ When this is not seen people are subject to self-deception, and instead of being "self-actualized," they miss living life to their fullest potential.

Maslow stated what he believes the solution is for the self-deception present in the majority of individuals: "We need a validated, usable system of human values that we can believe in and devote ourselves to (be willing to die for), because they are true rather than because we are exhorted to 'believe and have faith.'"⁶⁶ In this statement Maslow critiques religious faith. He emphasized that people need a true system to put their hope in, and that is not seen in religious faith. He sees self-actualization occur better when someone is willing to die for their country or contribute to a worthy cause in the community instead of when someone chooses to be martyred for their faith. The protection of keeping democracy in a country and contributing

⁶² Roberts, Robert C. and W. Jay Wood. "Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology." (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 59.

⁶³ Ibid, 66.

⁶⁴ Tietjan, Mark A, and C. Stephen Evans. "Kierkegaard as a Christian Psychologist." *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, Vol. 30, Issue 4, Winter 2011, 281, (Accessed March 12, 2015).

⁶⁵ Roberts, Robert C. and W. Jay Wood. "Intellectual Virtues: An Essay in Regulative Epistemology." (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 82.

⁶⁶ Maslow, Abraham H. "Toward a Psychology of Being." 2nd Edition. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1968), 206.

to a community can be discerned as true causes to achieve self-actualization. Although they are not always usable systems, each has true validation if systems are set up effectively. For religion, individuals cannot know if what they believe is true because they are encouraged to have faith and believe. They do not have evidence to support their religious claims, so Maslow does not believe they have a validated, usable system to work with. Aquinas provided a counter-argument for God's existence from his work, *Summa Theologiae*. He listed several proofs for God's existence, a few of them being cause and effect, and the perfection of God. The law of cause and effect is something that everyone experiences; every effect must have a cause. Because the universe is an effect from something (it could not occur from nothing) Aquinas believes God is the cause of the universe. Another proof for God's existence is God's perfection. Things on Earth are more or less good and there needs to be something that is the best and most good and that is God.⁶⁷ Faith is still a vital part to Christianity but Aquinas's proofs argue for God's existence, moving the Christian faith beyond the exhortation to merely "believe and have faith."

Music in self-actualization and the *Imago Dei*

Maslow also described self-actualized creativity: "It dawned on me once that a competent cellist I had reflexly thought of as 'creative'...was actually playing well what someone else had written. She was a mouthpiece...A good cabinetmaker or gardener or dressmaker *could* be more truly creative."⁶⁸ To Maslow, the musician who only plays someone else's music is less creative than the one who writes their own music. This is a poor evaluation of creativity, but unfortunately a common belief among people. Instead, each way of playing music, whether it is

⁶⁷ Aquinas, St. Thomas. "Summa Theologiae." Pt 1, Qu. 2, Art. 3 in "Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas" ed. Anton C. Pegis. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), I.

⁶⁸ Maslow, Abraham H. "Toward a Psychology of Being." 2nd Edition. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1968), 137.

an original composition or someone else's work, has creative elements in it. Musicians who play an original composition are expressing their inner creativity, using music to express emotion and adoration to God. Harold Best described this type of musical creativity as: "...a music maker will imagine, work out, or dream up a piece of music that can then be presented."⁶⁹ Therefore, a composer imagines a particular situation and creates music. An example is Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, where each season has a poem that inspired the music. Another way this creativity is present is when an individual improvises or creates music to a biblical passage to glorify God. This skill is not present in every individual. God has blessed this person with the ability to create music that others can enjoy listening to and make a difference in society. However, this is not the only type of musical creativity.

People who perform music already written, such as the first violinist in an orchestra, play music that was not present before even if the music had been previously written and played by several orchestras beforehand. Harold Best discussed this type of creative ability as well. He said: "Individual style is not system-dependent.... As long as there are no two creative people alike – and God's way of creating assures us of that – no artistic or musical system can be exhausted. If an artist or musician chooses to change systems, it may simply be that his or her own thinking has changed or possibly became exhausted. In the meantime, others continue to originate within the system.... In either case, the issue of individual creativity remains constant."⁷⁰ Harold Best is talking about musical styles (Baroque, Romantic, Avant-Garde etc.) in this passage, but his idea can be related to playing a piece of music previously composed as well. He later went on to say: "Re-presenting... is just as difficult as originating."⁷¹ Everyone

⁶⁹ Best, Harold. "Music through the Eyes of Faith." (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 12.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 22.

⁷¹ Ibid, 21.

interprets a musical piece differently, bringing their own style into the piece. Regardless of if musicians play an original masterpiece or a previously composed work, they are engaging in the *Imago Dei*, using their creative talents to the best of their capacity.

Music helps us develop cognitively and emotionally, appreciate aesthetic beauty, spiritually connect with God, and understand doctrinal truths. Music is also a means to self-actualization found in the *Imago Dei*. Madeleine L'Engle stated: "To try to talk about art and about Christianity is for me one and the same thing, and it means attempting to share the meaning of my life, what gives it, for me, its tragedy and glory."⁷² As musicians are using their music in the greatest of their capacity for the praise of Jesus they are finding self-actualization. They are able to express life's joy and tragedy, and experience life through Christ using a gift that communicates with God in ways words may not be able to. When we dedicate ourselves to our music, whether performing or composing, we glorify God. When good music is produced and performed people see glimpses of Heaven on Earth through a beauty that cannot be otherwise explained. J.S. Bach signed the end of his pieces *Soli Deo Gloria* (For the Glory of God), recognizing his music was not only a gift from God but it was to be used to worship and glorify him. Christian musicians are called by God to use their music as a ministry and for his glory. Through using music in this way self-actualization is fulfilled in the *Imago Dei*.

Conclusion

Music is a vital part of human development. Music allows children to strengthen academic ability, as well as increase mental pathways involving memory and creativity. In elementary education music is important and should be taught not only for children to excel in

⁷² L'Engle, Madeleine. "Walking on Water." (New York: North Point Press, 1998), 16.

academics, but for children to learn the importance of music itself as well as learn to appreciate aesthetic beauty. Music is a way to express emotions, and helps people connect with God and other cultures. It also helps Christians connect with God. For the Christian, their musical ability should be surrendered to the work of the Lord and used to praise him. Music also serves as a means to finding spiritual fulfillment in the *Imago Dei* during human development. When Christians use their music to serve God and further his kingdom they engage with the spiritual aspect of the physical self, and find a greater fulfillment that surpasses themselves. Through music people are able to experience beauty, and that beautiful music displays foretastes of Heaven in majestic ways. Music education, as well as music in self-actualization, is to be done for the worship, honor, and glory of God. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

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