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ODYSSEY ORACLE

EXPLORING THE ARTS



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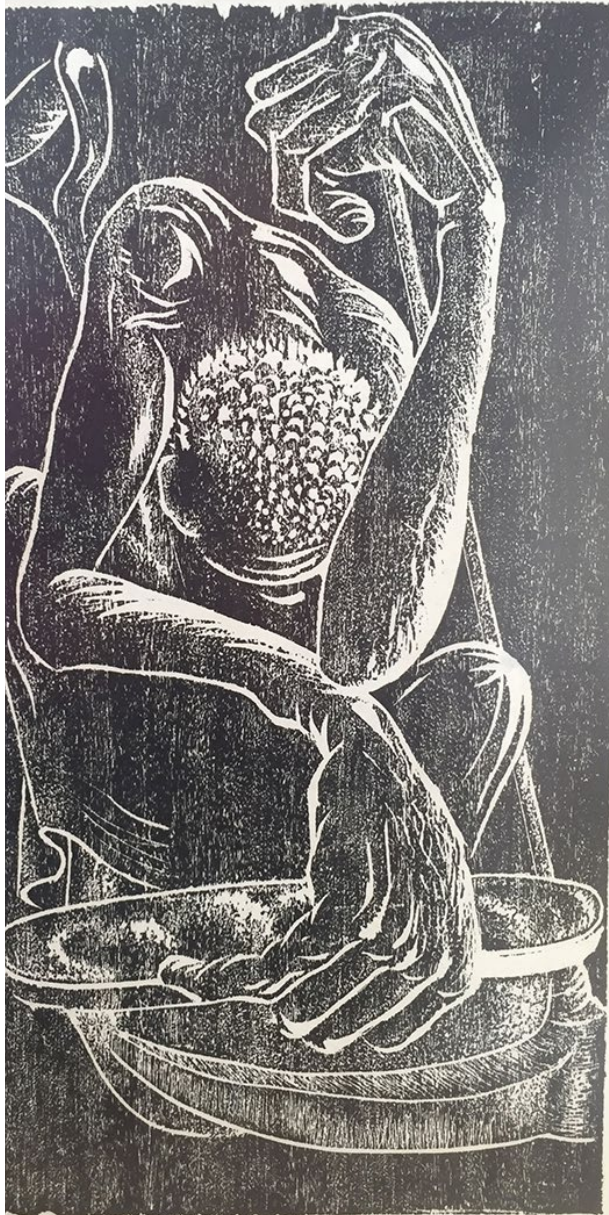
ADMIRING ART

Due to the pandemic, Odyssey students went on a virtual rather than in-person tour of the Chazen Museum of Art. For this assignment, they chose to write about a work of art they discovered at the museum or about a William Blake painting.

ART FROM THE CHAZEN

Kenneth Thabo, *Hard Labour*, 1948

When I look at this picture, I see an anguished man that works hard every day to support his family. I see a man that waits until he is alone to contemplate and stress on the life he works so hard to maintain every day. His forehead is wrinkled, which makes me feel he is worried and maybe a little anxious.



Nobody checks on him because this is his job, even though it creates scratches on his hands and calluses on his feet. His hands look larger than his frail body. Perhaps this is because his hands are the money maker, so he doesn't take care of his body as much. **(Tawania Alston)**



Andy Warhol, *Sedaka, Neil*, 1979

This shows a man with a jogging suit on, hand under his chin. He is just chilling without a care in the world. I got a good vibe from this artwork. He just looks, relates, with no worries, nothing. Maybe he didn't want to talk, lol, but I like this one. **(Paris Foster)**



Salvador Dali, New York, 1950

While on the Chazen's website, I searched for Salvador Dali and found some amazing sketches with ink and watercolor that I have not seen before. I love his work and the abstract images he created. Dali has always been a personal favorite of mine, and his pieces always have me look through his eyes and question what it is he sees.

This painting is of the Empire State Building and sky view of New York, along with delicately painted red flowers in the forefront.

I think the flowers represent natural beauty and life growing. You can make out the boats and water in the background, and there are blurred lines to create cars and traffic. I love the use of colors to show what I assume is the air and possibly pollution. I believe he is showing the beauty of the city even when seen as dirty and congested. The lights piercing throughout the clouds show me the beauty of life shining out and above the haze. **(Sarina Benford)**

Edo people, Commemorative Head of Chief, late 19th-early 20th century

As I was scrolling through the different art pieces, this one stood out to me. This specific piece called out for my attention. I want to know more about this interesting work of art. **(Sarah Galinski)**





Beth Cavener, *L'Amante*, 2012

When I study this piece of art, I see revolution and confidence. It knows that it's beautiful despite the large ears, discoloration of the skin, long linking legs, and wrinkly face. It's posing like it knows it will have other onlookers that will look past all of its flaws and find such beauty from it. This piece has the confidence that people will find more positive things about it than negative. Look at me. I am beautifully weird looking. Look at me. Don't you want to come chat with me? Make your eyes see skin deep. **(Valeria Gordon)**

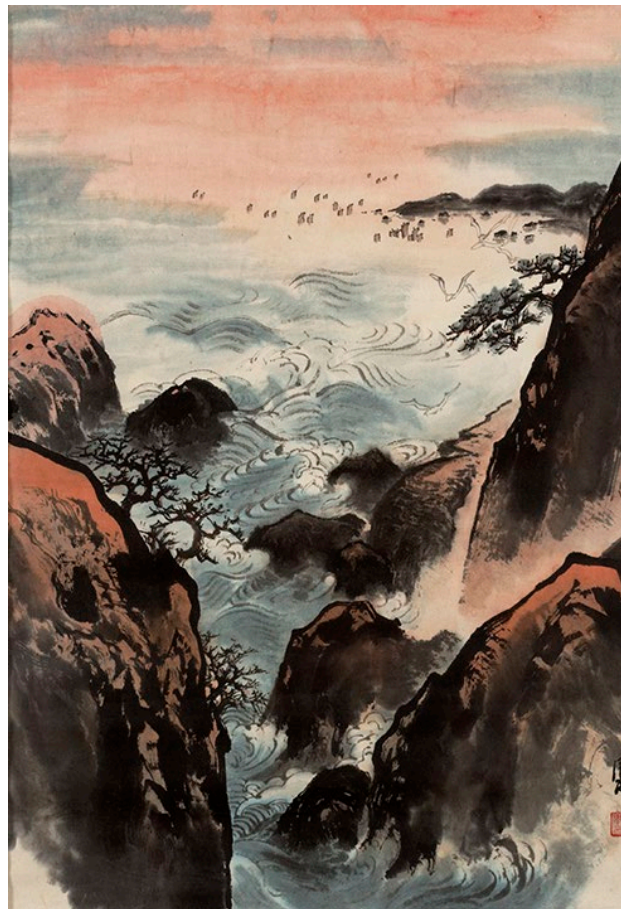
"*L'Amante*" by Beth Cavener is a stoneware sculpture with acrylic paint that was made in America in 2012. This

sculpture brought to mind the poem "My Heart Leaps Up" by William Wordsworth in a sense of sitting back taking a load off and enjoying life for what it is and not what we want it to be. This piece is of a white rabbit whose fur slowly starts turning a dark grey on the ears, feet, nose, and tail. He, unlike the majority of rabbits, is relaxing on a white post, feet hanging off as if he is taking a load off after a long day. You can tell he is relaxed and comfortable because his ears are all the way down, passing his shoulders. If I know anything about animals, I know that when they are scared or are frightened, their ears spike up to try and locate predators in the area. But I don't get that vibe from him—he is a carefree rabbit that's taking a break from his busy life to "stop and smell the roses." **(Kwan Hogan)**

I loved the bunny sculpture; I had a long stare at this and then felt that I need some chocolate! The way the hare's hair looks so realistic and the fact that the color is rare drew me to the piece. I really like this art. I had a rabbit when I was little. **(Dana Stokes)**

Zhou Cheng, *Landscape of Huang Shan*, 1980s

I chose this painting because it reminds me of a peaceful, happy place. The scenery makes me feel at my highest point of comfort. When I think about where I want to be, a place that brings me these emotions would best fit. **(Krystal Smith)**



Roger Ballen, Memento Mori, from the Series Asylum of the Birds, 2012

When I first saw this, I thought, what is going on with this picture? So, I googled it and found out *Memento Mori* is a novel by Scottish author Muriel Spark published in 1959. The title translates to *Remember you must die*. The definition of memento mori is an object serving as a warning or reminder of death, such as a skull. The picture shows the man being made of birds. I guess the reminder of death is under his bed. LOL I just don't get it, but I learned something new. (LaBresha Green)



Francisco Zúñiga, Juchitecas Platicando, 1985

I decided to look at the Chazen in the hopes that a Mexican painter may be in their repertoire, and there is. The painting I found is called "Juchitecas Platicando" by Francisco Zúñiga. This lithograph in color brought me a lot of memories of Mexican ladies talking outside their homes, or at the market. Their clothes and expressions brought me without a doubt some memories from my early days. (Henry Irisson)

**Kitao Masanobu,
The Courtesans Segawa and
Matsundo, Japanese, 1868-1925**

This piece of art shows a woman that looks wealthy, and it looks like the women around her are serving her with beautiful clothes and tea. The other two women look like they could be hanging out. For me, it looks like a concubine with other wives. This artwork is Japanese, but it reminds me of a movie I watched about China and Chinese Americans called The Joy Luck Club that included a story about a women joining to help support a child. (Brianna Johnson)



Erich Heckel, Reading Aloud, 1914

This was another hard assignment but for different reasons. So many incredible artworks, so where do you choose to stop? My favorite paintings have seeped in over years. So, I chose something that reminded me of home, and hopefully that's not too dull or predictable an idea.

I was looking at Reading Aloud by Erich Heckel. It's a hand-colored woodcut of two figures, a man and a woman sitting in a café or bar. The man is reading, it seems; the woman is listening. Their expressions are focused and drifting at the same time. The harsh cuts in the wood emphasize dignity but also the pain of living. There's an ashtray smudged out on the table. Out the window, there's a clump of houses, a cathedral, or perhaps just some candles. It suggests winter, dark days, dark beer. A holy light is enveloping the characters.

It reminds me of my favorite bar, Neachtains. At Neachtains, there was old wood, strong drink, and always a literary event going on. Many a drunken novel was penned in the cozies. (Farren McDonald)



**Claude-Joseph Vernet,
Sunrise, 1759**

The Sunrise painting caught my attention. Looking at the painting you would think it was nighttime. Sunrise can do that to you on a gloomy day. I see people making their way to the water before the sun goes into full effect. The darkness of sunrise is a reminder that night is ending. The sun peeking out of the clouds is a promise of a new day.

I relate to this painting because every day I wake up and start walking by

6 am. No sunrise is ever the same. The other day I saw the sun on one side and the moon on the other. This painting captures the beauty of sunrise even in darkness. Every day is a blessing, even the dark days.
(Michelle McKoy)

Anonymous, Spirit Wall

This artwork stood out to me the most because I'm very fond of the Chinese culture/artwork. The artwork has so many spontaneous pieces, carving, shapes, and a bright color that brings the art to the light. Its crossings with dragons throughout the middle highlights the piece with surrounding green markings, which I'd assume has something to do with the world, or how the Chinese imagine their country to be. It is a very nice artwork; I'd love to see it in person. (Burnett Reed)





Henri-Robert Brésil, *Landscape*, 1978

“Landscape” by Henri-Robert Brésil features lavish shades of greens and a variety of trees. I loved all green interpretation of the palm trees. The painting also has about six to seven layers. I think the illustrator did this to create a 3D effect. The most striking thing about the painting is the Black field workers appearing to work in the drawing. I read that this was his interpretation of Haitian field workers. **(Asia Pearson)**



Rafael Villaves, *Finisterre*, 2005

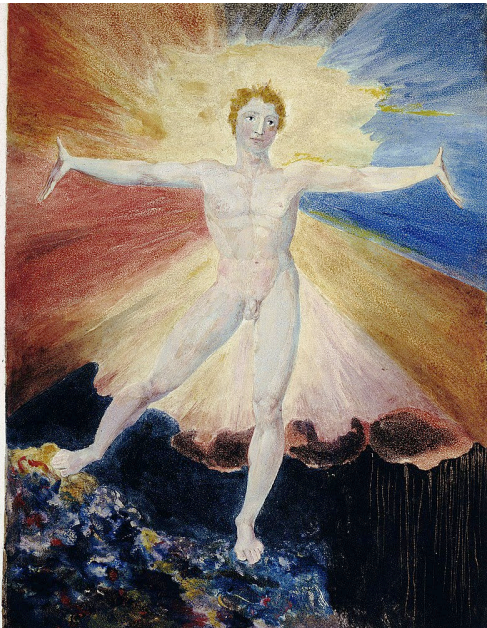
In this painting, it's a man painting a door. My reaction is a thinking mind. It shows many windows. To me, it is saying if you're not in the door, create one. I'm not sure if that's what the painting means, but those were my thoughts. **(Keyanna Wilson)**



Bill Viola, *The Raft*, video installation, temporary exhibition, 2020

This spoke to me because the painting betrays a sense of vulnerability. The everyday working person can fall victim to crisis anywhere. There were more people that were experiencing the same things. Some at the front of the line were hit from what we assume to be water as a symbol of crisis. **(Thedora Smith)**

THE ART OF WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

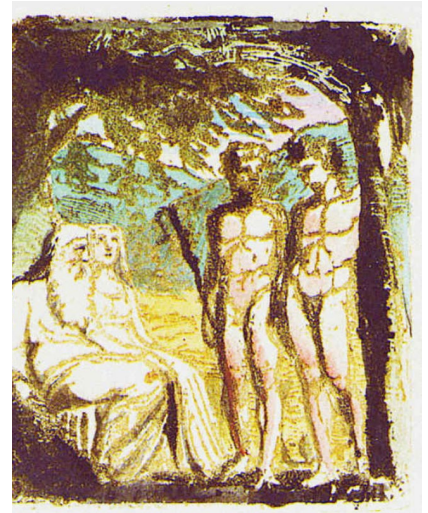


William Blake, Glad Day (Albion Rose)

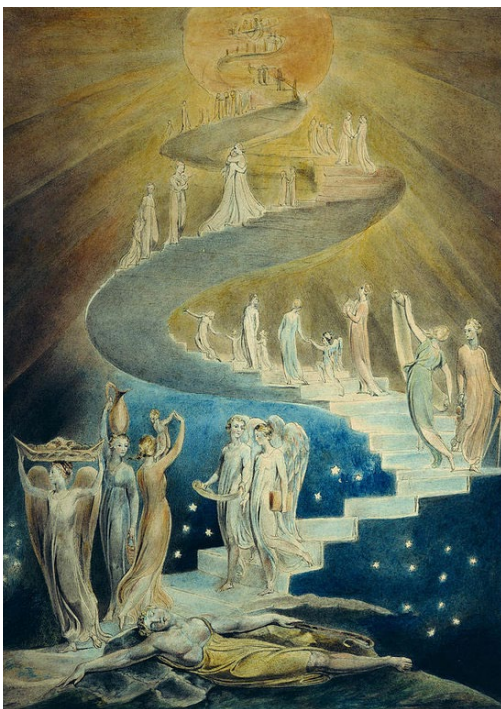
This shows a nude male figure standing with his arms opened outwards, his right leg extended slightly to the side; around his head there are clouds with rainbow colors. Blake was a rebel and would paint things people would close their eyes to. **(Erika Gonzalez)**

William Blake, All Religions Are One & There Is No Natural Religion

I googled Blake and came across so many poems, books, and works of art that got me super sucked down the rabbit hole. There are so many crazy interesting art works that I could go off on a tangent trying to interpret. I had to stop myself. What I decided on is not a painting but a small book



with original illustrations by Blake. The book is called "All religions are one and there is no natural religion." The title caught my interest along with the different cover. I came across this sort of book of principles before, but it was slightly different with a different cover and illustration. It depicts what could be interpreted as a godlike man sitting. This man is also half woman. They look as if they are one person and connected. They are resting under the shade of a large tree. Two naked shepherds with walking sticks are next to them. The combination man-woman figure has stereotypical godlike status, attire, and demeanor. They look more groomed; they are dressed and resting under a large tree. It could be interpreted as a tree of life providing shade and protection. The other men in the picture were standing and without clothes to maybe insinuate a servant or poorer shepherd.



The words of the small book are pretty simple yet complex, like the sketched drawings within it. My reaction is being intrigued; I still am. All I want to do is comprehend what he was trying to say. I feel like I may get where he is going, but I still am not sure where my head is going. Basically, a man/woman can only perceive what he/she has been told. Once they have learned a certain perception, their views are now tainted by that perception, and organic thought is no longer easily attainable. Without the different perceptions, things are still the same; we are the same, and religion is the same. That is just a small part of what I perceived from these universal principles, as he calls them. **(Feather Lloyd)**

William Blake, Jacob's Ladder

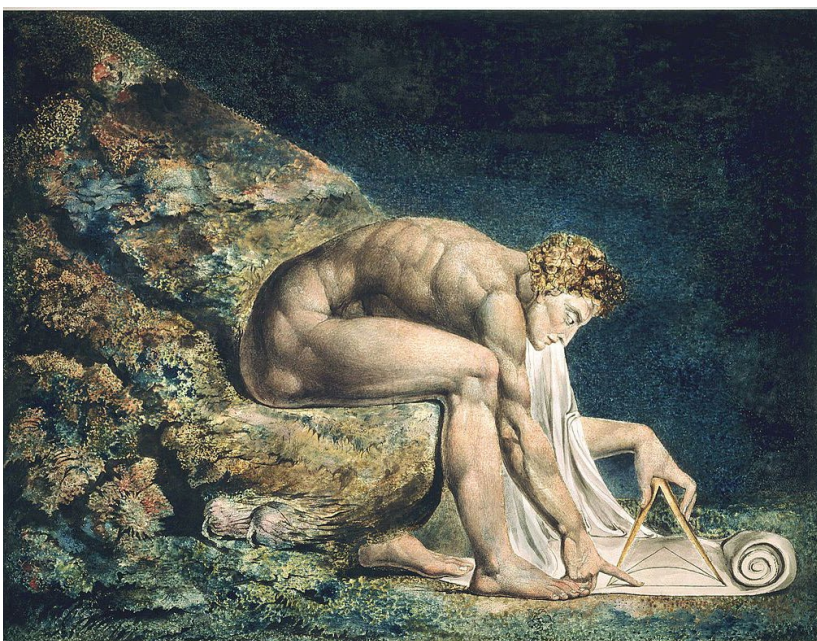
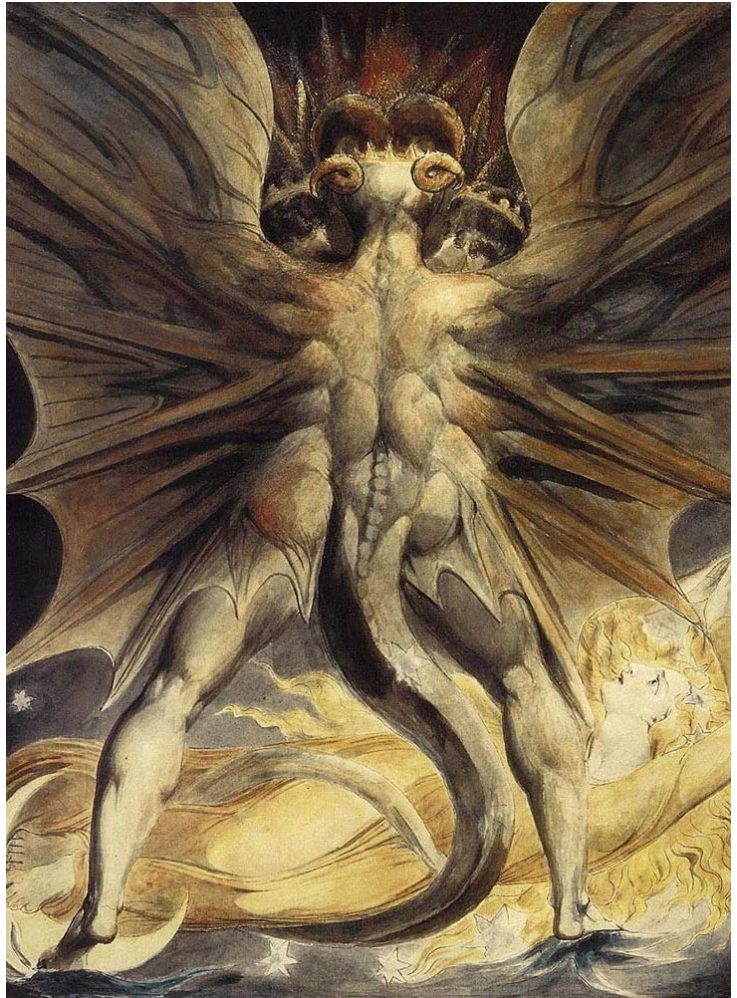
The picture I choose to write about is Jacob's Ladder. To me it looks like a ladder that leads to heaven. When you picture heaven, you picture a staircase, bright lights, and angels. Everyone looks happy as if they are having fun, just like the gods in Hercules. **(Sunni Walker)**

William Blake, *The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed in the Sun*

In the painting, it looks like a pregnant angel kneeling but holding her hands up to--I'm not sure if it's God, or are they considering the thing in the air with wings the dragon? The painting is very defined and beautiful. **(Keyanna Wilson)**

I never really knew about Blake until now, and I am so grateful to have been introduced to him through this program. I have fallen completely in love with him. When I look at and study "The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed in the Sun," I feel uncomfortable and in awe at the same time. Seeing this monstrous beast hovering over the woman is a frightening sight. This painting is terrifying and beautiful all in one. I've always been a fan of styles that are gothic, dark, and poetic. The duality in this painting is remarkable. It shows the historical oppression, lies, and abuse that women have dealt with from the beginning and how the Bible has played a part in that happening. It's refreshing to see that a man from that era saw this; in his art, he depicts that truth for people to see regardless of what the outcome could have been for him.

He also shows the strength in the woman regardless of the oppression. For this, I love him. This is what I see when I look at this painting. **(Jessica Jacobs)**



William Blake, *Isaac Newton*

I googled William Blake paintings and found "Isaac Newton." It's a painting of a strong man leaning over a rock that has colors as if the man is underwater. He is leaning over with his robe drawing a compass of some kind. It looks as though he is a Greek god of some kind, maybe. It seems as though this strong man was important and viewed himself as though he is a god. **(Yvonne Johnson)**

MOVED BY MUSIC

MUSIC IN OUR LIVES

What does music mean to you? The answers below come from a mixture of homework assignments, Zoom chats, and emails.

Music is everything in our daily life. With my girls, we listen to mainly Latino styles of music. The happiness and upbeat rhythms make us move and forget whatever issues we may be presented with during the day. My day would be boring without music. **(Betsy Alfaro)**

Music is an outlet; it's a way to connect sound to emotion and soul. **(Tawania Alston)**

I love music. Music has been with me every step of the way—a companion with whom I share a deeply intimate relationship, the friend that's always there in my time of need. Music! **(Calvin Valentine)**

Music to me is a feeling of memory. When I listen to specific songs, I associate memories I have that go along with them. I can listen to Red Hot Chili Peppers and feel like I am in art class and I'm 14 again. I can close my eyes and smell the cool air conditioning in the art room coming from the downstairs wing. Music holds such importance to me. Sometimes memories are all you have of something or someone. For me, I can listen to certain songs and feel my dad right next to me. I



love listening to songs that give me goosebumps or when someone sings and their voice brings me to tears. That emotion is what makes music so special. Our heart is a beat on its own, and music is even in silence. Music is in the sounds of the wind, the chirping of birds, and in the crashing of waves. For this reason, there would never be a world without music. **(Sarina Benford)**

Music makes us happy and sad sometimes. It depends on our mood, but for sure it's relaxing us most of the time. **(Souad Bidar)**

I love music. I love to listen to it. I play music almost every day. I use it to express how I am feeling and just to relax. I also play certain songs that remind me of certain things/people. I often find myself crying with certain songs.



Why is music important? Music is important to me because I use it as a relaxation technique. Depending on my mood, I listen to all types of genres. I use music as a way of expression. Music is also important because it brings people together, such as at concerts. Even when people have passed on and we are having a funeral, we play music to celebrate their life. To me, music is everything. I listen to music every day. **(Anjelica Brown)**

Music is my healer. (**Tisha Butler**)

Music is me
 Music is relaxing
 Music is rejuvenating
 Music is sweet
 Music sets you free
 Music is life
 Music is kind
 Music is the way to my soul. (**Cashae Davis**)

Music plays a big part in my life. I can't start my day or end my day without music. It helps relax me, calms me when I'm upset. I love all kinds of music. I can also write music from songs to rap to hip hop, very talented. The world would not be right at all if people didn't have music to express themselves. (**Paris Foster**)

Music has always been a teacher to me, sometimes even a father. Tupac was a great influence on me, good and bad. The things he would rap about made me do research. I could relate to the feelings of hate and abandonment. Nothing in my childhood made sense, but Pac made it make sense. He put all my scrambled feelings and thoughts in a rap form. Music is life to me! (**Fernando Galindo**)



Music

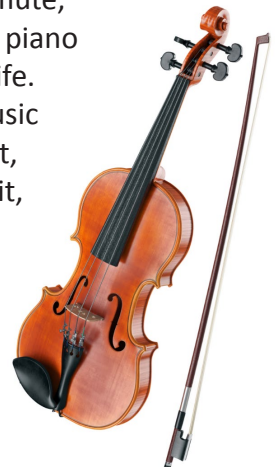
Music is math. It's universal.
 There are no barriers.
 No limits.
 It has to be the most
 Beautiful way to express oneself.
 It is life and death. (**Fernando Galindo**)

Music is a way to express emotions. (**Erika Gonzalez**)

Music can lift your spirits way up. But all music is not good music. It can also tear you down. Music can motivate you to go out and be the best that you can be. Music is a motivator that can get you off to a good start. Music is very encouraging. If another person is feeling down, you can invite them to listen to a song you know that can get them back on track. (**Valeria Gordon**)

Music is more beautiful the more passion that's put behind it. Music is a gift to everyone. Music can ease the most restless mind!

When I was younger, I fell in love with music. I can't remember feeling really passionate about anything until I got introduced to music. I used to play several instruments, like the flute, viola, drums, and a bit of the piano that I had picked up later in life. There is something about music that whether you're playing it, singing it, or just listening to it, you have a sense of joy. Now don't get me wrong, there are some songs that bring tears to my eyes. Even so, to me the fact that it can bring out some type of emotion is the joy in its-self.

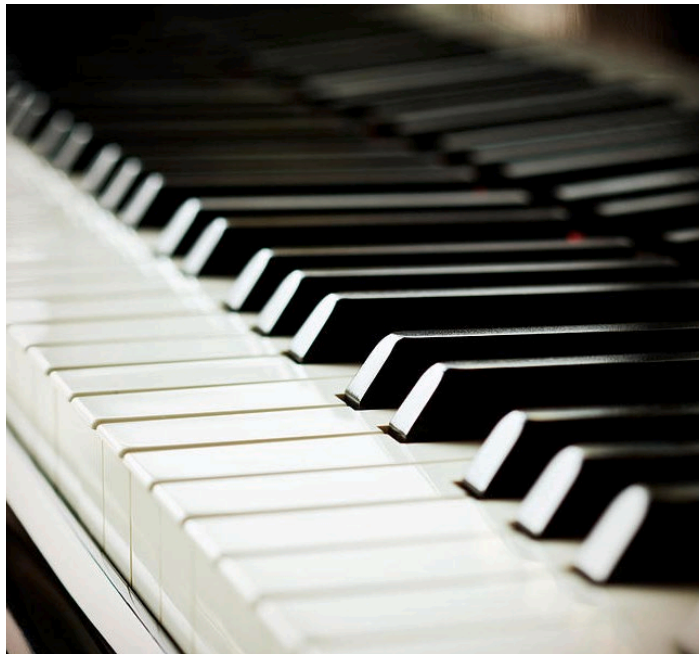


A dream of mine is to become a producer and to make music on a regular basis. When I say music, I mean playing instruments mixed with digital beats as well. I still have a lot to learn. I have been seeing that dragging my feet isn't going to get me anywhere, go figure.

I can't imagine a sane world without music. How would you hear your favorite show coming on from the other side of the house without the intro song? We would be listening to the radio all day, being subjected to more political brainwashing than we already are. I'd rather not. There are so many songs that relate to personal situations you may have that lift your spirits; to lose that would be heartbreaking. Would we even have ring tones without music? I know I'd lose my phone more than I already do if that were the case.

The most fun I can say I truly had was when I played the piano in "public" for the first time. I had been playing around with a small tune and ended up making a type of melody out of it. I went to my church's open mike night. There weren't many people there, so that's why I use the word public loosely. Nevertheless, this was a first for me to stand up and volunteer myself to play. I was nervous as all hell. I played my little song and was accompanied by a drummer, a guitarist, and a violinist. My little song had turned into a beautiful orchestra, and I felt like the conductor. I want to chase that feeling, and I know I can with hard work. I fell off a bit from playing anything really. Now I won't let any more excuses get in my way. **(Kwan Hogan)**

Music is in tune with our souls. Oh, music, the moment I listen to you, my body shakes, my mood becomes either better or worse; sad music can definitely do this to me. Music talks directly to me; music can unite entire countries. Music can make us like or dislike something (some political commercials add music making it either likeable or unlikable, depending on your political affiliation).



Music, oh music, if I could write you down after I dream about you, I'd be a millionaire; unfortunately, my mind always lets me down and I forget you. **(Henry Irisson)**

I do not know what I would do without music. What speaks to my heart are songs that speak truths and express people's pain. When I listen to music that is full of feeling and emotion because of a person's experience in life, I become overwhelmed with emotion; that is the thing that reminds me that I am human. And sometimes I need that reminder. I like music that favors poetry. This includes several genres. Music can speak to a person's heart in a way nothing else can depending

on the message being given. I try to listen to music that suits the way I feel and believe.

Years ago, I was once asked if I were going to be stuck on a deserted island, what would I take with me. Funny question, yes, but I said one of those things would be some form of music. I just do not know what life would be like without it. **(Jessica Jacobs)**

Music is another way to be heard. **(Yvonne Johnson)**

I love music—all kinds, especially music that tells stories. It can be of any type but has to have meaning behind it. I love when it has feelings and words of wisdom behind a melody and beat. That is what music is to me. I am not fond of a catchy beat with nonsense words. Music is everywhere and there were combinations of sounds making melodies long before humans were here to speak or hear it. You can hear a song in the wind or ocean. You can hear a song with just instruments, and the frequencies and bring you to tears. Music is everything. **(Feather Lloyd)**



My love of music came from my father. My father grew up in a small village in Donegal. This was little more than a valley that faced the snowcapped Bluestack mountains, a few houses and two pubs. The local priest wore a broad brimmed black hat, and everywhere he went he carried a movie camera and a shotgun. The shotgun was for shooting crows, the camera for shooting people. In the early 1950s, Father John's uncommon interest in the moving image led him to build a cinema for the community. This was a long, barreled hall they called the green cinema on account of its color. It had a tiered floor, which was innovative for the time, and every Sunday adults and children alike squeezed into oak benches and bentwood chairs to watch a film. A beam of light shot across the room and images danced on the screen. The most popular ones were the Elvis movies, which Fr. John was able to order from the military bases in the North. This is how, with the blessings of God, rock n' roll came to Donegal.

As I've started with Odyssey, I'll play different pieces of music to get me in the mood. For Malcolm X it was Public Enemy. For Thomas Jefferson I was listening to Declare Independence by Bjork. This week it was Sam Cooke.

Like a lot of people of my generation, my earliest memory of music was hearing The Beatles being

played in the house. Then later my parents bought the soundtrack to Pulp Fiction. The opening track was by the "King of the Surf Guitar" Dick Dale. I was eight years old. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I played the song to some kids who came over to visit; they didn't get it, and I knew then we'd never be friends.

When I was about 14 my dad bought me Led Zeppelin II. The final track is called Bring it on Home, and it's a standard 12-bar blues. I was so musically illiterate I could only recognize it as similar to the theme tune to Roseanne. He explained to me what the blues were, and this process was how I'd get into music: I'd find a little thread and start pulling at it, and it would lead me deeper and deeper into the music and further back into history.

The one thing my dad would never refuse me was music. Any time I asked for a new album, he'd buy it, no questions asked. When I got my own money, I'd go to the record store and buy stacks of albums without even knowing what they were. I'd try anything for any reason; I never cared about the genre. Spotify told me last year that I listened to 72,000 minutes of music, which works out to about 50 continuous days of music a year. At the moment my main obsession is African music from the 1970s.

I've been lucky to live in a country that still has a strong musical tradition of its own. There's scarcely a pub in Ireland that doesn't have traditional music. My favorite Irish song is the Pogues' version of the Limerick Rake. Rake in this context means a wayward soul, a wanderer, one who stays out late at night. In the song the titular rake from Limerick turns the piety of his accusers against them by claiming "the son of King David had two thousand wives and his wisdom was highly regarded."

My own music is in a holding pattern. I have two albums written but am struggling to get consistent players, and all the gigs I'd booked were cancelled by COVID. For now, we wait. **(Farren McDonald)**

Music is uplifting, music reaches our soul, and music can make us laugh or cry.

Music is a way to cheer me up on my darkest days. When I feel sad or lonely, I listen to Pandora and before I know it, I am singing like a canary. My soul is filled with happiness, and I am no longer sad. I also use music when I am running six miles. That can be a long run, but as soon as I turn on Pandora I am jamming away, and in no time my run is done.

I could not imagine a world without music I think the murder and suicide rate would go up. I remember as a kid watching the movie Footloose where music was banned in a small town. This killed people's souls, especially the teenagers. That was until the new kid from Chicago shook things up and made music legal again. I remember thinking as a kid I pray that never happens. A world without music would be a dark place to live. **(Michelle McKoy)**



Music plays a lot of notes in my life. It serves as an emotional boost. It is a means to make me happy when I'm sad; it is a means so, at the moment, I can feel anything, be anything, and do anything. It makes me happy, full of life and talents, makes me connect with things I can't see, experiences I've never had, and a whole lot more. I sing when I'm moved by something. Singing brings out my purest emotions and intentions. It relaxes me also. **(Stephaney Obi)**

Music is my sanctuary. Music is a free vacation while I'm at home. When I'm down, music comes and lifts me off my feet. Music is pain. Music is joy. Music keeps me balanced when the world is unbalanced. Music is me. I am music.

Music is me. I am music. Music has helped me get through some of the toughest times in my life. Could you imagine how lifeless the world would be if we had no music to dance to? **(Asia Pearson)**

I'm a free spirit. I listen to R&B, gospel, Rap, Reggae, Instrumentals, 90s/80s music. I personally listen to music to get through life, get through tough times, relax, and have fun. Music brings joy to me because I make my own story come to light through song. I love instrumentals, period. The world would be a little quieter without music. **(Burnett Reed)**

Music is a happy place; music brings peace and comfort. Music to me is a getaway. Music can take my mind off things when I'm worried. When I need to let off steam and do some deep thinking, there's nothing like a car ride with Lil Durk playing on shuffle. **(Krystal Smith)**

Music is my escape from reality. Music can tell a story. **(Dana Stokes)**

Music is my conscience. Depending on my mood, depending on the day, music is my unofficial compass; it can go either way. I usually go high when they go low. **(Faleshuh Walker)**

The music I listen to is an extension of me, the completion of me. I listen mostly to smooth/contemporary jazz, with no words; artists like Chuck Loeb, Marion Meadows, Fourplay, Brian Culbertson, etc. For the most part, I'm not interested in hearing others' thoughts. I want to get away into my own space and mind, blocking out things that are happening around me. I prefer beautiful melody without words, or up-tempo beats that I can groove to. Late night driving on familiar roads, with little to no traffic, night lights, and the volume on high, is my meditation. **(Diane Walton)**

Music helps with my mood. It brings different emotions to the surface.

Music plays a big role in my life. I listen to hip hop, rap, and R&B, and, most times, I can relate to the stories they tell. Sometimes it changes my feeling or emotions, and sometimes it makes me emotional. Music in my life has also been known to set the vibe or the tone of the room. I honestly think it's about what you're listening to. But overall, it does bring a balance, like old school music makes me happy. **(Keyanna Wilson)**

MUSIC IN OUR CLASS

Students responded in Zoom Chat to Bob Auerbach on piano, David Auerbach on viola, and René Robinson singing.

I want to say thanks for being here, Mr. Auerbach. I am very thankful for you, and God bless your soul. I'm thankful. René Robinson sang well too. **(Shiquita Woods)**

Thank you for sharing your beautiful music, Mr. Auerbach!! **(Valeria Gordon)**

Bob, I just want to say thanks so much for helping to keep this wonderful program going. You are very talented piano player. Thanks for sharing! **(Feather Lloyd)**



I want to hear your son (David Auerbach, viola) again. I thought that was beautiful! **(Theдора Smith)**

You all grew up with it, but American music changed my life. A huge portion of that was black music. Music is the best. Period. Loved it, thanks Bob and everyone else too. The lyrics were great. **(Farren McDonald)**

Music is Odyssey; a journey full of ups, downs, and winding roads filled with hopes, aspirations, and goals to achieve. **(René Robinson '08)**

ODYSSEY FALL 2020 BLUES

Some students submitted blues lyrics to a special contest we held; others wrote them spontaneously in class. Starting with the contest entries, here are the Class of 2021's Fall 2020 Blues. An asterisk () by a stanza indicates this was the stanza the judges selected out of several entries from the same student.*



I want to see the sand and sea
I want to see the sand and sea
But the pandemic took those plans from me

Oh, universe hear my plea
Before I reach insanity

2020 said to wait and see
Until then just let it be

And so I'll look inside me
Meditation holds my mental key
From what I need in sand and sea
To unlock my mind and set it free (**Sarina Benford**)



My Blues

*I hate to have to take care of two disabled children alone
Hate to take care of my autistic kids alone
But if their dad ever decided to get them, I would be sad and all alone.

I'm goin' to my car and running away
Down to Indiana or Atlanta to run away
Everyone and their Mama will have something to say.

I wish I didn't have to explain myself every day
Wish I didn't have to explain myself every day.
I'm not sure if questioners are competent and
understand what I say.

I'm gonna save me some money an' plan my estate
Save me some money, grow it in the bank
So when I'm dead my children won't need no
money and will live great. (**Bresha Green**)





*Our ancestors were shackled and sold
Our ancestors were shackled and sold
But Black Lives Matters is the key to keeping us whole

A night of temptation, a night of temptation
Can give you the world you thought was mistaken.

I want to live better, I want to live better
But Coronavirus got me under the weather (**Brianna Johnson**)



2020 has been a disaster, a disaster for us all.
2020 has been a disaster, a disaster for us all.
COVID has not given no one a chance to actually enjoy the fall.
When this pandemic is over, we should all have a ball.

Joining each other in a dance hall
because COVID has ended once and for all. (**Keyanna Wilson**)

I'm on an odyssey, a journey
I'm on an odyssey, a journey
Walking my path to success
I'm on an odyssey, a journey
Won't let these feet get no rest
I'm on a journey (**Cashae Davis**)

Running, running from my job!
Boss micro-managing me every day.
Running, running from my job!

Since March we started working from home,
and now that my boss can't micro-manage us at the office,
she keeps finding ways to do it from her home.
(**Michelle McKoy**)

Freedom and Peace

They say the most important in life
It's the air, water, earth, and time.
I say the most important in life
It's freedom and peace...
For all terrorized children
For all abused women
For all colonized nations
For all places in the world,
I wish freedom and peace. (**Souad Bidar**)



Take my crown off where

Take my crown off why
Always keep my head held high
Make my daughter proud
Take my crown off where
Take my crown off why
I really didn't know you tried to hold me back
Like there was no other way
Not knowing my mind stronger than that
I made my own way
Take my crown off where
Take my crown off why
(**Paris Foster**)

Imma need me a lawyer so this marriage can end,
 Imma need me a lawyer so this marriage can end ,
 Then Imma need a preacher to marry her again **(Calvin Balentine)**

I'm so tired, I'm so tired
 But I'm in class and the kids are wired
 Come on nine, come on nine, I'm trying to have my glass of wine. **(Sarina Benford)**

I wanna sleep, I wanna sleep
 Work and my children won't let me
 I'm gonna weep **(Bresha Green)**

Tryna make something to eat
 Tryna make something to eat
 But I'm still in class, stuck in this seat.
(Kwan Hogan)

I'm gonna go scream at the sky
 I'm gonna go and scream at the sky
 Hope my boys can reach off further than high
(Jessica Jacobs)

Kids wanna play
 Kids wanna play
 I don't wanna play another day **(Dana Stokes)**

Lost my mind
 I can't wait till these kids go to bed
 I can't wait till all of these kids go to bed
 So I can relax and get back in my head.
(Delisha Smith)

I'm going to the kitchen to fix myself a meal
 Stomach growling, kids a' howling, I just can't deal
 The smile on Zoom is not real,
 I'm going to the kitchen to fix myself a meal.
(Faleshuh Walker)

She got us writin' the blues
 She got us writin' the blues
 To help us get in the mood
 Now that we know the blues
 We all understand the tune
 The tune of the blues **(Keyanna Wilson)**

