

The Mind of Music

Well, there it is; “you don’t need any brains to listen to music.” - according to world-famous, opera-tenor Pavarotti.

One of greatest benefits that I derive from this type of writing is to learn about the author or owner of the quote. It’s not enough just to grab the quote and *go with it*; no, it must be with some degree of understanding and acknowledgement.

*“You don’t need
any brains to
listen to music.”*

- Luciano Pavarotti

An appreciation for opera is far beyond my ability; the basic background is, well, known from which to scantily derive or draw in connection. Unlike my children, who have been trained in music, I come to the keyboard without the smallest ounce of ability and ambition – but only the attitude that some things can be sought and pursued on the mere belief that something new and different can result. Ignorance is bliss...and blind too.

An old-navy guy and colleague of mine was telling of his travels abroad. While in-port in Italy, he (Marvin) had the most profound experience of hearing a man sing opera on impulse or impromptu. He recalled that the most fascinating feature of the stand-up was the projection or volume of his voice. He said, “Kirk, it seemed like he was using a mic...but he wasn’t.” Apparently knowing this man (the opera singer), the most surprising aspect was that his “regular” speaking-voice and his apparent music-voice had no similarity; one was quiet and reserved, and the other traveled to every corner of the restaurant where he sang.

I don’t think Marvin knew much about opera – and like myself – much more about music; yet, he knew that this still, small speaking-voice was now a confident, controlled collection of notes. It astonished him to the point that years later, he still remembered it.

Marvin might agree with Pavarotti – that brains are not required to listen to any music; but what is more is that Marvin was able to appreciate what he heard – and to recall it then, even today...

Oliver Wendall Holmes suggested: **“Take a music bath once or twice a week for a few seasons.** You will find it is to the soul what a water bath is to the body.” I think he is right; music has a way of cleansing the soul – or at least bringing it to the water’s edge...

William Merrill, a Presbyterian Minister, said: **“There is nothing in the world so much like prayer as music is.”** Among his own works was, “Rise up, O men of God!”. In this favorite of mine is an appeal to be strong; strong in faith in God...

Among other quotes of Mr. Merrill, I like this one (though not necessarily about music): “Unless you give yourself to some great cause, you haven’t begun to live.”

Finally, there is Henry Ward Beecher – one of thirteen children of the famous Beecher family of New England: **“Music cleanses the understanding; inspires it, and lifts it into a realm which it would not reach if it were left to itself.”**

So much more could be written were it from a man of greater mind of music. I think it is good that a mind is not required to listen to music; but I think that it is great that music goes beyond the mind and, as my daughter so eloquently put it, “...elicits the soul from the heart.”