



CARLA J. GIOMO

When I think of the spiritual element of music, I picture in my mind a Celtic cross. Imagine the typical Christian symbol, with the vertical and horizontal bars crossing each other, and add a circle radiating around their point of intersection. No doubt you've seen it. The vertical bar represents our connection with the divine, and it must be noted that the connection flows both ways. So, when I sing, or play my instrument, or compose, or chant, or hum, or dance to some inward tune, I am reaching toward God, the Universe, and Spirit, and I am open to being touched by God, the Universe, and Spirit in return. The horizontal bar refers to my connection with my brothers and sisters and, really, to all of life. To forget this horizontal connection turns my spirituality into a form of narcissism. I think that's why I love making music when in a group, such as a choir or an ensemble. It reinforces the idea that in music making, just as in growing spiritually, I have a responsibility toward others, just as they support and challenge me. The circle surrounding the intersection of the vertical and horizontal bars represents wholeness, unity, the All. If we were to anthropomorphize the Celtic cross, you'd notice that the circle lays at the level of the heart. I think this reminds us that just as performing music engages all of ourselves, our body, mind, emotions, and spirit, so should our spiritual life. Not only that, but just as we musicians live and breathe music - I can hardly go a minute without some melody playing in my mind - so we are reminded to live and breathe every moment in a spiritual sense. We are asked to maintain that vertical, two-way connection with the divine, we are asked to remember our connection to all of life, and we are asked to hold this attitude constantly in our hearts.



DR. CARLA J. GIOMO
AUTHOR, COMPOSER, AND TEACHER