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It is no secret that music moves us as nothing else can; it touches the emotions and causes physiological responses which have been measured scientifically.¹ Many times we equate those emotional responses with spiritual responses. We tend to measure our response to different types of music as a barometer of how “*spiritual*” we are feeling; we say we “*really felt the spirit*” when we leave a concert or worship service that had upbeat or otherwise moving music. Scientifically speaking, our emotions have simply been stirred and chemicals in the brain have been released.² Theologically speaking, how this science links to the spirit remains a mystery, because not every emotional feeling, induced by music or otherwise, is a spiritual experience or encounter with God.

Music is significant to us spiritually in two ways: it fills our need to communicate with our Creator on a level which words alone cannot express, and it positively or negatively influences our spirituality and the way we live our lives. All of mankind seems to perceive that music is a way to spiritually connect to another world or Higher Power. Non Judeo-Christian cultures and religions externalize their spiritual beliefs through various forms of music. From far Eastern-influenced New Age believers to pagan tribes, specific musical techniques are used as a vehicle to achieve a state of spiritual realization that lines up with each one’s particular religious belief system, filling a spiritual need with simple chanting to musically-induced “*out-of-body*” experiences, or even demonic possession.³

In contrast, Christian music is not used to manufacture a musical state conducive to spiritual nirvana, and it is not a tool to “*usher*” us into God’s presence. Instead, Christian music is an aid to express worship and adoration to our Creator and Savior, which gives us simple emotional satisfaction. Like other religions, our musical expression of worship also externalizes our beliefs, our doctrine, and both the lyrics and the musical styles should match to accurately convey Christian ideals. It is essential to understand the influence of various musical styles, because this is the second way that music has spiritual significance in our lives. Although lyrics are important, music itself will affect us either positively or negatively, because music is not amoral. Just as tone of voice conveys meanings apart from words, different musical techniques and styles convey meanings and morality without lyrics. Therefore, when we listen to sacred or secular music that is morally “*straight*”, with or without lyrics, the music itself helps us to live out our Christian lives according to Scripture because it is reaffirming our Biblical spiritual beliefs. The opposite is also true: immoral or rebellious music will encourage immoral or rebellious behavior.



Music is not unique to man; it is enjoyed by both Heavenly and earthly realms [See Job 38:7; Ezekiel 28:13; Revelation 15:2-3]. Because music has such spiritual significance, it is our responsibility to use this gift wisely in our personal lives, and in our worship of the Lord Jesus Christ “*in spirit and in Truth*” [John 4:24].

End Notes

1. N. M. Weinberger, “*Feel The Music!!*” MuSICA Research Notes, 2001, Volume VIII, Issue 1 (Winter 2001). Note: These responses were to music without lyrics. The music itself, through specific styles, induced “*genuine emotions in the listener.*”
2. Ibid; Also, “*The Neurophysiology Of Rock*” by Drs. Daniel and Bernadette Skubik. Reprinted in “*Pop Goes The Gospel*” by John Blanchard. Revised Edition (England: Evangelical Press, 1991), p. 187-188.
3. Mickey Hart, “*Drumming At The Edge Of Magic: A Journey Into The Spirit Of Percussion*” with Jay Stevens (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), p. 204.



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