



SHARON KNIGHT

I believe music occupies the same part of the brain and psyche as religion and spirituality. Both speak to the same yearnings, the same desire to expand consciousness and the same certainty that there is more to life than meets the eye. We yearn to evolve into our full potential, and both music and spirituality help us to expand into these places.

I am a Pagan magician, so my relationship with spirituality is oriented toward practice and experience rather than belief and doctrine. Developing a magickal worldview entails becoming aware of deeper layers of reality, and learning to interact with them in skillful and conscious ways. Through practice, we begin to experience the mundane world as just the tip of the iceberg, and the deep realms of dream and vision become every bit as real to us.

Music accomplishes this same goal. Music lifts us out of the limits of our mundane world – the four walls of our domiciles, the traffic jam we are trapped in – and opens up vast dimensions in our minds. It creates space around us, entire worlds yet to be explored. I believe we would go mad without music or spiritual perception. I suspect it would be a lot more difficult to be an atheist without music, for the psyche craves to go to these places, and perhaps we don't need religion to get there, but we do need a vehicle of some kind. I believe that music gives us more immediate access to these dimensions than anything else. As Beethoven said, *"music is a higher revelation than philosophy"*.

There are, of course, more shallow versions of both music and spirituality, that do not challenge us to think or expand but exist merely for escape, comfort, or distraction. Mainstream music and religion both have this effect on me and I find no inspiration in either. I am most moved by, and strive to create, music that creates an atmospheric space in the psyche. To open these portals within seems to me the point of both music and spirituality.

As magickal practitioners, we use ritual to attune ourselves to the forces of nature, to awaken these forces within us and learn to wield them. We see these cosmic and natural forces as energy that has coalesced into specific patterns, and music operates much the same way. In magick we see these patterns as energy and in music we hear them as sound. Both create vast dimensions in the psyche. Listening to and learning to play music is every bit as effective as spiritual practice in learning to balance these forces within us and thus participate more consciously in creation. Therefore, I have come to see music and spirituality as two sides of the same coin.



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