

Music is art. Art is emotions. Music is the auditory manifestation of emotion. It induces feelings of joy, grief, excitement, and lament in a way no oration is capable of. And music is so much more than noise: it allows patrons to visit a new world not as participants but as spectators, present only to glimpse at the thoughts of someone else. And when music is done, audiences are returned to themselves with a concept to ponder, reassured that they are not alone, whatever conclusions they come to. It is in this way that music creates solidarity out of solitude. Music gives hope. Music gives comfort. Music defines the unknown. Music tells us it will be okay. By seeing ahead, we can obtain a sense of calm. Calm because we know we are not alone and we know what is next. This assured calmness that is music contributes to a comprehensive feeling of peace.

I have played a number of instruments in my eighteen years, beginning with the piano when I was four. After five years I began the trumpet, then tried violin, percussion, and finally settled on the cello. I have played a wide range of music with various musical groups including String Quartets, Piano Trios, and Symphony Orchestras. Music has been a part of my life for a long time and has served to bring me peace throughout it. I have participated in a string orchestra in school since fifth grade. In middle school it became a class that I attended daily, along with a class on Chinese language with a strict teacher who gave difficult tests. Orchestra was always the period before Chinese; an hour of music before each class was a period of tranquility that brought me peace.

Perhaps my earliest inspiration for music comes from my grandmother. She played accordion and piano and never had to read music to know how to play a song. In my sophomore year of high school, she developed Alzheimers, and passed away this past September, buried in a casket with treble clefs on the corners. It gives me peace to remember through music the joy I shared with her when we played piano together an activity that we shared for as long as she was capable.

In August I will travel 100 miles west of home for college. There is a very small music program there that lacks an orchestra. I would not feel the same playing the cello alone. I thought the guitar would be an appropriate accompaniment to my western escapade because the guitar is capable of a variety of styles and would allow me to tie back to home, and to any of the instruments I have played. College is a crazy place first semester, especially when repatriation is not an option. I may encounter tough times, but a guitar would give me hope. A guitar would give me comfort. A guitar would tell me its going to be okay. A guitar would bring me peace.