

Music and Medicine

Dr. Raphaël NOGIER

The 19th of November [Chantal Vulliez](#) and [Sophie Mougnot](#), as representatives of «[Homéopathie sans Frontières](#)» ([Homöopathy with no Frontiers](#)), invited to a musical evening under the slogan "Music and Health" which took place in the hall Garcin, in Lyon. [Madeleine Mirocourt](#) and a part of the music group [l'Ensemble de flûtes à bec de Lyon](#) ([Ensemble for Recorder of Lyon](#)) took the responsibility for the musical part of this evening, where they offered to the audience a musical spectre from the XVIIIth century until contemporary music. Myself, I read some text on medicine, which you will find in the lower part of this document. This evening was an opportunity for us to think about some often neglected aspects.

Music and Medicine

Despite of [Berlioz](#), who engaged himself for a certain time into the studies of medicine, there is no other great composer, who also devoted his time to medicine. Nevertheless, many of medical doctors are remarkable musicians and it is not rare to find excellent organists, violin players, pianists, clarinetists, etc., in this beautiful profession.

A medical doctor is at fist place an artist. This is also the reason for the fact that medical doctors love all kind of art. Here, some writers, whose provenance was in medicine:

[François Rabelais](#), [Alfred de Musset](#), [Charles Sainte-Beuve](#), [Emile Littré](#), [Tchékhov](#), [Eugène Sue](#), [Louis Ferdinand Céline](#), [Georges Duhamel](#)...

What is art?

Art is the sum of techniques and procedures that allow the human being to discover the beauty.

What is music?

It is the art to combine sounds.

It is also the art to emphasise the silence.

It is additionally the art to express an impulse, an emotion, or a prayer using the to everyone comprehensible language of sounds.

What is medicine?

It is the art to combine techniques in order to treat and to heal the invalid.

Because of the relief and the abolishment of the suffering, medicine gives back to the human being his freedom and allows him to achieve his own life in a normal way.

[Medicine is the expression of charity.](#)

The mutuality between medicine and music is the intention to offer to the human being the possibility of development.

Medicine and vibrations

Since several years, a part of medicine based its therapeutic methods on therapeutic impact of certain vibrations.

It is the case especially for [Homeopathy](#) discovered by Hahnemann in the XIXth century. The homeopathic granule does not possess any chemical active substance. In return, it contains electromagnetic information. One can say that each granule represents a kind of diapason vibrating in very high frequencies, which as soon as it is placed into the organism releases a set of therapeutic vibratory reactions. These vibrations are carrier of information. Therefore homeopathy represents a treatment method with the aim to "activate a reaction in the organism", which is the opposite to the allopathy, which one can say tries to substitute itself to the organism.

The homeopathy is not the only treatment method working with vibrations. [Acupuncture](#), [Auriculomedicine](#) are based on the skin capacity to understand certain vibratory phenomena.

The cells and the tissues react with preference to a certain frequency. There is real [vibratory language](#) between cells of the organism. Certain frequencies are biotic, others are antibiotic. Certain sounds are toxic to living tissues, others are able to lead to a regulation of organism functions and sometimes even to a complete recovery. [Music can become medicine.](#)

Music and laterality

Animals do not show preference for the use of one side of their body. Even apes. There are no right- or left-handed in the animal world. Only the human being presents laterality and gives preference to the right hand. 90 % of humans are right-handed. This phenomenon explains, why certain capacities are present in humans and not in animals.

Our brain is divided into two parts. Therefore, we have a right and a left brain hemisphere.

Contrary to the animal, our brain is asymmetric and each of our brain hemispheres possesses its own specified capacities.

In humans, the [left brain hemisphere](#) is specialised in abstraction: the language, words, writing, numbers.

[The right brain hemisphere](#) controls the tangible and practical thoughts. It is specialised in recognition of sounds, noises, melodies and music.

This means, when we listen to a piece of music, the right brain hemisphere is activated first. When during this we let us carry by the music, without trying to understand the music, we develop reactions in connection to this music. In order to integrate a piece of music, one shall not try to analyse it, but shall just live and absorb it.

Rossini said, when he was speaking about music : A bit of science, a bit of heart - all is there.

Music and the nervous system

Vibrations, light, sounds, rhythms all have a positive or negative impact on the organism.

The human nervous system is build up in levels.

One can distinguish:

[The first level](#) – the spinal cord coordinates the simple reflexes.

[The second level](#) - the more elaborated sub-cortex, is composed of nuclei, which control sensations and emotions.

[The third level](#) – even more elaborated cortex is responsible for the development of constructed thoughts.

Music, via sounds, rhythms and sequences, can give preference in stimulation of a specific level of the nervous system.

[Let us make an experiment:](#)

Let us take a group of persons, composed of women and men, who we make listen to a music.

First to a quite rhythmic music, a kind of Rock'n Roll. The persons will start to move their feet in rhythm, they will get up and dance. This music will stimulate the primitive part of the nervous system - the first level.

After, we make listen the same group to an Irish ballade. Everyone will calm down and will develop sensible thoughts and will start to dream - the second level is stimulated.

Further, we will play a CD of Olivier Messiaen. The thoughts will change. Here the third level is active.

Each kind of music creates a specific resonance. Therefore there are different kinds of music. Some of them are light, others are heavy. Some of them are sad, others are joyful, some are hermetic. Schematically, we can say there is:

[Music that addresses the epidermis](#)

[Music that addresses the heart](#)

[Music that addresses the intellect](#)

At least, and with no doubt, there exists the [sacral music](#). It is the kind of music, which allows us to discover in us a part of the divine.

Medicine and language

Jean Hamburger (1909-1992) professor for medical science, father of the composer and singer Michel Berger, was very enthusiast about language. Here, an extract of one of his works written in 1991:

« Language is the thought. Though when the thought develops very fast, the language has difficulties to adapt. Yet, since several years the thought in medicine experiences one of the most profound transformations and an extremely impressive development. The language in medicine was not able to keep pace. One was obliged to create new using words which were not up-to-date anymore, words which were composed in a bad way, based on accidental and premature concepts. The medicine of today does not dispose of the language that it deserves. »

Inspired by these lines, we can say the following about music:

Music is the thought and the emotion. Though when the thought and the emotion develop very fast, the music must adapt. Yet, since several years the way of life and the way of thinking in our society experiences one of the most profound transformations. A new music was created, using new instruments and technologies. Music developed parallel to the language.

Does the today's society has the music it deserves?

Extract from "Experimental Medicine" by Claude Bernard 1865.

« Sciences are exclusively promoted by new ideas, the productive force and the originality of the thought. One shall be careful in the field of education to avoid that the knowledge, which shall strengthen the intelligence, does not burden the later and that the rules, that have the means to support the weak aspects of the spirit, do not atrophy or asphyxiate its powerful and fertile areas. It is not my purpose to develop other tendencies of development. I restricted myself to arm the biology sciences and the experimental medicine against the exaggeration of the erudition and the assault and dominance of the systems. Yet, in case these sciences would accept the later, they would loose the fertility, as well as the liberty and independence of the spirit, which since ever represented the essential conditions for all progress of the humanity..»