

# Why We Teach Music

*Music is a science:* It is exact, specific; and it demands exact acoustics. A conductor's full score is a chart, a graph which indicates frequencies, intensities, volume changes, melody and harmony all at once and with the most exact control of time.

*Music is mathematical:* It is rhythmically based on the subdivisions of time into fractions which must be done instantaneously, not worked out on paper.

*Music is a foreign language:* Most of the terms are in Italian, German or French; and the notation is certainly not English but a highly developed kind of shorthand that uses symbols to represent ideas. The semantics of music is the most complete and universal language.

*Music is physical education:* It requires fantastic coordination of fingers, hands, arms, lip, cheek and facial muscles, in addition to extraordinary control of diaphragmatic, back, stomach, and chest muscles, which respond instantly to the sound the ear hears and the mind interprets.

*Music is all these things, but most of all, music is art:* It allows a human being to take all of these dry, technically boring (but difficult) techniques and use them to create emotion. That is one thing science cannot duplicate; humanism, feeling, emotion, call it what you will.

*That is why we teach music.*

Not because we expect our students to major in music  
Not because we expect them to play or sing all their life  
Not so they can relax  
Not so they can have fun.  
But so they will be human  
So they will recognize beauty  
So they will be sensitive  
So they will be closer to an infinite beyond this world  
So they will have something to cling to  
So they will have more love, more compassion,  
more gentleness, more good, in short, more life.  
Of what value will it be to make a prosperous  
living unless you know how to live?

*That is why we teach music.*

author unknown