

## Music for Solace

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Music creates a wonderful sense of belonging that reaches deep into our souls. Participation in music, via singing or humming along connects us to others and to a greater community. It helps to combat the growing sense of alienation that social distancing has caused during the era of COVID 19. It also gives us a break from being consumed by our current stresses.

A woman sang alone in her car to the radio as loud as she could. A couple sang the lyrics of 'Hamilton' together over and over after watching the musical, laughing and trying to remember all of the lyrics. A woman worried about the results of her repeat mammogram, got lost in a Mozart concerto being played in the background and forgot for a moment why she was even at the doctor's office. A grandfather sang 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' with his 2-year-old grandson via Zoom.



Music helps calm anxiety as it closes the distance created by geographic isolation and it soothes during a time of fear and uncertainty. Even better, music lifts the mood and feeds the spirit. Perhaps this is why Italians sang from their rooftops and balconies while quarantining in their homes, and Parisians sang hymns in the streets as they watched

flames and smoke melt their historic Notre Dame Cathedral.

There have been stories of singing and clapping for healthcare workers during the pandemic both to show support but also to show solidarity as a community and to remind each other that their community is strong and will persevere. What a wonderful way to use music to cope with a tragedy.

In so many ways, COVID-19 has given us an opportunity to exercise our "creativity muscles," as every day presents us with an unexpected sudden new adventure. It has also given many amateur and professional musicians an avenue to express themselves, to let their voices and feelings be heard, and to connect with others – new phrases, new lyrics, new beats, new rhythms, new songs. Music gives us power to communicate and technology gives a broad platform to those who wish to share their gifts. Music gives us a way to regain some of the control that has been lost.

Music during this time can be used to regulate mood, anxiety, achieve self-awareness, express one's identity and relate to others. It is readily available in many forms. Use music as it best suits you!

