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AP Language

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The Power of Music

I believe in the power of music. To heal, to influence, to commemorate, to celebrate, and to recall. It can be extremely loud, or whispering soft, but either way it can speak to the soul. Even though there are many different types of music, and I do not love all of them, each one still bears a message, tells a story, and has the ability to commune with me on a deeper level.

Classic instrumental music is unique in that it utilizes not words but the pitches of air passing through pipes or string vibrations to effect an emotional response. For that is what music truly is: audible emotion. For the past four years I have been in my high school's marching band. Marching band music is so different from even regular concert band style music. Most of the time it is in-your-face, loud and fast. Sometimes though, especially during the slow "ballad" section, it calms down to a more chamber-like quality, drawing in the audience in a seemingly impossible way. However, it is the combination of these two forms of expression that truly enable marching band music to leave a lasting impact. And being on the other side, the inside, is so much more rewarding. I play the trumpet, and knowing at the end of the season that for that final performance I gave my all, I poured my emotions into my horn; that is the magic.

I have been blessed to experience and participate in both major forms of music expression: instrumental and vocal. The voice is distinctive for its ability to simultaneously put words to tone. I have learned how to infuse what I sing with the true meaning of the text. Separate, there is only poetry (the text), and sound (the tones), but together they allow for an infinite means of expression through emotion; from anxiety to amusement, happiness to bereavement and mourning, the human voice through language adds inflection and shades of deeper meaning. It is an incomparable experience to feel the power of the final note of a Major Work, like Vivaldi's *Gloria*, juxtaposed and perfectly in sync with the final exclamatory declaration of text. When the chords line up in perfect intervals, the result is a major, or happy sounding blend. If arranged in a slightly different way, the musical tones bespeak sadness, grief, and desolation.

Over this past summer, I had the privilege to attend many concerts given by the music majors of the Governor's Honors Program. The music of those concerts greatly touched me. Certain songs, both instrumental and vocal, left such a mark on my soul that I still cry whenever I hear them. The emotion and love that in one fell swoop captured my heart and released the floodgate of my tears embodied the song. The words of one particular "Everything I Own" clothed the notes in a raiment of simultaneous splendor and grieving pain. To know that I was about to leave the people I had grown so close with over the summer was one of the most difficult realizations of my life. But to commemorate the experience in song, to celebrate the friendships harmony, and to recall the memories through the recordings—that is the true power of music.