

# Getting Inside the Music

**J**azz flugelhornist Chuck Mangione once said that he wished he could take everyone in the audience and sit them down right in the middle of a symphony orchestra, because only then could they ever really feel the power of 70 people making music together. He's right—there is nothing better than being right “inside” the music. It is this idea that has carried over with me into my most profound listening experiences.

I have always tried to get inside the music I was hearing. Learning how to hear beyond the performance, beyond the artist and beyond the production allowed me to fall in love with some music that was often not recorded well, or even sometimes, not played that well. I believe music, in itself, cannot be limited to the performer or the recording. I describe it this way—music is a giant work of art in a dark room. The artist or recording is like a flashlight, and what we can “see” of a piece of music is limited to the scope of that flashlight. A great performance or recording may show more of the music than a mediocre one, but ultimately, there is so much more to music than we'll ever really “see.” So, I try and listen beyond what I'm hearing.

## MUSIC AND ME

But I say all that to just set up my main topic, which has to do with styles of music. (Even more confused? Bear with me.) I used to come home from school as a kid and put my headphones on and just sit, for hours sometimes, listening to records. Headphones are a great way to really tune everything out and focus on what you're hearing, and I really began to try and get “inside” the music. This was becoming a very valuable, inspiring listening time for me. However, as a kid I didn't have my own money to buy new records, and as I eventually tired of listening to my own records, I had to start digging into my Dad's collection. At first this was difficult because I didn't really love the styles of music he loved. But eventually, as I looked beyond the “styles” and dug “inside” the music, I found myself starting to get moved by music I never would have sought out on my own. I started listening—intently—to jazz, classical, country, opera, symphonic, Broadway and even mariachi music! And I fell in love with all sorts of music. Eventually, my taste in music was not limited to the style of music, but rather what was “inside” the music—passion.



*By Tony Guerrero*

## CARE TO MOVE

Passion can take a limited performer, a bad recording, a bad song, and an undesirable style of music and turn a musical moment into something profound. I am proud to say that I love music of all styles, so long as there is passion in it. And it is a search for passion in music that keeps me unafraid of seeking out and experiencing new, unfamiliar forms. I was recently moved to tears by a recording of indigenous singers from the Himalayas—and trust me, I didn't exactly have this on my iPod already.

Over the years, this openness to all styles of music has profoundly affected me as a musician and as a writer. My music has been influenced by a wide variety of diverse styles and by a wide variety of performers, and I have found great satisfaction in listening to music most of my friends would shrug their shoulders at. I am often perplexed by people whose playlists are limited to song after song of the same basic style of music or similar performers. “There is so much great music you're missing,” I often think to myself (sometimes, I actually tell them!).

## JUST LIKE GOD

I believe God loves variety. Have you noticed how so much worship music and so many worship teams sound the same? Wouldn't it be great if our worship teams represented influences as vast as God's creation? I would encourage you to examine your personal playlist. How much variety do you see? If there isn't much, start filling it with music you've never listened to before, even music you previously thought you hated. Get “inside” the music. Dig deep and look for the passion that may exist in it. Let the passion inspire you, and soon the style will be irrelevant. But as you continue to listen, you will begin to see how all these styles will start to enhance your own gifts, from your writing to your performances. I promise, you will find many, many musical treasures you'll wonder how you lived without, and they will find a way into your craft. And God's church will be enhanced by your wider range of influences.

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*Tony Guerrero serves as the Director of Creative Arts at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA (Rick Warren, Pastor). He is also a noted jazz musician and has just released two new CD projects (featuring several jazz luminaries), which you can read about on his website at [tonyguerrero.com](http://tonyguerrero.com)*

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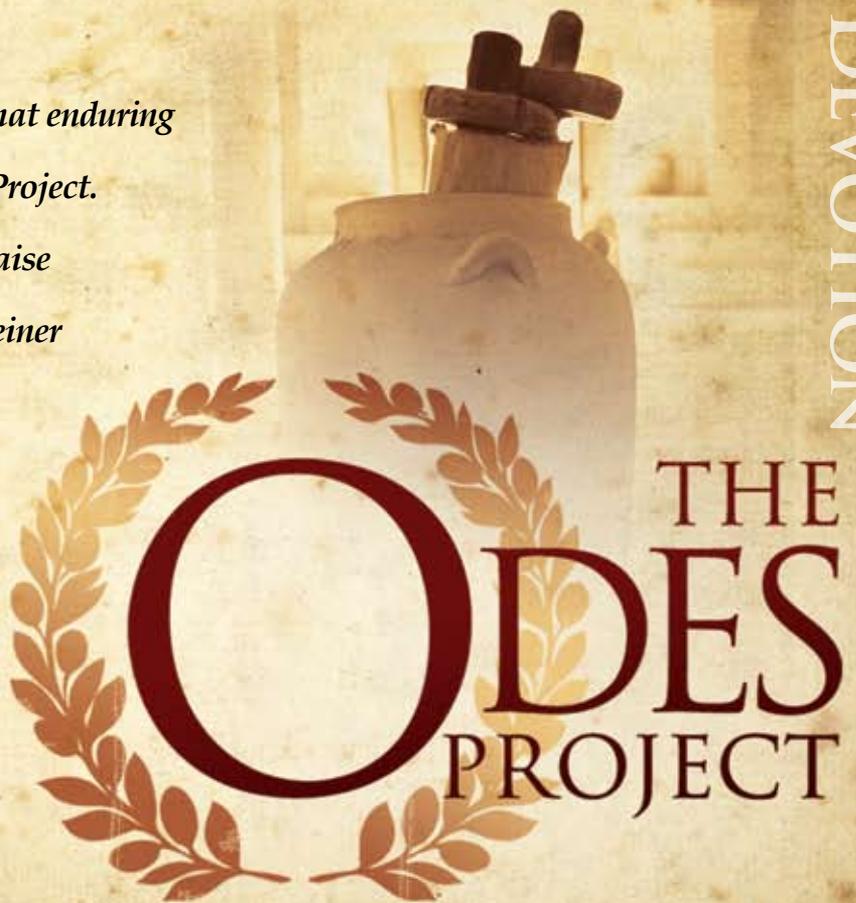
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