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Music, the International Language

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In this world of different languages, cultures and customs, there's one language that almost all people understand, the language of music. It's a language that looks very complicated when you see it written down in musical notes or guitar tablature, but sounds lovely to the ear.

This week I'm going to continue on Gina's theme of music and music lessons.

I love music. There's nothing I like more than to listen and sing along to the radio when I'm doing boring chores at home, or to sing (or try to sing!) and play along on my guitar.

Now, I like most music. My favourite music is heavy rock/heavy metal, especially the older groups like Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, etc., but I also like some of today's music. As long as it's listenable, I don't mind.

My one pet hate is rap music, which I don't think is music at all, but just talking a language nobody understands, apart from the people singing it and the youngsters who have read the lyrics on the CDs. Maybe I'm getting old? I don't know, but I just hate rap music. I also can't keep up with hip hop, garage, Spanish 'bacalao', etc., and I find a lot of today's so-called disco music a load of repetitive rubbish for people who are high on ecstasy or some other drug or alcohol! (Just my private opinion of course!)

When I was at primary school, I was in a choir, and I had a very good voice, but unfortunately, at the age of about thirteen my voice broke and instead of singing 'All things bright and beautiful', a popular high-pitched hymn, I found myself singing Bing Crosby's 'White Christmas', which would have been

more appropriate due to the very deep voice I had developed! Later in my secondary school I took violin lessons, but I never really liked the violin. Actually I was quite good at it, but have you ever heard what a violin sounds like when you make a mistake? Aaaaah! And my classmate at the time, a boy called Lesley Hebden, wasn't quite as good as me and his violin used to screech in my ear hole!

Then, one day when I was on holiday in Majorca at the age of eleven, my mother bought me a Spanish acoustic guitar. Well, I just practised and practised and I had three other friends who were learning to play the guitar, and we used to sit out cross-legged on the grass playing three-chord songs. Ah happy days!

Then I took guitar lessons at secondary school. The teacher, whose name was Mr Wills if I remember rightly, was a good teacher and he taught me to play 'the boogie and twelve-bar rock tunes'. The only bad thing was he had a lisp and always had a cup of coffee in his hand as he was teaching me, and he used to shower me with coffee as he explained what to do, so my guitar lessons were always a very wet affair!

Getting back to music in general, though, my musical tastes have broadened now. I mean I don't mind listening to Elton John (one of my non-guitar-playing favourites), Madonna, Dido, The Communards, Eros Ramazzotti, Nek, La Oreja de Van Gogh, Amaral, etc. Even Robbie Williams and James Blunt. As I said before, anything listenable that actually has a tune to it!

I learnt a lot about languages from listening to different foreign singers. Including Julio Iglesias! My father used to have Charles Aznavour and Sacha Distel records, and my brother-in-law, who is Italian, introduced me to Salvatore Adamo's songs. Incidentally, he is my favourite foreign romantic singer. I used to be amazed at their ability to sing in other languages and I said to myself 'One day I'll be able to sing in many languages too'.

Well, today I can sing some tunes in other languages, and I'm a mediocre guitarist, so I've fulfilled some of my musical ambitions in life.

How about you? Are you musical? What are your musical tastes? Can you play a musical instrument? Can you sing or do you just sing in the kitchen or the shower for your neighbours' entertainment?

As Shakespeare said, 'If music be the food of love, sing on.'

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