

Throughout the terrifying and tumultuous time that is adolescence, music has been the one thing that has brought me peace. Whether it be sitting in bed after a long day, letting the cathartic emotion of Chopin wash over my head, or driving my car, blasting *The Phantom of the Opera*, listening carefully for that euphoric horn part that makes the world new, or dancing with my friends to a no-name Australian ska band, letting their funky tunes block out the week's long moments, music fills my life with peace and lets the good times roll.

Until a few years ago, music and I have ran in circles and gone our separate ways, but I started as a pianist when I was six years old. Soon thereafter, I quit, unwilling to put in the many hours of work. Music was not important to me, or at least, not at that point in my childish ignorance. But my favorite thing to do before the age of 10 was watch old movies. I fell in love with Gene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain* and Yul Brynner in my all-time favorite musical, *The King and I*. I aspired to have a voice as beautiful as Marni Nixon's and be as graceful as Debbie Reynolds. I knew I would never achieve that level of perfection but to sing along, no matter how terribly, pushed me through plenty of rough times.

I believe I truly began my musical journey in the fifth grade. There I learned how to play the trumpet, which led to a reintroduction with the piano, and a fleeting friend in the guitar. Although I dropped guitar and piano due to my perceived importance of other activities, I stayed with trumpet. And when I was asked to play in a summer musical, I felt as though everything had been wonderfully worthwhile. Although *The Drowsy Chaperone* is no classic, it paved the path for me to find my happy place -- amid throngs of elementary school students and middle schoolers as the music director for Stagecrafters Community Productions. My voice may not be as beautiful as Marni Nixon's but the opportunity to teach children how to sing, and hopefully install in them the same dreams I dreamed, has become the eye in the center of the hurricane that

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is high school. Every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday, I feel safe, I feel peaceful, I feel at home.

For I am surrounded by music and wonder, and nothing could be better.