

Service with a Song

A Mānoa professor shares the healing power of music

Every Monday morning for more than a decade, Arthur Harvey has performed for a special audience. He commands the attention of a few, is joined in harmony by some and simply provides reason to get out of bed for others. For an hour he plays piano and sings a variety of tunes and audience requests. He doesn't do it for money. He doesn't do it for fame. The Mānoa assistant professor and coordinator of music education is living out his commitment to service and his passion for studying the healing power of music and its effect on the brain.

The long-term care patients who attend the weekly concerts at Lē'ahi Hospital aren't the only ones on the receiving end of Harvey's generosity and goodwill. His calendar is crammed with classes on campus; speaking engagements for the American Cancer Society, National Alliance for Mental Illness and other organizations, and service as director of music and worship at Calvary by the Sea Lutheran Church in Honolulu. "I am called almost every week to speak to an organization," he says.

People are eager to learn about—and Harvey is committed to share—his findings from years of research into the effect of music on the brain. "I have always been very interested in figuring out why music affects people so powerfully," he explains. He has published countless journal articles and essays on the healing and therapeutic powers of music, the benefits of music in working with special needs students and the use of music to improve and increase learning capabilities. His book, *Learn with the Classics: Using Music to Study Smart at Any Age*, and accompanying music CD, offer tools and techniques on improving learning skills for students, parents and teachers.


Research has shown that music can stimulate various parts of the brain, providing stress relief, lowering blood pressure and affecting moods. Music has provided distraction from discomfort during childbirth and eased pain after surgeries. It has produced a positive impact on patients with severe ailments and diseases, including

Music can lower blood pressure, ease pain, reduce seizures, enhance learning and may even help develop intelligence

seizures, Parkinson's disease and schizophrenia. There is also considerable evidence that music has a significant impact on the development of the human brain and that it plays a role in the development of intelligence. Numerous studies show that it can enhance students' cognitive development, critical-thinking skills, problem-solving abilities and communication and social skills.

The father of 5, grandfather of 13 and great-grandfather of 3 attests to the power of music in his own life. Harvey was a high school graduate at 15 and a college graduate at 19. He claims music as a major influence in his life for as far back as he can remember. With the ability to play more than 30 instruments including the piano, organ, trombone, euphonium and trumpet—"not all of them equally well," he admits—he uses his knowledge and talent to continue to explore the power of music "outside the borders of traditional music education."

Reflecting on the three focus areas of a university professor—research, teaching and service—Harvey ranks service as his greatest passion. "It's the unique contribution I've given to the state and the university."

The audience at Lē'ahi Hospital would definitely agree. 

by Kristen Cabral, a UH External Affairs and University Relations public information officer



Arthur Harvey performs solo or with fellow musicians for hospital patients each week and lectures frequently on the benefits of music