

## **A Pleasing Concord - Music in the Masonic Lodge**

Music is the sixth of the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences mentioned in the Senior Deacons lecture following the Fellowcraft degree. Pythagoras and his followers were keen on studying music as a science. But what is the meaning of forming a ‘pleasing concord’?

The meaning is ‘The state of being in agreement or concord. It is the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce a pleasing effect. The quality of forming a pleasing and consistent whole.’ The Senior Warden is sometimes associated with this Art of a Pleasing Concord, as he is the one who reminds us that there must be harmony in the Lodge.

Music is part of all of us. Our heartbeat is the basic pattern, with sounds ranging from the first cry of a newborn baby to our last gasp for breath. The sense of hearing is improved, so that we recognize songs and rhythms and syncopation. Clapping and singing are part of who we are as human beings. It has been so for tens of thousands of years.

Vibrations cause sounds. Pitch is determined by the frequency of the vibrations. We learn to hear major, minor, and chromatic scales. If we attempt to match the pitch of the lead singer, although it takes discipline, we can indeed achieve harmony. Many have sought to hear the sounds of the vast universe by listening to radio frequencies. Whole pieces of music have been dedicated to the ‘music of the sphere’.

Music as a science isn't just about making sounds that are pleasing to the ear. It's the study of the dimension of time. This is easy to observe in the element of rhythm. In the musical element of tone, it is observed in the frequency of vibrations which cause sound. This study of vibrations and their effect on matter was a new concept during the period of the enlightenment, but it has grown into modern wave theory.

Music, as an art, used to play a much larger role in Freemasonry than it does today. Tuckahoe is one of just a few Lodges in Virginia that relies on music within the degrees, and as a form of pleasing entertainment before and after our meetings. In early Masonry every man present was expected to lead or at least participate in a song. In the early days of our Craft, there were songs for every occasion. It should be noted, however, that Freemasons were still meeting in taverns at that time and tavern songs were part of the normal culture. Back then, nearly every lodge had a Lodge Musician or Organist. Today, Tuckahoe is honored and most fortunate to have a very talented pianist and vocalist in Brother Dick Turochy, who provides music to enhance and support our degree work, and provide a time of reflection before and after our meetings, thus bringing a ‘pleasing concord’ to each occasion in the Lodge.

Ritually, music is referred to at least twice in most Masonic jurisdictions in the world. These references are publicly available from many sources, but they find their origin in Preston's Illustrations of Masonry: 'Hearing is that sense by which we distinguish sounds, and are capable of enjoying all the agreeable charms of music.' and, 'Music teaches the art of forming concords, so as to compose delightful harmony, by a proportional arrangement of acute, grave and mixed sounds.'

As with many of the other liberal arts, the use of music has become woefully absent from many Lodges in North America. However, in those Lodges where it is present, and for us in Tuckahoe, it has become almost unimaginable to conduct a meeting without it.

I have attended Lodges in other jurisdictions that offer what they call a Moment of Reflection, which, while often being a period of silence, can just as well be an opportunity to silently meditate with a reflective piece of music. While silence is equally powerful, the use of music for such a moment has an additional advantage: it allows the Master to be fully engaged in the meditation as well. This provides for every brother to focus on the reflection without worrying about the responsibility of closing the period of silence, leaving this to be determined by the end of the musical selection.

So, forming a 'pleasing concord' in lodge can be something as simple as the brethren being in agreement....and it can be enhanced with an appropriate melody provided by a Lodge Musician.



**...another nugget from the quarry of Freemasonry. <sup>SM</sup>**  
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