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Play that music

by BRIAN LOCKHART

Almost every weekend during the summer, I attend a concert in a local park.

Some of the bands and performers are local, while others come from different parts of the province.

I am always amazed at the level of musical talent out there.

When thinking of talent, it seems only those performers who make it big are thought of as the best.

However, over the years, at various venues, I have seen guitarists who could rival Eddie Van Halen and heard singers who could sing just as well as the top pop divas of the day. And yet they never made it big in terms of fame and fortune.

Maybe they were just never discovered, or maybe they really had no interest other than just being a local person and having some fun with music.

My best friend growing up had musical talent that I envied. He could pick up a new instrument and just know how to play it, and play it well.

It seems every generation comes up with a new style of music. There is a definite difference in the music of the first few decades of the 20th century, when music first started being recorded.

There was a remarkable change from the 50s to the 60s, and another big change in the 70s.

Probably my favourite decade was the 80s when New Wave started a whole new style. Although I can enjoy music from just about every era.

Music really became important in culture during the Classical Period, at least in my opinion.

For some reason, many people refer to any ?old' music, or music performed by an orchestra, as ?classical.' However, the Classic Period only lasted from around 1750 to 1820.

This was during a time when many new instruments were invented or were still recent, which changed the sound of an orchestra or ensemble.

Prior to that period, there really weren't that many instruments.

I once was trapped in an art store for eight hours as the cameraman on a movie a friend of mine was directing.

The owner of the store had a constant stream of pre-Baroque period music playing ? all day long. I guess he thought it went well with the atmosphere of the store.

During that era, there were a lot of flutes of different sorts. Somehow, you can picture Henry VIII eating a large drumstick while his court jester dances around the room.

By the end of the day, I decided I never wanted to hear flute music ever again.

There is also, what I would call, a misconception that all Classical era music is beautiful and written by great composers. I will have to challenge that.

If you took piano lessons as a kid and had to suffer through the grade books issued by the Conservatory of Music, you will understand.

I am now grateful that my parents insisted I take piano lessons. It gave me a foundation in music, and by the time I took music classes in school, I could already read, write, and play music, which made it much easier to learn other instruments.

However, the Conservatory books were filled with old music that was just not fun to either learn or play. I didn't want to play some 200-year-old Allegro written on a single page.

Maybe things have changed, but back then the Conservatory apparently didn't think any music written after 1820 was worthy of being in their books.

There are still plenty of musical geniuses out there who are working and creating great music.

One of the best resources for musical talent is Hollywood.

When you really listen to movie music scores, they are incredible.

Movies are a visual medium, so the music complements what is happening on screen. But if you took out the music, it would totally change the dynamic of the movie.

Sometimes the music outshines the movie.

You have probably heard the song Unchained Melody, performed beautifully by The Righteous Brothers' Bobby Hatfield. But have you ever seen the movie Unchained?

The song was written for the prison movie in 1955.

Any fan of the 1982 sci-fi film ?Blade Runner? will recognize the music theme from that film.

The theme from the film ?A Summer Place? is instantly recognizable. But how many people have seen the movie?

Music is one thing that transcends language.

You don't have to speak the same language as the person sitting next to you to enjoy a concert.