Music Soothes Bipolar Symptoms

April 8, 2010 By David Evans

Once in a while I come across a description of an experience that elicits that shivery feeling of recognition. In this case, there's a blog post from Sandy Naiman at Coming Out Crazy about the power of music and volunteerism in healing from mental illness. It's a nice booster for getting involved in the arts and and giving back to others. What I connected to in her post, like a magnet to steel, was how she described her response to Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* when she was a girl.

"Mysteriously it whispered to me, deep down. I couldn't explain it. I tingled with exhilaration. Its manic rhythms resonated emotionally. Not rationally or intellectually or verbally. It calmed and excited me simultaneously."

This is how music has often affected me too, especially pieces like *Rhapsody in Blue*. There is a mystery to them that both soothes and excites simultaneously, as Naiman says.

As a person living with bipolar, I can say that music has almost always been a soothing force (except when I begin obsessively reorganizing my iTunes playlists--a definite sign of hypomania rearing up.)

Anyhow, I like to give shout-outs to people who write things that move me, or make me laugh or strike a chord. Thanks for that Sandy. In the hope that I'll bring a little rhapsodic harmony into your life today, here's a Leonard Bernstein version of the famous composition.

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http://beta.docker.sanemag.com/blog/music-soothes-bipolar-symptoms