



## MUSIC THEN AND MUSIC NOW

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo  
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas  
B.S. Medical Technology

I miss those days in elementary and high school when we'd have weekly music classes. I remember joining the entire class at singing lessons every week with the father of one from our batch, who was a pianist, accompanying our entire class (all four sections) on the school's trusty piano. We enjoyed going through numerous round songs, popular ditties and other English songs meant for school singing. I remember singing Maria Went to Town, Sunrise, Sunset, Hot Cross Buns, Edelweiss, etc. with all the eagerness and enthusiasm of the entire class getting to the refrain. The school had a collection of such songs printed in a songbook which we'd all religiously bring for those once-a-week music sessions. We'd all finish those sessions eager for the next one.

In high school, we also had music classes but on a more, well, restrained manner. We had studied full notes, half notes and quarter notes as early as our elementary years and the lessons got more advanced in high school. I could never read a music sheet not even if my life depended on it, so I guess my lessons on notes and rests and staves amounted to nothing. But being part of the school choir and singing at 9AM mass were really exciting parts of my growing up years. I liked practicing with the school choir an hour before mass, studying new songs and learning to have my voice blend with the others'.

Nowadays, my kids don't seem to have weekly music sessions like we used to in our days. They study notes and rests and staff. In fact, I've often had to brush up on such topics to help my children with their lessons. But these are the days of downloads and online synthesizers and mixers. Just today, I have had to ask my daughter to delete an application she downloaded on the computer for mixing music; it was taking up way too much of the computer's memory and was slowing down the PC considerably. Things can be so much easier to do on music today, but they also pose challenges and complications to non-techies such as myself.

Our children get their music fix from non-traditional concepts. They have all manner of thingamajigs and gadgets that allow them to share music, listen to it, and compose if they have the inclination. But one thing remains unchanged: music will always be a universal language that most everyone can speak or learn to speak. Whether we listen to old-school music or find our rhythm to more contemporary tunes, as long as music defines our very emotions and feelings, our soul, then we are free to explore its boundaries and parameters without fear or prejudice. Ideally.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Differentiate today's modern music from music of old. Cite specific aspects of comparison, as needed.
2. Why do you think older people find contemporary music reprehensible?
3. What is your opinion of classical music?
4. Why can't we find composers with the genius of Beethoven, Mozart or Chopin anymore? Give your thoughts on this topic.
5. If you were to compose a song, what would you highlight in that song? How would you go about the process?