

FROM THE ORGAN LOFT WHY TUNE AN INSTRUMENT?

"The Marshal's duties and principle role is the organization of processions and ensuring the correct precedence and etiquette in formal proceedings. It is his duty to formally conduct visitors into the lodge and introduce them to the members when the lodge is in session. The Marshal's position is similar to that of a Supervisor." - www.masonic-lodge-of-education.com

"What is most important in music is not to be found in the notes." - Gustav Mahler

On reflecting on the duties of my new position as Marshal, I will rely on these two quotes to keep me focused on what is most important about Masonry, and Music.

We spend a lot of time in practice learning and repeating many specific words, moves, positions, and procedures. At times, this painstaking process might be frustrating, confusing, and difficult. When experiencing a point of difficulty we may become frustrated with ourselves (and/or others) and wonder even for a fleeting moment why we are going to such trouble to "get it right." Can't we just let the little stuff slide? What does it really matter if we say every single word in the right order, or turn the correct way, etc.?

In these moments for me, I remind myself to think of how a good orchestra, band, or choir works. The better the musical group the more attention is paid to being in tune and having each instrument or voice in perfect shape. Great care is taken in personal preparation, ensuring that each instrument is set up exactly right before coming to a rehearsal or concert. It is no fun trying to play music on an instrument that does not work well.

However, the best musical groups know very well that having a perfectly set up instrument is only the beginning, not an end unto itself. It is only lesser musical groups or performers who take too much pride in the instrument itself. But that misses the main point of music entirely. Music is not only about the instrument, or the ink blots on the page called notes. Good musicians realize the incredible beauty and majesty of music when their combined effort and serious attention to detail come together to produce an ineffable emotional experience. That is where the miracles that move human emotion lie; when an excellently prepared instrument is played perfectly, with others who also interpret their own notes spiritually. This is exactly why Music is such an important component in Masonic teaching. Music is a powerful metaphor.

When we strive for perfection, true heart, and deeper meaning in our individual and collective performances in our rituals, we give ourselves and each other the chance to experience something that cannot take place otherwise; a mystical connection with the Grand Architect of the Universe. As Pythagoras knew, it is only when the lines, circles and points line up perfectly that the deeper images within those elements can begin to be revealed fully.

Our striving means nothing if we believe the effort is only about correct words, proper positions, exalted titles, prestige, power, badges, pins, costumes, etc. But, just like music, when all the elements *are* right, and done for the right reasons, the beauty and majesty that unfolds is truly worth all the frustration in getting to that point. Our tireless commitment to perfection pays off in a mutual emotional bond which inspires profound growth in our internal characters. We then begin to see God's work at perfection, order, and harmony in ourselves.

FROM THE ORGAN LOFT

That experience is worth "tuning up" for each and every time we practice or perform, don't you agree?

FRATERNALLY,

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