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Contents:

HOW MUSIC AFFECTS US?

Have you ever noticed how a sad song can make you feel emotional, or how an energetic tune can make you want to dance? Music is more than just entertainment — it can change the way we feel and shape our perspective on the world. Music is so present in our daily lives that we often don't even notice it. In this article, I will explain how music affects our mood and emotions.

Music is closely connected to our brain and emotions. When we listen to music we enjoy, our brain releases dopamine — a chemical that makes us feel happy and relaxed. Different types of music can influence our mood in various ways: fast-paced music can boost our energy, while slow music can help us relax or even fall asleep. Sad music can make us emotional or even bring us to tears. Music also activates parts of the brain related to memory and emotion, so it can quickly change how we feel and bring back powerful memories — both happy and sad.

Sometimes people listen to music because they want to feel something deeply. Many of us have songs we are emotionally connected to. We may relate to the lyrics or the melody, finding comfort in knowing we're not alone in what we're going through. Lyrics can help us express our feelings or realize that others have experienced similar emotions. Every song tells a different story about different people and what the artist has been through. Everyone has at least one song they feel deeply connected to — a song that makes them feel truly understood.`

Music also impacts our mental health. People struggling with emotional or psychological challenges often listen to sad music. However, listening to sad music when you're already feeling low can sometimes make things worse. It can intensify negative emotions, make you feel more isolated, and trap you in negative thought patterns. While some people find comfort in sad songs, for others, it may be more helpful to listen to calming or uplifting music to improve their mood.

So, what is music therapy? It's a method that uses music to support emotional, cognitive, and physical healing. Music therapy helps reduce anxiety, depression, and stress, and it can improve mood and self-expression. In neurological settings, it aids in stroke recovery, enhances memory in Alzheimer's patients, and supports speech and motor skills. For individuals with autism, it helps foster communication and social interaction. Its wide range of benefits makes music therapy a valuable tool in both mental health care and medical treatment.

In conclusion, music has a powerful influence on our emotions, thoughts, and overall well-being. It can lift us up, calm us down, or help us process difficult feelings. Whether we use it for comfort, motivation, or healing, music plays an important role in our lives. By understanding how it affects us, we can use it more intentionally to support our mental and emotional health.

[Z. Karczewska]

How far can mental illness go?

The group of mental illnesses is huge and very varied; they are either scary or just interesting. Mental diseases like schizophrenia and depression are the most common, and yes, they are interesting and sometimes very scary, but there are many more terrifying mental disorders that nobody talks about. So, below are some of them that I found most interesting.

First - Alice in Wonderland syndrome. It's a mental disorder first noticed in 1952 by Lippman. The name is taken from the book titled "Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll. The story tells about Alice's adventures in Wonderland. For example, once she drank the found drink, she became extremely small. Next, she ate the cookie and grew extremely tall. This is actually similar to what people with "Alice in Wonderland syndrome" experience. There was a situation when one of the patients was sure that he was taller than other people, he said that when he walked across the street, he could see the top of people's heads. Also, in the story, Alice fell down the rabbit hole, and - guess what - some patients also feel like they are more in a diagonal position than straight while they're just standing still. Some people suspect that Lewis Carroll was also sick, especially because he also had migraine, which is often connected with this syndrome. There are also other symptoms like abnormal feeling of textures (floor feels like a sponge, blanket - like a stone), time (time can flow faster or slower) or even emotional disorders like feeling of being followed or very intense fear.

Next is the "Cotard's syndrome," which is often connected with deep depression. It's hard to explain this syndrome, but I would say that it's all about feeling and thinking that something that is real doesn't exist or gradually disappears. For example, there was once a man who felt only their blood and nothing else; the rest of his body didn't exist to him. The first described patient was Mademoiselle X. She thought that some parts of her body didn't exist and she didn't need any food. After some time, she died from hunger. There are also other symptoms like intense fear or a decrease in feeling pain. This mental illness is also referred to as the "Zombie Syndrome".

And the last in the article is the Fregoli delusion. People with this illness always have a feeling of being followed. A person who is sick first sees the person who chases them only in strangers. Yet after some time he/she starts to see him in her friends and she hinks it's still the same person, but quickly changing appearance. At the end of the day, the sick don't trust anyone, even her family. The name of this illness is taken from an Italian actor named Leopoldo Fregoli who had very impressive abilities to change his appearance in a few seconds. Mental disorders can be interesting but also terrifying. It's interesting how much our brain can do and how much it can't take. [Aniela Dziura]

The Power of Potatoes

At first glance, potatoes may seem like ordinary, boring and unremarkable vegetables. In reality they play a significant role in our daily life.

From the research results we can find out that potatoes are the most popular vegetables in the whole word. They have special place in our pantries.

The history of potatoes dates back to the 5th century BC. Then they were cultivated by the indigenous people of South America. They came to Europe in the 16th century, after the expeditions of Spanish conquistadors.

Initially, they were not popular - they were considered inedible and even poisonous. Over time, people discovered that they are nutritious and easy to grow. Potatoes appeared in Poland around the 17th century and quickly became the basis of many traditional dishes. Now we can hardly imagine life without them.

Potatoes are one of the most versatile vegetables in the kitchen. They can be cooked, baked, fried, mashed, roasted, and turned into soup. From classic Polish dishes like mashed potatoes, potato pancakes and dumplings to modern recipes and international cuisine, the possibilities are endless. What's more, potatoes take various forms all around the world—from Spanish tortilla de patatasto to Indian curry. Its flavour changes depending on how it's prepared, and each method brings out something different.

Potatoes are a really good addition to meat dishes. It's hard to find another vegetable that offers so many culinary variations.

While potatoes are mostly known as a food staple, they also have a long history in folk medicine—especially in their raw form. Raw potato slices have soothing, anti-inflammatory, and cooling properties, making them a popular natural remedy for various skin issues. When placed on the skin, raw slices can help relieve sunburn, minor burns, bruises, swelling, and insect bites, and even reduce dark circles under the eyes. Thanks to their content of vitamin C, starch and antioxidants, raw potatoes support skin healing and calm irritation. It's a simple, natural and inexpensive way to ease everyday skin problems.

Potatoes aren't just for eating — they have some surprising household uses too. For example, water from boiled potatoes can help clean tarnished silver, bringing back its shine without harsh chemicals. A raw, cut potato combined with baking soda works as a gentle scrub to remove rust from metal surfaces. Potatoes can even generate electricity when used as simple galvanic cells in science experiments. Additionally, in combination with other plants, they can be used as a natural dye for fabrics or paper. These unexpected uses highlight just how versatile the humble potato is.

Although initially considered harmful, the potato has proven to be an incredibly multi-purpose crop. Around the world, it is used in a wide range of culinary creations as well as for its surprising medicinal properties. From the kitchen to natural remedies, the humble potato continues to surprise with its many uses. [H. Gąsiorowska]

THE LARGEST MIRROR IN THE WORLD

Salar de Uyuni is a salt flat, a remnant of the Pleistocene dried-up salt lake Ballivián in southwestern Bolivia. It is located on the Altiplano plateau in the Andes at an altitude of 3,653 m above sea level and covers an area of 10,582 km^2. It is the largest salt desert in the world.

The word "salar" means "salt flat" in Spanish, and "uyuni" comes from the Aymara language and means "enclosure." So Salar de Uyuni can be translated as "salt flat with enclosure," which probably refers to the "islands" of Salar.

Aymara legend says that the Tunupa, Kusku and Kusina mountains that surround the Salar were giant people. Tunupa married Kusku, but Kusku ran away from her with Kusina. Tunupa began to cry in despair while breastfeeding her son. Her tears mixed with her milk and formed the Salar. Many locals consider Tunupa an important deity and argue that the place should be called Salar de Tunupa, not Salar de Uyuni.

In reality, the place was formed by the transformation of several prehistoric lakes that existed about forty thousand years ago, but over time they all evaporated. It is now covered by several meters of salt crust, which has an extraordinary flatness with average height differences of about one meter over the entire area of the Salar.

The most extraordinary thing about this place is that after rain, a thin layer of dead, still water transforms the plateau into the world's largest mirror, with a diameter of 129 km (80 mi). It is a breathtaking sight. This incredible phenomenon attracts tourists and photographers from all over the world.

Due to the previously mentioned fact of being one of the flattest regions on Earth and thanks to the good reflection of light from the salar's surface, Salar de Uyuni area is used to calibrate the altimeters of satellites orbiting the Earth.

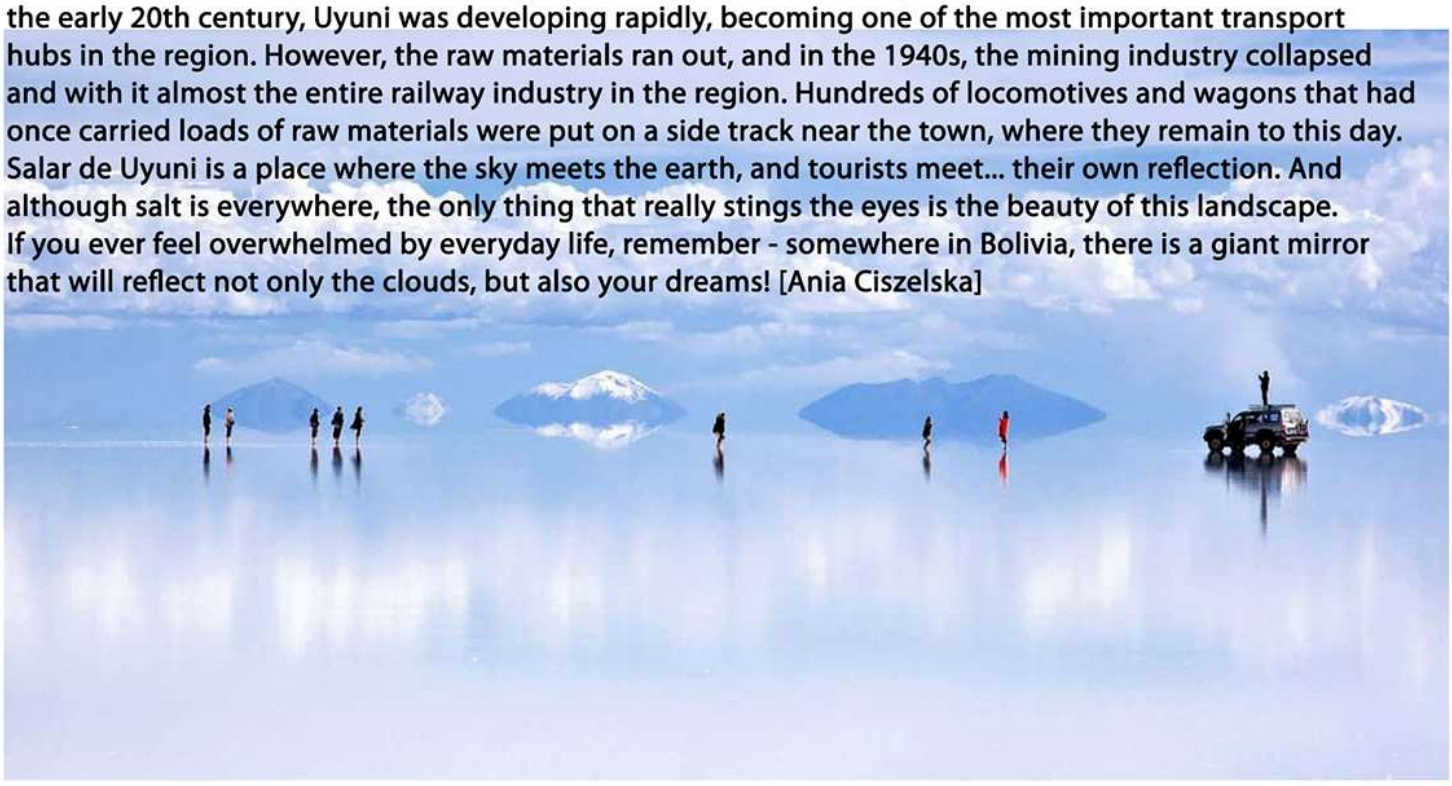
Salar de Uyuni is also a location that filmmakers use and the salt flat "played the role" of the mineral planet Crait in "Star Wars: The Last Jedi". It has been also used as a filming location for movies such as "The Fall", "Salt and Fire", "The Unseen". Salar de Uyuni is an ideal location for photo shoots.

Salar de Uyuni is a popular tourist destination, and for this reason, many hotels have been built in this area. However, due to the lack of conventional building materials, many of them are almost entirely built (walls, roof, furniture) from blocks of salt cut from the Salar. The first hotel, Palacio de Sal, was built between 1993 and 1995 and operated for about 7 years. Its location in the middle of the desert caused problems, and mismanagement caused environmental pollution. About 5 years later, a new hotel was built under the same name, but in a different location.

One of the main tourist attractions is the historic train cemetery. It is located 3 kilometers from the town of Uyuni, which was founded in the late 19th century as a trading post and transport hub. It was built because of the nearby deposits of raw materials, and the British played a major role in its construction. In the early 20th century, Uyuni was developing rapidly, becoming one of the most important transport hubs in the region. However, the raw materials ran out, and in the 1940s, the mining industry collapsed and with it almost the entire railway industry in the region. Hundreds of locomotives and wagons that had once carried loads of raw materials were put on a side track near the town, where they remain to this day.

Salar de Uyuni is a place where the sky meets the earth, and tourists meet... their own reflection. And although salt is everywhere, the only thing that really stings the eyes is the beauty of this landscape.

If you ever feel overwhelmed by everyday life, remember - somewhere in Bolivia, there is a giant mirror that will reflect not only the clouds, but also your dreams! [Ania Ciszelska]



THE LEPER KING

One of the results of the Crusades, which were initiated by Europeans at the end of the 9th century was establishing the Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1099. Of course, due to the importance of Jerusalem as a city in both religions - Islam and Christianity – the Arabic world did not accept that situation which caused many wars between the Kingdom of Jerusalem allied with the European kingdoms and the Arabic states.
The first rulers of the Kingdom of Jerusalem were not born in the prominent families from Europe, as in 1131 Fulk the Younger became the king. He was from the house of Plantagenet, a family which started to rule in England 20 years after it. One of his descendants was Baldwin IV who ruled in Jerusalem from 1174 to 1185. He is known first of all for one thing - he had been suffering because of proxy since he was a child. That's why his nickname is "the Leper King" As a young and inexperienced ruler he had to fight against Saladin. When he was 16 years old, in 1177, his troops defeated Saladin's troops in the battle of Montgisard in a situation when the Arabic forces were a few times bigger. That battle is known as a symbol of Baldwin's sacrifice to the kingdom, because, according to chroniclers, he was commanding his soldiers regardless of his severe illness. Another interesting fact about that battle is that Saladin had merely withdrawn and avoided death after the defeat.
Besides wars with the Islamic states, the king of Jerusalem had other problems. One of them was interior fighting between nobles of the kingdom whose goal was to reach as much power in the country as it was possible. The Leper King knew that he could not have any children, thus he understood that his sister's husband and after him, his children would inherit the throne. He decided that Sybilla (his sister) marry Guy of Lusignan who was a knight from France. He did it because some of his relatives wanted to force him to abdicate and take over the rule in the Kingdom of Jerusalem.
Nonetheless, despite Baldwin's getting rid of the one issue, the marriage of his sister to Guy caused other problems. Some nobles of the kingdom assumed that the maternal relatives of the king would be better as the heirs of the kingdom. Historians suppose that the Leper King wanted to abdicate but this would only lead to a worse situation with inheriting the throne. In 1183 the king lost the ability to use his legs or hands, snd additionally, he became blind. Guy became regent of the kingdom. Finally, because of his illness, Baldwin IV died in 1185. [W. Lewczuk]

MIRROR NEURONS
THE REASON FOR OUR EMPATHY

Have you ever wondered how we can empathize with other people's emotions? Why do we yawn when we see someone next to us do it? Or when we feel anxious seeing other people stressing out even though everything was just alright? The answer is stuck deep in our brains- in the so-called mirror neurons.

Mirror neurons are a special type of neurons which are activated not only when we are doing something ourselves but also when we see someone else doing the same thing. It's almost like our brain is pretending to be doing something even if it is only watching. They were discovered in the 90s when during the research on monkeys' brains. The scientists noticed that the same neurons were activated both when the monkey was reaching for food and when it was watching the human doing the same. Soon it turned out that a similar phenomenon occurred in people and it has a huge impact on our social life.

Due to mirror neurons, we can learn by observing. That's why children follow their parents and we learn new skills by watching how others do it. But also these neurons are the foundation of our empathy. When we see someone suffering our brain is activated as if we were experiencing pain. That is why we can sympathize, understand others' emotions and build deep relationships.

However, mirror neurons also have their bad side. If they can reflect good emotions and behaviors that means they can also imitate the bad ones. Being in an environment full of violence, screaming and anxiety our brain subconsciously acquires these patterns. That is why children who were brought up in toxic houses often repeat the same pattern that they used to experience, even if they strongly want to avoid them. Same in a friend group, if we are surrounded by people filled with anger, sarcasm and complaint we start to feel and act the same even if we don't understand why. The brain learns this by imitation without us being aware of this.

Mirror neurons show us how much we are social by nature. We are made for being in relationships, compassion and mutual learning. But also we experience others' influence on a really deep level. That's why it is worth thinking about with whom we spend our time and who we are observing. Because the brain - even if we don't say or do anything- absorbs the atmosphere, emotions and behaviours of the environment. So we better choose wisely, not only for our mental health but also for the well-being of our brain. [M. Godzisz]

A PERFECT DAY IN SCHOOL

It’s 7:30 a.m., and I'm well-rested - yes, well-rested! That is the first sign that something is out of place. I looked at my watch, and time stood still. Is it some miracle? No, it’s just a perfect day in school.

Instead of rushing to catch a bus, I went for a long and relaxing walk in the sunshine with a cup of coffee from my favourite cafe by the park. No one cuts the line, everyone is kind and happy. Everything is perfect.

8.00 - the school bell is ringing, but it is not that awful bell that keeps me awake even after no sleep for two days. It’s more like the sound of violin and piano. The first lesson is religious education, but first the roll call in the school hall where we pray. Here comes a test of the 10 Commandments, but wait, it’s the perfect day so we have a conversation over the tea about how to be a good human. The teacher is smiling and the students are very active, is it a dream?

9.00 - Mathematics, it is strange, I understand everything... The tasks are easy and I even got a good grade for my activity during the lesson. The teacher says: “Today, exceptionally, there will be no tests or homework, you have free time for the rest of the lesson”. I’m over the moon.

10.30 - Lunch break. The Cafeteria serves freshly made waffles and croissants with jam and fruits, for drinks there are coffee, tea or hot chocolate. In the background, the music is playing and everyone can add their favourite song to the playlist.

11.00 - Polish lesson, but instead of writing an essay we are watching films and talking about the literary context in “Matrix” and “Harry Potter”. Suddenly a teacher asked if anyone would like to talk about what the main character felt, and everyone in the classroom wanted to say something.

13.00 - PE, but today we were not running in circles instead we went for a long walk, the weather was perfect so the teacher bought ice cream for everyone.

13.50 - we were supposed to have one more lesson but it turned out that our teacher was absent so we all went home.On my way home I felt that my backpack was strangely light and was even more excited for the long afternoon at my home doing...

And then... the sound of my alarm.

6.20. It’s time to get back to reality. But you know what? A day like this is not impossible, well, maybe not a whole like this but even a part of it would make a big difference. Sometimes we should do something to make our day in school more “perfect”, try listening to positive music in the mornings and see if your energy changes. [K. Iżewska]

Masayoshi Takanaka
Hidden gem of guitar mastery

When we think about the best guitarists of all names like Brian May, Jimi Hendrix, Eddie Van Halen, Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton and many more but often Times I don't hear people talking about a man that, in my opinion, deserves a place amongst the gentlemen mentioned above. The man that I'm talking about is Masayoshi Takanaka.

Born Masayoshi Ryū to a father of Chinese descent and a Japanese mother, he was raised in Tokyo, as he was growing up he decided to change his name from Masayoshi Ryū to Masayoshi Takanaka.

His early Career consisted of playing bass against his will in a progressive rock band, Filled Egg. He then started taking guitar and music theory lessons daily.

In 1972, Filled Egg disbanded with Takanaka joining the Sadistic Mika Band where he finaly started playing guitar professionally. Unfortunately, due to the divorce of two of its main members, the band fragmented with Takanaka, Yukihiro Takahashi, Tsugutoshi Goto, and Yutaka Imai starting their own project named sadistics.

1976 saw the release of Takanaka's debut album Seychelles, which started his solo career, according to Times Japan, this album among many others, helped start Japan's rock-fusion scene.

The album is characterised by it's melodic guitar solos, inclusion of city pop elements and it's slight tropical vibe, which would go on to be one of Takanaka's main features.

In 1977, Takanaka released another album, this one self-titled, TAKANAKA continued the tropical fusion vibe started in Seychelles with its inclusion of elements of samba in songs like Summer Breeze or Mambo Magic.

The same year, he released an album that brought in new themes to Takanaka's music was An Instable High, this album saw the inclusion of Jazz into the unique and tropical style of his music, seen in songs like Malibu or Sundrops.

Brasilian Skies released 1978 is probably one of Takanaka's most diverse and popular albums, besides the standard elements of samba and jazz fusion elements of bossa nova and and soul can be also heard some of the songs, the album was partialy recorded in Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro hence the tropical vibe of the music is more detectable than on all the other albums, it also includes features from a famous saxophonist Benny Golson in I Remember Clifford and a famous composer John Williams in Star Wars Samba.

Takanaka released many more great albums, but one of the most interesting is The Rainbow Goblin, released in 1981. The unique thing about this album is the fact that all of the lyrics are parts of Ul de Rico's ,,The Rainbow Goblins'' children's book with Takanaka's Jazz fusion tracks playing along the story.

One of Takanaka's most unique traits is his showmanship on the stage, the best example being his iconic surfboard guitar, which, as it sounds, is a guitar placed in a surboard with spaces cut out for Takanaka to hold it correctly.

Takanaka still performs to this day with one of his latest perfomances being his performance in Los Angeles where he walked out on stage in his iconic red suit, which he wore on the cover of Takanaka back in 1977.

Although my main taste in music may sometimes appear to consist of heavier sounds, i love to come back to Takanaka's music and lose myself in his tropical jazz-fusion world as it simply brings me joy even in the most awful of moments. With all of that, I can safely say that Masayoshi Takanaka still remains number one in all of music for me.

[H.Szumski]

The Power of Matcha

As you have probably noticed, matcha has really been catching on lately. But what exactly is it and where did it come from?

Matcha is a Japanese green tea in the form of finely ground powder, made from high-quality tea bush leaves. Before harvesting, the plants are shaded, which gives the leaves a more intense green colour and a milder flavour. After picking, only the young leaves are selected, then steamed, dried, and cleaned of stems. The processed leaves, called sencha, are ground into a very fine powder using stone mills - and that powder is what we call matcha.

Its history dates back to the 9th century when many aspects of Japanese culture were shaped by the Chinese influence. At the time, the Japanese Buddhist monks studied various methods in China and brought them back to the Land of the Rising Sun. Among the things they brought was the tea, which they discovered as a medicinal herb.

As Buddhism spread in Japan, knowledge about green tea also began to grow. Japanese green tea has been refined over many centuries by Japanese culture and has become deeply rooted within it. As tea became easier to prepare at home, the culture of enjoying tea during meals began to take hold among the people.

But have you ever wondered while drinking it if it has any benefits beyond its wonderful taste? Well, it does. Matcha has a stimulating effect, providing natural energy and improving concentration, but at the same time, it calms you down and helps you relax, supports the cleansing of the body from toxins, helps speed up metabolism and supports fat burning, strengthens immunity thanks to the content of vitamins and minerals, and also improves mood and helps deal with stress, thanks to which we can feel better every day.

However, it's important to remember that matcha is not prepared like ordinary green tea. It's a whole ritual designed to bring out all its flavour and health benefits. Matcha should be made from high-quality powder, preferably ceremonial grade, which is characterized by an intense flavour and vibrant green colour. Before brewing, it's worth sifting one or two teaspoons of matcha through a fine sieve to avoid clumps. The water used should be heated to about 70–80 degrees, as water that is too hot can cause a bitter taste. Matcha is whisked vigorously with a bamboo whisk, using quick motions in the shape of a "W" or "M" until a thick foam forms on the surface.

So, whenever you want to relax, just play calm music, sit comfortably in your room with a cup of matcha and enjoy!

[N. Momot]

Electric guitar – the path of struggle and joy

Summer holidays are straight ahead – with those wonderful days coming in the pipeline (though for some they have already arrived), many of us are now wondering about spending them wholeheartedly: whether by reading huge amount of books with stories that are actually addictive, playing a favourite game that we promised ourselves to accomplish over a year ago, or finally commiting to start playing guitar like a true rockstar. What do you prefer? Personally, I choose all of them, but today I'd like to focus on the last topic the most – let's turn on the gear and start blasting!

My interest in picking up the electric guitar was born thanks to our high school. In June 2023, students could bring guitars from their homes and play a certain song due to the event called „Urszusfera's Guitar Record", which was a local version of the widely known „Guitar Guinness World Record" happening once a year in Wroclaw's market square. I myself decided to pick up my old, classical guitar, which I rarely even played on, just to be a part of that experience, but when I saw my friends coming with their not-so-cheap electric guitars along with the rest of the inventory and then heard their sharp and crispy tunes, I immediately knew I needed to get myself such an instrument.

I bought my first set with my dad in October of the same year, which contained an amplifier (Nux Mighty 20 BT), a power cable and the guitar itself (Squier Telecaster by Fender) with necessary gadgets – an orange case and a black stand. Later on I also purchased a belt to allow comfortable performance while standing. There weren't any concerns about getting picks, though – I already had some after my previous guitar.

It goes without saying that playing on new equipment comes to be easier when one had at least a slight experience with a similar model. At this point, I already knew basic chords and a few simple riffs, so I had a promising start to my adventure with an instrument designed for heavier sounds… or at least I thought it would be like that. In fact, I got stuck in learning new songs or even particles of them and transitioning from one chord to other felt extremely clunky. Adding to that, after a 20-minute session of playing, I thought my fingertips were burning - it was so painful! But despite all of that, I didn't give up. If I truly wanted to get better, I needed to practice more. And so I did.

Months upon months, I delved into improving my technique by watching dozens of tutorials on Youtube and doing weekly guitar exercises. Meanwhile, I had to share my free time with school studying, which I found really problematic, but eventually I graduated and passed (I hope with flying colours) the final exams. Now here I am, almost two years since the start of my musical journey being taken seriously. If you thought that I would become the master of solos and harmonies during that time, then you're delusional – it would be almost impossible to achieve anyway. However, I became way quicker and more precise at hitting notes, which allowed me to reach further goals and learn more fluently on my own.

So, in the end, the hard work provided a satisfying result for now. As I have had some spare time in recent days, I'm going to practice even more often. It won't be easy, of course – actually, I'm going to enter probably the most arduous part of learning, which is the music theory, but I'm sure it'll be worth it. With raised difficulty comes more fun of using the instrument and showing true skills to others, let alone oneself. Who knows where I'll be in another ten years? Maybe I'll burn out eventually or maybe I'll take the next step and start a band? I guess only time will tell.
[M. Oziembłowski]

HEMATOLOGY

Hematology is not a very well-known field in medicine. It is all about blood and blood disorders, but it's not as simple as it sounds. Haematological tests can help diagnose anaemia, infection, and haemophilia. They also include blood clotting disorders and leukaemia.

Often when we are sick we get sent by our doctors to do a blood test. Blood tests called complete blood count (CBC) are a diagnostic tool used by haematologists. They show the blood doctors our white blood count, red blood count, platelet count, haemoglobin concentration and much more. Their deficiency can lead to serious consequences in our body, for example, platelet shortage, which are the blood cells responsible for clotting, can lead to severe internal and external bleeding and thrombocytopenia. People with severe thrombocytopenia may bleed easily and have difficulty stopping the bleeding. However, those with mild thrombocytopenia may have no issues with excessive bleeding. Luckily we have haematologists, who treat the sick, including through blood transfusions.

That being the case, it is so important to donate blood. In Poland, everyone above the age of eighteen (with minor exceptions, of course) can donate blood. It is not complicated at all and practically painless. Moreover, if you give blood you get chocolate and a day off from work. Over and above that you are provided with satisfaction for helping and potentially saving someone's life.

Not only blood can be donated. Other much-needed matters are stem cells and bone marrow. Bone marrow transplant or stem cell transplant is used to treat leukaemia and some other cases of cancer. There are two types of those transplants. One is an autologous transplant. It uses the patient's stem cells that were collected before treatment, which can be used to replace the damaged bone marrow. The second one is an allogenic transplant which uses stem cells from a healthy donor, who is usually a family member, or a matched donor from a registry.

If you are willing to register as a bone marrow donor - don't hesitate. Registering does not always mean donating. The only thing that you need to do for starters is sending a genetic sample. Only if you get matched with someone in need of bone marrow will you be called to do so.

Not everyone gets a call. Some wait their whole life, and some are called in immediately. You never know when someone needs YOUR help.

Concluding, haematologists, like all doctors, are doing miracles and healing people, but there's not much they can do without blood. People donating is hugely important. If you are reading this article - think of what you can do to help others.

[Ania Zając]