

The Schubert Club Museum located within The Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul, Minnesota gives children the opportunity to admire those who invent and then develop musical instruments, to admire those who compose music featuring musical instruments, and to admire those who play and sing their compositions.

When I was only age nine I was a fourth grader at Robert Fulton Elementary School in Minneapolis, Minnesota; located just several blocks from Lake Harriet.

Along Lake Harriet's shoreline is a castle-shaped band pavilion. Across from the band pavilion is a small forest.

The forest is a bird sanctuary.

Miss Sclater, my fourth grade teacher, took my classmates and me on walks to and within the forested bird sanctuary.

Miss Sclater felt it was important for us to learn about all the birds nested and singing in the bird sanctuary.

Miss Sclater believed it was important for me to learn and understand how each bird is a musical instrument.

Miss Sclater believed I am also a musical instrument.

Miss Sclater taught me to sing "Mockin' Bird Hill."

Tra la la, tweedle dee dee dee
It gives me a thrill
To wake up in the morning
To the mockingbird's trill
Tra la la tweedle dee dee dee
There's peace and good will
You're welcome as the flowers
On Mockingbird Hill

Miss Sclater also introduced me to the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Before Miss Sclater took us fourth graders to see and hear the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, she helped us learn about each instrument in the orchestra: the brass instruments, the string instruments, the percussion instruments, and all the woodwind instruments.

Miss Sclater helped me love the music birds sing, and the music we fourth graders sang with her as we walked to and within the bird sanctuary, and the music orchestra members and singers performed for us at Lake Harriet's Band Pavilion.

Now, more than 66 years later, at age 76, after serving as a docent and interpretive guide for 20 years at The Schubert Club Museum, I take pride in having helped introduce children to the wonder and gift and treasure of music we as human beings enjoy.

How much do we enjoy music?

Perhaps our enjoyment of music is best expressed in one simple statement: Where words fail, music speaks.

Music is about expressing our human emotions, and with the power of music we have a way to express our most powerful emotion: Love.

The Schubert Club pays gratitude to those who bring music to us.

The Schubert Club Museum rooms commence with a truly "cyclonic exhibit" featuring more than 300 musical instruments from the world's Western and Eastern Hemispheres.

From there the museum moves onward to a room that features the more than 300-year invention and then evolution of what perhaps became the world's greatest instrument: the piano.

The next room features an abundance of letters, all written by world-famous composers of piano, orchestral and vocal music; preserved letters written by Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms and other composers, each composer indebted to the centuries of musical instrument inventors, developers, and builders.

Five more museum rooms feature the supervised hands-on opportunities for children to enjoy playing centuries-old replicated keyboard instruments, then playing several antique music boxes, then playing antique phonographs, then playing many Indonesian instruments; then admiring antique brass instruments, and then an opportunity to enjoy playing several brass instruments: trumpet, trombone, and French horn.

During the 20 years I served as a docent and interpretive guide for The Schubert Club Museum, I enjoyed how children would often sit and perform improvised and memorized compositions for their admiring teachers, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.

During such memorable moments, I would often extend a box of tissues to the teachers, parents and relatives, to dab their joyful heartfelt tears.

The Schubert Club Museum is a sanctuary and haven for creating, nurturing and sustaining respect for creative people in the world who bring music to us; within whatever age and place they lived and had loved and within whatever age and place we live and love.

- Paul Edward Johnson