



Pianoforte

You experience the greatest sense of joy and accomplishment. You feel like you just gave someone the perfect Christmas gift or finished the best novel of your life. Your skill set grows and the successful performance makes your heart swell. Relief sweeps in to reward you for all your hard work. Now you're on to bigger and better things. The mountain has been conquered. The war has been won.

The process of learning a new piece of music is like developing a new friendship. It's a little awkward at first. It can even be a little scary. But as time goes on and you attempt to translate the notes into your fingers' movements, you start to hear the melody appear in the air. Your fingers loosen and you become more comfortable with the pattern of the notes.

I rest my hands on the keys and grin with elation. At last, my body relaxes. This is where I feel the happiest: sitting alone in front of the black and white keys. Sometimes, playing piano is an escape. I can forget the worries that plague me and the petty troubles of the day. No matter what is going wrong in my life or the world, the piano is always there for me. I can play tunes I've memorized ages ago and feel nostalgic. I can test out new

melodies to see how they sound. There are endless possibilities when I'm sitting on that piano bench.

Other times, it's a form of worship. Music has always connected me to God, and I love to pour out my heart to Him with the talent He has given me. I know He is the only one who loves unconditionally. Worshiping Him with my songs is as natural as breathing because of the nature of God. He is so worthy of my praise, and I daily long to express my gratitude through music. Leading the congregation in worship is a large responsibility but one I'm thankful to have every week.

Music is a huge piece in my family's puzzle of a life. My father is a fan of several different genres and knows more songs than one probably should. There is nothing that makes my mother happier than to hear someone play their instrument. There isn't a day that goes by that she doesn't want me to entertain her with a tune. I usually oblige.

This instrument that I love wasn't always called what it is today. It was formerly named the "pianoforte," which fits the instrument like a glove. In Italian, "piano" means "soft" and "forte" means "loud." I find it amazing that a seemingly basic instrument could produce so many different tones played at any volume. Maria Cristina Mena was capturing the flexibility of the piano when she said, "The piano keys are black and white but they sound like a million colors in your mind." A blank canvas, the pianoforte is just waiting for the next artist to pull up a bench and express himself through music.

It's astonishing to think about how many people are playing instruments at the same time, all over the world. A 20-something studying mechanical engineering pulls out his guitar to clear his mind during an impossible project. A middle-aged woman plays her trumpet on the street corner to support her family. All over the world, people of all occupations, ages, and skill levels try their hand at making music. Even though some may not be the greatest at it, they're still expressing themselves. It would be incredible to be able to hear it all. How many of those amateur musicians could be making a living doing what they really love if they were just given a chance?