

Listen, and hear us

By Cassie Eurich

CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL, GRADE 8
(This poem was submitted last spring.)

Listen.
What do you hear?
To those with closed hearts
and minds locked tight,
their ears are blocked,
they hear nothing.
But there are those special few
who listen,
really listen.
For everyone speaks
in their own way.
Through words in ink,
through a song,
or a riddle,
the way they act,
the things they do,
sometimes even
just the way
they look at you.
Some even dare to say aloud
what most of us
are screaming inside.
So listen.
What do you hear?
We all scream
that we are frightened,
confused people
who want protection,
who want support,
who want to fit in,
or who want to stand out.
Who want just to be told
we are important,
we are special,
we are wanted.
We scream that
surrounded by people
we are still lonely,
we are afraid.
But to help
you must first hear the cry.
So listen.
What do you hear?
For it's not what you hear
but rather the fact
that you continue to listen,
to reach out.
So open your heart,
unlock your mind,
unplug your ears,
and listen.
What do you hear?

Next Prompts

Headline. Write an attention-grabbing news headline and then create a story about it.

Alternate: Listening in. Take a moment to listen to conversations around you, then use some of the dialogue you hear in a story or poem. Fill in the gaps. Due Friday.

NOTE: These pieces were written by students who attended this summer's Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival led by reknowned violinist Soovin Kim.

First notes

By Shoshana Silverstein
HOMESCHOOLED, GRADE 11

I push the glass doors open and relish the cool air splashing across my face, chasing away the steamy weather that tries to follow me inside. The ceiling arches above me, soaring like a majestic cathedral. I am warmly greeted, and set on the correct path to the first event I'm attending. But I find myself straying, drawn towards the distant yet clear sound of a piano. I peer through an archway into a large room with chairs stacked against one wall, facing a glossy, midnight piano raised on the shoulders of the stage.

The music is as majestic as the hall it fills.

I watch the pianists, their bodies bending and swaying with the music created by the connection between their fingers and the keys. For a moment I am taken away to a place where the notes divulge the secrets of the reality left behind.

This is sorrow, they whisper. This is joy. These are the colors of the sunset. These are the tears of an angel. Look! There is Youth, dozing in the shade of Time. There are the soldiers of Darkness, stretching far into the unknown.

There is true beauty.

When I step back from the archway, losing sight of the musicians joined with the glossy, midnight piano, the music swims down from the stage and follows me through the hallway. It brushes and entwines those it passes, sharing its secrets in a language all the world can comprehend.

Warming up

By Aliza Silverstein
HOMESCHOOLED, GRADE 8

The music as the trio warms up-- one song, three musicians, separate places, different sounds-- not meant to be together, but so beautiful. It lasts only a moment before they stop, and begin to rehearse as one.

Audience

By Avni Nahar
SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL,
GRADE 9

... I look around at the audience, and watch as faces young and old absorb the music. Some nod their heads slightly, others stare. The guy in front of me wags his head enthusiastically. One boy yawns, but we won't talk about him.

My attention goes back to the performers, and after less than half an hour, the [Schubert] Marches are over. The pianists hold the silence for a moment, and then break out into huge smiles. They look relieved and joyful all at once, and just seeing their faces makes me smile too. When they bow, Ignat Solzhenitsyn looks so young, so pleased and proud -- almost embarrassed. The music transforms him, I think. And it's true, the music does transform him. Along with everyone else.

Soovin Kim

By Jordan Cannon
THE SCHOOLHOUSE, GRADE 6

The violinist Soovin Kim held a free concert at the Firehouse Art Gallery in a room upstairs. The room was filled with people and color. Paintings and a collage made of wood decorated the walls. People sat in black-backed chairs, wearing pink, red, yellow, blue, green and striped clothes. It was crowded, with chairs filled, people standing in the back, and a line out the door.

He launched the concert by telling the audience about the festival that's going on, and saying how much he liked the blog entries on youngwriter-sproject.org. He played Bach's Partita No. 2 in d minor, which he thinks is one of the most beautiful pieces Bach wrote. Watching him play the violin was amazing. He swayed back and forth, reeling back at dramatic parts as though something had hit him, getting louder, softer, faster, slower. His fingers raced along the fingerboard, doing quick chords and unbelievable string crossings. The sound was rich and beautiful.

The audience loved him. He was friendly, and people seemed excited that he was there.



Young Writers Project is an independent non-profit that engages students to write, helps them get better at it and find their authentic audiences for their best work.

THANKS: YWP depends on the generosity of businesses, foundations and individuals to keep going. Today we'd like to offer special thanks to:

The Windham Foundation

One of the aims of the Grafton-based foundation is to promote the vitality of rural Vermont through support of educational projects.

Budweisers and bunny ears

By Ben Duff
SPAULDING HIGH SCHOOL, GRADE 10
(This story was submitted last spring.)

Every year, my family goes camping over Memorial Day weekend. We have quite a group that we go with, but each year the group shrinks. We once had ten families at one time, and it is a wonder that we were never kicked out (although we may have been close a few times).

This year our group consisted of only five families, so it was a little less wild than usual. The whole weekend consisted of the kids messing around and the parents hanging out and having a great time. There is never a dull moment when you're camping.

Now, people do their own thing during the day, but by the time the sun goes down everybody gathers around the large fire that has at times been much larger than the owners of the campground may like. This is when everybody has a chance to show off what they have gotten during the day and, of course, the adults celebrate the time with a few drinks. It is a pretty funny thing to see the adults break out the treasures they found at garage sales during the day. They show off everything from hard hats and bunny ears to a confused mannequin. I will always remember how my dog reacted when he saw that mannequin that my dad kicked over. That sent poor Cooper running to the camper.

Every camping trip presents new surprises, and I can't wait until Labor Day.