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2020 High School Scholarship Essay Contest \$1,000 Award Winner

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The Music We Make

This is a fact which has stricken my heart with sorrow: no generation of people have lived on this Earth in perfect peace. Plenty of humans have lived their lives in the periods between total war, but not one single soul, past or present, has been alive to see a time in which mankind was truly peaceful. Only after reading the quote presented by Rigoberta Menchu Tum did I see this painful truth. Our Earth is a place where so many people live in turmoil and are neglected by those who could help. A place where people's personal beliefs or ethnic backgrounds are reason enough for another person to hate and ridicule them. A place where people who are different from others can become targets. How could a place like that ever be a place of "peace?"

According to my own definition of "peace," it could not. I equate peace with music. The most beautiful pieces are composed of a melody and harmonies. These different parts are woven together, flowing smoothly around each other and filling the listeners' ears with a haunting ballad or twinkling serenade. A world of peace would be like that: a place where every person lived together, worked together, and thrived together, filling the Earth with joy and positivity.

No two people on this planet are identical. Every person has a different system of beliefs that may cause them to think the way they do. In many situations, these differences have caused conflicts between individuals and groups alike. Religions often butt-heads on teachings and doctrine. Different countries may dislike each other based on what they believe about the other. Even neighbors who attend the same church, work similar jobs, and root for the same sports teams may avoid the other based on a difference in the color of their skins. For some crazy reason, these dissimilarities cause contentions. In music, the unique vibration of each instrument is celebrated. The hulking bass of a trombone is harnessed for depth. The lilting timbre of a flute accents the piece. The vibrancy and variability of a violin fills a piece with emotion. With those three sentences, a brass, a woodwind, and a string instrument were defined by their relationship to their music. That music which is only produced in its most spectacular form when many other varied instruments come together. Those instruments aren't fighting for the spotlight or hating each other because one is made of metal, or the other has weird knobs that they say do not make any sense. No, that would be idiotic. All of the instruments are playing their parts, being beautiful on their own, to make something unforgettable together.

Humans could do this too. We could make something beautiful together. The poverty, pain, and prejudices that pollute our planet make the music of Earth sharp and distasteful, but if people

decided to celebrate diversity and capitalize on each other's uniqueness, our music could ring strong and exquisite across a galaxy of peace.