**emPower Music & Arts Bring Us Positive Music**

**by Linda Ridley, LUT**

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I have loved music since I was a young girl and we got our first record player to spin those 45s. It was through the magic of those records, the radio, parties, and wedding receptions that I became a melomaniac! Did you know a *melomaniac* is a person with an abnormal fondness of music; a person who loves music? That is me! Everyone knows, I love music!

Research shows that music can have a beneficial effect on our brain chemicals, such as dopamine, which is linked to the feelings of pleasure, influencing focus, concentration, memory, sleep, mood, and motivation. Music stimulates oxytocin, the so-called “love hormone,” putting us into a romantic state. Most music will have a positive, immediate effect on our mental state. Quiet music can help lower levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, lower blood pressure, and heart rate. Music can improve our health and wellbeing. Music is better than most anti-depressants as it can improve our mood, reduce anxiety, bring people together, decrease loneliness and social isolation. Some music may bring back past-memories of the good times or make us cry. Some fast tempos can psychologically and physiologically arouse us, uplift us, and help energize us.

Music has been around for at least 35,000 years, inspiring people to dance, sing along, become creative and write more songs and compositions. Artist may create music for ceremonial purposes, recreational purposes, and artistic expression. Now we have the emPower Music & Arts community dedicated to creating positive global change through music, writing, and the spoken word. Sue Riley, Richard Mekdeci, and Russ Hammock are the co-founders of emPower Music and Arts, with the mission of “Changing the World, One Song at a Time.” They bring us lots of Posi (positive) Music from many artists in various music styles. Posi is short for “positive” and it’s pronounced Pah-zee.

Now Sue Riley tours the country performing in the emPower “PosiPalooza” concerts bringing Posi Award Winning artists together in a unique, uplifting format where the artist swap songs in an organic musical conversation. To date, they have produced over 300 of these concerts in the US and Canada. I have enjoyed several of them here in Michigan.

Did you know, Sue Riley and Richard Mekdeci have published a handbook on Music Ministry which is full of practical tips for ministries? During Sue Riley’s 11-year leadership of the Music Ministry Team of Unity Worldwide Ministries, the team created 10 song books of Positive New Thought Music for spiritual centers. Almost every Unity center has a music director and choir.

Every year there is an emPower Music Festival bringing many artists together sharing their music expertise. This Festival is traditionally held just days prior to the Annual Unity People’s Convention at Unity Village. This year the 18th emPower Music Festival is June 21-25 at Unity Village.

For more information, contact the emPower Store, the individual artist’s website, empowerma.com or emPower Music & Arts, LLC, P.O. Box 1012 Elfers, Florida 34680

Reference article about Music Director Salaries: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/paying-the-piper-a-a-consideration-of-church-musicians-salaries