

This I Believe

Austin Menezes has been involved in music his whole life, from when his parents had a "Friday music night" every week to now, and participating in various marching, and concert bands after playing Clarinet for 10 years. With all his experiences in music, Austin believes in its power to unify individuals.

I believe that music and its power to connect people, if only for an instant. Ever since the fifth grade, I have played Clarinet in various musical groups. In the early years of my musical development, I went through the motions of musical education – practice, class, and performance— not stopping to appreciate the impact I was making and not trying to understand what music had, and would, provide for me. It was only really until my freshmen year in high school when I finally learned to appreciate what I was in.

After middle school I decided that I would continue my musical endeavors through high school with the Rancho Bernardo Royal Regiment. During my freshmen year of marching band I had felt as though music was more of something I did for myself in order to relieve stress and express myself. However, this changed the moment the Rancho Bernardo Royal Regiment the field for competition at the Arcadia Tournament of Band. I vividly remember entering the gates, the whole band lined up marching as one. You could see the fire in everyone's eyes as we all looked at the field, ready to show our hard work and talents to the thousands of people watching in the stands.

Marching into a stadium, I could feel the level of cohesiveness that the band had. It was this moment when I was able to realize and appreciate the fact that we were unified through the power of music. Everybody in the band had worked so incredibly hard during the season for this moment, we were all working towards a common goal and this field show performance was the culmination of all our work. We were all from different studies and all had different interests, but we all shared the desire to share our talents with everybody in the stadium to create a shared musical and emotional experience. It was at this moment when I realized music's power to bring individuals from all ethnicities, social classes, and divides, together.

Even today I can see the unifying nature of music: When I came to UC as a freshmen all the way from California, I decided to participate in the UC Bearcat Bands. I was pleasantly surprised that even though I was 2000 miles away from home and a culture I was familiar with, music provided a common thread between me and every other member of the 260-piece band. Music connected us in that we all had a desire to provide music to those around us to create an emotional experience that the viewers were able to share.

I believe music is a universal language though which people can connect to others as they share a common experience that transcends all the divisions of life.