

# RILEY'S RAINFOREST



“Send down... from the clouds of Thy mercy the rains of Thy healing...”

—Bahá'u'lláh

## Explore & Soar: Savor Some Songs

**S**ound, rhythm, and music play a big role in how we experience the world. Try these tips for adding more melodies to your life.



- ☐ Explore different instruments at a music store. Or make your own instrument from recycled materials.
- ☐ Choose an instrument and find out about its history. What culture is it from? How has it changed over time?
- ☐ At a prayer gathering, share music that helps set an inspiring and reverent tone.
- ☐ Get up and dance. Try to feel the rhythm flowing through you. It's a fun way to express your feelings.
- ☐ Listen to a favorite song and write your own lyrics. What words and images come to mind when you hear a happy tune?

## Music: Our Spiritual Food

**D**id you know that you can strengthen your mind, body, and community by listening to music? The Bahá'í writings say that music is “spiritual food for soul and heart.” Current research shows it, too.

When we listen to music we enjoy, our brains release the “feel-good” chemical dopamine, which affects our emotions. So uplifting music can make you feel happier and more energetic. It can help you concentrate and put you in a better mood for learning.

Music is also great for our bodies. It can boost our immune systems and reduce stress and anxiety, which helps us heal. And when we exercise, music gives us extra endurance to keep going. It can distract us from fatigue, which helps us go faster and farther.

Music can enhance our communities, too. Creating or listening

to music together synchronizes our brain waves, which can help us feel more connected. Some studies show that when people listen to music with lyrics that promote kindness, they tend to be more generous. Listening to music with positive lyrics can even help to decrease prejudice toward one another.

So look for ways to make music a part of your healthy routines. Find songs that cheer you up when you're feeling down. Listen to tunes with positive lyrics to make sure you're feeding your brain healthy messages. And find opportunities to connect with friends by sharing music together—whether you're singing, drumming, or listening to the radio. A little music can go a long way toward lifting our spirits.



## Curiosity Canopy



**D**id you know? Music stimulates more areas of the brain than almost any other activity we do. Playing an instrument engages nearly every area of the brain at once! Dr. Anita Collins, a neuroscientist and music educator in Australia, says, “Playing music is the brain's equivalent of a full-body workout.”