

Le Vinh

Mr. Greco

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### *Inside A Musician's Mind*

The clock hand strikes a quarter past midnight, as the music begins to play. A percussive beat begins to echo throughout his room, as Dominic Christiansen grips the drum stick tightly—*thump, thump, thump*. His neighbors begin to hear, but he doesn't care. Inside the comfort of his room, Dominic begins to record a new song to post on Spotify for many to hear. He starts with drums and soon tops it off with guitar and bass. His head bobs to the rhythm of the drums as he begins to record. Dopamine and serotonin begin to flood his brain as he plucks the strings of his guitar. Dominic has become one with his music.

Music has grown so much in the past centuries to be a part of our everyday lives. It helps us focus, it helps us when we are down, when we are up, and also helps some people communicate emotionally. Music helps us get through our toughest workouts, our longest car rides, and can even help people find their true identity. Music has evolved to be an important aspect of life and culture. According to Statista, 68 percent of people ages 18 -34 listen to music every day as part of their daily routine (“Music Listening Habits”). Music has grown to be important to the everyday listener, but have you ever wondered what music means from the perspective of a musician? Dominic, a 17-year-old musician at Los Altos High School shows us his perspective on music from an emotional standpoint and shows us how music can come with many physiological benefits.

Living in Mountain View, California, 17-year-old Dominic creates music and songs to share with listeners on popular music platforms like Spotify or Apple music. Having over 12 thousand plays on sound cloud, Dominic shows his emotional experience from making music for

the past two years. An article created by Rosemary Waldrip, it states that “When we analyze our musical tastes, we begin to understand just how far-reaching and interconnected our passions are” (“We Are What We Listen To”). Before music, Dominic was playing baseball for his league during middle school but soon stopped after he realized that baseball was getting finite about technique. Dom wanted to be the best at baseball, but Dominic knew that he would have to follow advice to be the best. Despite already being good at baseball, Dominic had set out for a new passion, and that passion was to become a musician. He stated that “creating new music is like creating a new sport in a way, that when you create a song or anything, you end up following your advice and you are by default the greatest player of all time”. In Dominic's mind, the reason for his sudden switch in finding a passion for music instead of baseball was the desire to be the best at something. For Dominic, music was a way for him to find himself as a musician, rather than a baseball player.

Dominic's passion quickly grew as he got more and more interested in music. From just the comfort of his room. He was able to create 4 songs, all of which got almost 60,000 plays on different platforms. But Dominic didn't always do it on his own. At the beginning of his music career, Dominic was able to build many relationships. The most notable relationships came from his family. Music has ultimately brought Dominic closer to his family, especially his dad, and music has been a tool for him and his dad to bond and communicate. In an interview, Mark Christiansen, Dominic's father, had stated that “ever since Dominic was little, he had always hated talking on the phone, but music is a great way to bond, in a way that is very well understood, to understand the world.” Despite the difficulties Dominic found when bonding with his dad, music had ultimately brought Dominic closer to him, in ways unimaginable. Music can be used to communicate and form bonds by sharing your emotions and feelings towards a specific song. As stated by author Jill Suttle “when we try to sync with others musically—keeping the beat or harmonizing, for example—we tend to feel positive social feelings towards those with whom we're synchronizing ( Four Ways Music Strengthens Social

Bonds) . ” This is most definitely true for Dominic and his dad's relationship. When Dominic was younger, Dominic loved Metallica, and the video game Rock Band, which he founded over with his dad. Despite the two not communicating socially, they were communicating over the synchronization of playing music together, which allowed them to become closer and bond in a way where talking wouldn't do alone. This in the end strengthened their bond, something that music can truly do.

Although amassing 4 successful songs, Dominic still views himself as “ not good enough”. In a recent interview, he stated that “ I am a very average singer, and not the most incredible singer. Self doubt is a common trait among most successful musicians. Dominic is a very talented musician, but he undervalues his talent. This ultimately puts him in a state of mind to over achieve when it comes to music. When creating a good song, he mashes many of his ideas together, taking different drum patterns and guitar patterns and putting them together into one. He states that “ although it might not sound good half the time you create music, you'll always find a way to make it work. That's the beauty of music”. This is what led Dominic to his success.

Dominic's early success grew as time went on, but not without any challenges. Throughout his time making music, Dominic had experienced days and nights where he struggled to put anything out. This includes playing or even mixing music. Dominic had stated that “ it is very difficult to play music sometimes. It's almost like I have to force myself to do it sometimes although I enjoy doing it. It's so much easier to sit down and watch a sitcom and harder to pick up guitar sometimes even if it's inches away.” Dominic shows how motivation can be a problem from time to time. Although he enjoys music, there are days where he just can't seem to find what makes him tick. So his advice to young musicians is to “ keep pushing, and create something even though half the stuff you make will kind of suck “. This mindset that Dominic had set for himself, demonstrates his cognitive thinking as a musician. Even at times when he feels stuck, and when thoughts fog up his brain, he will always find a way to push

through and create something special for people to listen to. It stated that “Passion for **music** is not enough to achieve a career in **music**, practicing every day is what helps one to grow and improvise in **music**. By practicing daily, a **musician** rises above others” (“Common Characteristics of Successful Musicians”). This is what sets a difference between success and failure. The people who strive for success will always push themselves to past their limits and work hard no matter how unmotivated they are. Dominic demonstrates just that through his daily music practice, and strives to become better than he was the day before. “ you just have to do it “ as Dominic would say.

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