

# Playing Music Not the Same as Therapy

## Letters

I was touched by "Thanks for the Melodies" (Nov. 8) and am confident that the Los Angeles Jewish Symphony's project was well intended, lovingly executed and as a person who loves music, I know the value of live music can be enormous, multidimensional and lasting.

I was disappointed, however, by the blurring of the boundary between music performance and music therapy. The ethical issues this raises and by there being no mention of the professional discipline of music therapy.

More than 6,000 music therapists currently work with diverse clinical populations in a variety of settings in this country. Almost half of these serve older adults (many with Alzheimer's and other types of dementia) in nursing homes, psychiatric facilities, adult day health-care programs, hospitals, board and care homes and retirement facilities.

Music therapists are intimately familiar with the associative and other powers of music, are knowledgeable about brain functioning, including accessing long-term memory, and are trained and competent in the exploration and containment of the often powerful feelings evoked by such memories. Interventions are selected and carried out thoughtfully, with attention to the special needs, strengths and vulnerabilities of the consumer of music therapy services.

When a resident is told to "let the sound take you to the emotional places," the person attending this directive has a responsibility to provide appropriate processing of such emotions.

Let us all who have a passion for music and talents to share continue to do what we do best, making certain that our roles remain

within the scope of our professional training and practice.

LAURA KANOFSKY  
Board-certified music therapist  
Licensed clinical social worker  
Santa Monica

## Bamboo Nightmare in Studio City

Regarding "Bamboo May Be Trendy, but It's Not Beloved by All" (Nov. 9): We owned a home in Studio City that was next to the former home of an actor who became infatuated with the "tropical look" when filming the original "Mutiny on the Bounty," or so the story went.

Subsequent owners did nothing to discourage his bamboo plantings which, of course, invaded neighboring yards. We would come home on summer evenings to find shoots as tall as a foot that had grown up through my backyard grass since the night before. I would attack them, breaking them off down to the runner and would apply Roundup with a turkey baster to avoid hurting the grass. Finally we dug a 4-foot-deep trench all along the property line and filled it with steel reinforced concrete, to a height of 12 inches over the grade. This barrier also served as a foundation for a new fence. Then we dug up the entire backyard and manually pulled out every shred of bamboo we could find and had it carted to a dump, where I am sure there is today a beautiful stand of cane. That solved our problem.

I hope never to have anything to do with bamboo—except when it

has been transformed into a fly rod.

RAY BERGEN  
San Pedro

## Doraemon Is the Name of a Cartoon Cat, Not Candy

I noticed with interest a reference in the article by Leslie Komauko ("Candy in Pithy Packaging," Oct. 31) about Doraemon, the ultra-popular and well-loved robot cat in Asia. Children and adults of all ages in Asia are familiar with the lovable cat in his own cartoon. Doraemon is not the name of the candy mentioned but rather the label just like Batman gumdrops or Mickey Mouse ears. Doraemon, by the way, is a cat robot from the future that defies the laws of physics with his magical pocket from which anything can be retrieved and has done so for more than two decades.

SHARMIZA MUHAMMAD  
Los Angeles

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# Snuggling Up to a Fireplace Make-Over

Home • Design experts offer advice on how you can spruce up the hearth of your home.

By PATRICIA DANE ROGERS  
WASHINGTON POST

Fireplace season has arrived, stirring thoughts about how to give the hearth of the home a little visual crackle.

In many older houses, fireplaces were graced with handsome woodwork and architectural detailing. In lots of newer homes, condos and town houses, though, the fireplace isn't much more than a hole in the wall with minimal framing and a serviceable red brick surround. But there are ways, short of demolition, to embellish an existing fireplace.

Before embarking on any redo, remember that certain fireplace dimensions are set by local building codes. County code determines the size of the opening, based on the size of the flue. And most codes specify a masonry surround six to 12 inches wide between the edge of the firebox and any wood or other combustible material.

Three main fireplace components are candidates for makeover: the mantel, the surround and the hearth.

Victoria Neale, an interior designer in the District of Columbia, gave a skimpy mantel stronger presence by building it up with a chunky piece of ready-made crown molding. "I used traditional molding to make a shelf big enough for a hefty pair of candlesticks," Neale says. "Beefing up the mantel improved the proportions, making the fireplace a legitimate focal point."

Neale says plenty of sources offer ready-made decorative elements that can dress up a plain-faced mantel.

Plain woodwork around the firebox can be given architectural richness with ornaments like rosettes and medallions, or trim like Greek key and dentil molding strips. Baseboard molding can be added to create plinths on the vertical supports, called legs. Many such decorative additions, including fluting for pilasters, can be found at Home Depot and Lowe's.

But Alexandria, Va., architect Robert Bentley Adams says the mother of all troves is a Chicago-

based mail-order house that's been around since 1887. The Decorators Supply Corp.'s catalogs include 14,000 historically correct architectural ornaments. Catalogs cost \$5 ([www.decoratorssupply.com](http://www.decoratorssupply.com) or (773) 847-6300).

When it comes to the masonry framing the fireplace—often predictable red brick and sometimes soot-stained to boot—marble, slate or ceramic tiles can be used as cover-ups. Thin tiles can be applied directly to the face of brick; thicker tiles may require temporarily removing the mantel.

Neale hid the Design Center surround under mirror mottled with spray-on oven cleaner so it would look aged. "I left it on a few minutes and wiped it off."

If the existing hearth is structurally stable and flush with the floor, it can also be covered with a new material. But Neale advises that it's better to remove old material so the replacement will be as level as possible. You can always repeat the material used for the surround, but if the surround is in patterned tile, Neale votes for something less busy on the hearth. Slate or marble in white or light beige would be easier to live with, she says.

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