Isidori, De musica, 27

Quid possit musica.

1. Itaque sine musica nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta, nihil enim est sine illa. Nam et ipse mundus quadam harmonia sonorum fertur esse compositus, et coelum ipsum sub harmoniae modulatione revolvitur.

Musica movet affectus, provocat in diversum habitum sensus.

2. In proeliis quoque tubae concentus pugnantes accendit; et quanto vehementior fuerit clangor, tanto fit fortior ad certamen animus. Siquidem et remiges cantus hortatur. Ad tolerandos quoque labores musica animum mulcet, et singulorum operum fatigationem modulatio vocis solatur.

3. Excitos quoque animos musica sedat, sicut legitur de David, qui a spiritu immundo Saulem arte modulationis eripuit. Ipsas quoque bestias, necnon et serpentes, volucres, atque delphinas, ad auditum suae modulationis musica provocat. Sed et quidquid loquimur, vel intrinsecus venarum pulsibus commovemur, per musicos rhythmos harmoniae virtutibus probatur esse sociatum.

The power of music

1. So without music there can be no perfect knowledge, in fact there is nothing without it. For even the universe itself is said to have been put together with a certain harmony of sounds, and the very heavens revolve under the guidance of harmony.

Music moves feelings and provokes the senses to different behaviors.

2. In battle the resounding trumpet fires the soldiers and the louder is its blare the more are their souls strengthened for the strife. The same way, singing encourages oarsmen. Music soothes the soul so that it can better endure the labors and the melody of a song lightens the weariness of every kind of work.

3. Music relieves also altered minds as it's told that David delivered Saul from an unclean spirit with the art of melody. Music also stirs the very beasts, even serpents and birds and dolphins, to want to hear its melody. But everything we speak about or everything which we are inwardly moved by, as seen in the beating of our veins, is proved to be the virtues of harmony through musical rhythms.

Translated by Lara