

THE POWER OF MUSIC!

" I tell you, I doubt if I would have become president if I hadn't had music as a child. It taught me discipline, it gave me self-confidence, it gave me both order and creativity.....and it gave me a sense of teamwork and a sense of individual achievement, which is a hard thing to get in the same place. So, I fell very strongly that this is important." - former US President Bill Clinton

From: Douglas Elbinger, Contributor to ENN
Published April 16, 2010 08:03 PM

Bill Clinton Opens Enviro-Expo in Windsor , Ontario

Former US President Bill Clinton got a warm welcome from the mixed American and Canadian audience that paid up to \$175 to hear his keynote speech at the first annual Essex County (Ontario) Enviro-Expo. The former president spoke to a nearly full house of 3000, at the Caesars Windsor Convention Center in downtown Windsor. Citing a myriad of world challenges; hunger, water, terrorism, climate change, and global economics, Clinton said all solutions point to the development of sustainable energy on a global scale.

The following is an excerpt from his interview:-

Q. Thank you for the question, Andrea. Mr. President, this is the last question, and I know that, seeing some of your prior interviews, you talked about how sometimes music played such an important part in your life early on, and what a great sax player you were and you could have been a professional musician if you didn't go into public service, and by the way, my brother and I, we talk about this all the time, what a great sax player you were.

President Clinton: 'Were' is the operative word here. I still play a little bit but I'm not very good any more.

Q. The question is: We know that music played a big part in your life. Do you support music education in public schools from kindergarten to Grade 12?

President Clinton: Oh, absolutely. I think, look, I know that a lot of schools are strapped for budgets, and in the United States in the last 20 years we've had all kinds of schools drop their general music programs and their physical education programs with predictable consequences for both. But let's just talk about music for a minute. First of all, there is a lot of evidence that our brain structure forms early and then changes in terms of increasing capacity only in response to stimuli. And all of our brains work differently but we have huge amounts of research now that there are some people who literally learn better when exposed to music, that it increases your imagination, increases your capacity. I used to have arguments all the time with the then Prime Minister of Israel. He's now the Defense Minister, Ehud Barak. He was a concert-level pianist and I was just sort of an average jazz saxophone player, but I think it's better in politics to be an average jazz man than a concert level pianist because I can ad lib and you gotta be able to ad lib in this business. So we would have these agreements about the relationship of music and structure and composition. I tell you, I doubt if I would have become president if I hadn't had music as a child. It taught me discipline, it gave me self-confidence, it gave me both order and creativity, which is a hard thing to get in the same place. And it gave me a sense of teamwork and a sense of individual achievement, which is a hard thing to get in the same place. So, I fell very strongly that this is important.

I spend a lot of time now, in my dotage, trying to learn new things, and I spend a lot of time reading science, and the most important for me, anyway, because I'm 63 years old; I don't know how I got to be that old but I am, but anyway, the most important thing for me is that there was a massive new study last year which showed that people can form new neural networks well into their late 60s and early 70s if they do new things, and the main thing cited in the study they said what we found, much to our surprise, was that it was the doing of the new, particularly when music was involved. So that, for example, if you had a physicist you would think that if he wanted to continue forming new neural networks at my age, what he should do is take that handful of physics riddles that have never been solved and just keep working on them - you know, it would be more and more difficult - but what they found was he would form more new neural networks if he took his grandchild to Suzuki piano because it was different, and music is different and re-wires the brain.

So, I just say that. I think that it's also really fun, but I think it's more important than most people realize to offering a complete education, and there are a very significant number of young people whose brains will work better if exposed to it and exposed to it at an early age.

- Thank you, Mr. President.

Few people attain a global perspective on world events as 'citizen' Clinton. As a 'disaster relief' expert, Clinton mentions a litany of environmental catastrophes, natural and man made, that have involved his personal intervention. He has seen first hand the effects of hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis and in each case he advocates opportunities to rebuild in an earth friendly and sustainable way. The plan to rebuild Haiti is such an example.

At several points in his address he reiterated that the consequences for squandering the world's natural resources are too catastrophic to contemplate.

Accelerated warming of the earth, the melting of polar caps and glaciers, and even a trend to burning garbage to generate electricity and eliminate land fills in Europe, energy use and conservation is the major hurdle for all civilization in the 21st century. **The upside to this, Clinton says, is that changing the way we produce and consume energy is the "single greatest economic opportunity since WWII".**

Clinton suggests that merely investing in [energy efficiency](#) to retro fit existing buildings alone, we will create millions of jobs and reduce up to 35% our need for energy ...even before getting to [solar](#) or wind. Retro fitting could eliminate the need for any new conventional (coal) power plants. He also stresses that private citizens must take the lead because governments cannot be relied on to do the job.

Clinton concluded on a humorous note, "when I leave you tonight ...I am going directly to Washington DC to meet the secretary of state regarding an important domestic issue".

[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

2009. Copyright Environmental News Network