

THE JOURNEY

To reconnect the player/teacher to themselves...

To play music, to teach art, indeed, to be a human being in the world, one must have access to one's own emotional core, for it is from that depth that real insight can be offered to audiences and to students. No one is "perfect." We are a mass of opposites, of broken dreams and unfulfilled promises. We are like Ibsen's Brand, unforgiving and imperfect. Tragically, when we teach and when we play music, we present ourselves as flawless and exemplary...perhaps even immaculate. But great art is like ourselves, filled with the opposition of living, capturing our highest and lowest moments as human beings in our struggle to survive our journey.

It is simple. To play, to perform, to teach anything of worth, we (the whole imperfect, wonderful, exasperating, heroic, terrified, hopeful human being) *must* show up in the moment. If we are not there, how can we ever expect our audiences and our students to have the courage to confront and to be present with all that they are?

To reconnect the player to the composer...

Unless we believe that playing music is only playing perfect notes in perfect meter, we must enter the "world" of the composer. The notes they have left behind for us to play are the map of their soul and their history. What we are shows through in what we do... and nowhere is that truer than what we discover in the compositions of any composer...of any artist.

This is not an academic exercise to be written and discussed. It is, rather, the nonverbal physical, passionate act of actually playing what is written, and finding in our emotional connection, the answers in tone.

To reconnect the player to the player...

The first act of Music is to communicate. Music is a simple conversation, or a Grand discussion, or a simple dance, or the overwhelming tumult of thousands in celebration and revolt...but it is always communication. To play music with fellow musicians is often times more intimate an act than the moments we experience with loved ones.

We spend our lives trying to communicate to other human beings...to our friends, to our colleagues, to our spouses...to anyone who

will listen. We tell lies and are believed, we tell the truth and are denied. The entire act of communication frustrates us for most of our existence. We are terrified of the depth of intimacy always required for meaningful interchange.

What we cannot do in life, we *must* do in our art. And the truth is that it is easier in art than in life. In art, the trembling, profound moments are ethereal and need only last for the moment of the performance of the composition we are playing. Those truths are given to each other and to the audience with whom we are also attempting to communicate and to touch. In life, what we say and do reverberates on us for all time. In performance, the reverberation occurs in our audience's lives. We are actually *safer in our art than we are in life*, so we really have no excuse for not being present in the moment of performance and creation.

To reconnect the player(s) to the audience...

There is only one reason to play music and that is to transmit the enormity of the truth, emotion and insight that great music provides. Public performance affords the most profound opportunity to communicate those elements to other human beings.

The audience sits expectantly in the dark waiting to be touched and moved in ways that their lives do not provide for them. Too often, the audience witnesses a private act on the stage that has little to do with their presence in the hall.

Like any conversation, performance is a two way street. Both participants must speak and both participants must listen. Anything less becomes simply a lecture, which provides information, but risks having little emotional connection.

We come to performance as audience members, to have, in the safety of the darkened hall, experiences that our lives do not provide. We are open in that moment and can be touched in ways hardly even imagined by the performers. Our lives could be changed and illuminated by what we might experience in the concert hall, if only the performers would take the responsibility to create the great circle of communication and choose contact and relationship with their fellow musicians, and, as an ensemble, with their audiences.

Godspeed...