

Recording

Saturday, March 8, 2008

My guitar playing is cooked and ready. Where can I take it now? Are concerts the only answer, challenge, direction? Must I now make public appearances? How, where, and why? But what else is there?

Or make my CDs?

These CDs would not promote my (ha, former) weaknesses, namely my old nemesis, Alhambra, Leyenda, Villa-Lobos Prelude NO. 4, Bach Prelude in D minor, and Recuerdos de Sevilla.

Well, I might even (perhaps I should) record these pieces just for the hell of it, for personal reasons. I don't have to release them, or even put them on the CD itself. Perhaps for my files only. We'll see. But I should definitely record them!

Or should I use this CD (these CDs), to prove myself once again. But have I not been down that road for years? Yes. Therefore, not. Do not use them. Chose only the pieces I can play musically. Prepare my program.

Would these be separate CDs? On one side, classical and flamencan guitar, on the other, only folk songs?

I just about finished my folk dance CD and book project.

Is recording now staring me in the face? Is that my next challenge, my next step?

I'd start with a classical guitar CD. (Then perhaps later, do a folk song CD.)

Commercial purposes for the classical guitar CD: For the wedding and club date market. (The Andy Wander idea).

I feel partly sick over this recording "decision." Does that mean it's the right one? Probably.

Monday, March 10, 2008

There is an answer to morning and daily visits of depression. It is work! To be overwhelmed by overwhelming work. And the more constantly overwhelming the better!

I had it once. Years ago, as I remember, I conquered this these morning bouts of depression with the discovery and implementation of my miracle schedule. Indeed, it worked. It filled me with purpose, and ultimately, by driving me daily forward, with hope and joy. I constantly felt I was improving in something; I was progressing, on my way somewhere. And this is a good, hope-filled, healthy, positive, desirable, and wonderful feeling. As Mihaly Csikszentmihaly said in his great book Flow: I'd be reaching for happiness by ever extending myself slightly above my boundaries.

This means returning to the miracle schedule with a vengeance! It means reaching into the past for inspiration, going back to my inspirational and motivational roots with a vengeance.

No doubt, I had to take this winter – two-to-three-month break. I needed to fall apart, to destroy my old body and mind, in order to resurrect it in new, changed, and revitalized form later on. I needed to get sick in order to get healthy.

Well, now with a cleaner, fresher, untraumatized mind, I am ready to return. I'm ready to get healthy again.

How?

Knees, Legs, and Performance Paralysis

Strangely, both knees are beginning to hurt. Recently, I also had scattered pains appearing in my legs as well.

Possible psychological, Sarnoian reasons: (Very important: Notice the introduction of doubt in my word "possible." In order for Sarnoian knees to get better, I have to eliminate all doubt. I have to know. beyond a shadow of a doubt, that is the reason for my hurt.)

I could subtly be trying to cripple myself, to hinder and even destroy my dancing ability so I won't have to face the fear of outside criticism, failure, performance, and competition.

It could be a disguised form of performance anxiety.

Could this have something to do with my "coming out," the publishing of my 46 Folk Dances, and the subsequent workshops and teaching I will be doing? After all, I would now have to see myself as a "real" and professional folk dance teacher! The pressure is (might be) on to compete. (Very important: Notice again the introduction of the doubt words "might be". In order for Sarnoian knees to get better, I have to eliminate all doubt. I have to know. beyond a shadow of a doubt, that is the reason for my hurt.)

Try dropping "possible" and "might be" from my vocabulary.

Competition

Gaida is a from Greek Macedonia.

During the past few months, I've eliminated my macho gaida squats. Why? I'm afraid I'll hurt myself if I do them. What is one of the root causes of this fear? My hesitation and fear of competing with Lee.

Well, let's face it: I am competing with him. And that's a good thing. This competition pushes me, motivates me, raises me up. Thank you, Lee. But I hate you, too. Can I stand being so split? Yes. I'll have to. There is no choice. It is the nature of improvement. I can either compete with myself or others. Besides, others are really a reflection of myself. Thus my competition with Lee reflects only my own desires.

Let's face it: On one level, with the publishing of my 46 Folk Dances, I am going out to compete with all the other folk dance teachers. Just as I love and hate them, they will love and hate me. That is the nature of competition. Well, from my point of view,

as long as we don't kill each other, it will raise us up.

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Pain and Writing

How to get the feel good, warm bath, luxuriate-in-my-body feeling back in my body, dance, yoga, running, and life.

I used to have it. And this only two or so months ago. I lost it during the past winter, along with my traumas.

As a post-traumatic person, how to get it back, or forward, in this, my next and new life?

I used to have joy in my body. Where did it go? Why did it disappear? And so suddenly?

Are my leg pains really an extension of my old "folk dance ankle?" Am I fooling myself? Have fears of performance really never gone away, only been pushed aside, denied, and forgotten for awhile? I once said, if I didn't worry about money, I'd worry about my health. Well, I'm not worried about money anymore. But I am concerned about my body. Was it a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Does this mean I have a secret need to worry about something, that I have an unreplaceable amount of "fear energy" that must find an outlet somewhere? Is it presently finding it in my body?

There seems to be nothing I can do, or even want to do about these pains. I don't want to see doctors, healers, or other "experts." Is this an arrogant attitude, or is it simply true? Basically, I believe no one can or will be able to cure me but me.

The only thing I can do about these pains is write about them. Use them as a subject, a motivation, a reason to turn out my four pages a day. Write about them. This seems to be a solution I believe in. Plus, I'm doing it anyway.

Does writing cure my pain? No, but it helps. And, most important, it gets me to write! That is always good. And truth is, like dancing, when I am focusing on my

writing, pains disappear.

What about my new pin point pain in my right tailor's bunion? Why is that there? Well, I really don't care why it is there. My only concern is: What, if anything, can I do about it? Of course, I can start by writing about it!

Beauty and Pain

This is the mystics joy-through-suffering view.

Secretly, I believe it is courageous and heroic to deal with and bear my suffering, pains, trials, and tribulations. It is heroic, courageous, transcendental, and God-bearing to be on the cross. So am I Christian at heart? Probably. But it goes with my Judaism, too.

In fact, I wonder: Is that why I create my pains in the first place? In order to suffer? When I do, I become courageous and heroic in my own eyes. And, in the process, I hope to transcend myself and see God.

Is that the hidden payback, the secret benefit of pain?

Wow. Deep stuff here.

That's why I don't want to go to the doctor. I don't really want to be cured. I don't want them (even if they could) to take my suffering away. I'd rather "use my pain" to make great personal discoveries.

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

What a Day!

Well, finally I'm afraid of something. I'm afraid, actually terrified, that my body will not hold up, that my body will betray me and fall apart. Finally the transfer from money to health, from financial fear to health fear, has taken place.

Truth is, since I returned from Greece, I've been secretly looking for a new fear. Without a fear, even a terror, to focus on, I feel strangely lost. I figured a new fear

would motivate and energize me.

I even miss my panics. Yes, you can be paralyzed with panic, but they are also incredible driving forces.

I don't know what I can do about this new health and body fear. I don't even know if I should do anything about it. Maybe just feeling it, learning to appreciate the force and power of its energy, is enough.

Indeed, I miss my motivation. All my successes in life, especially during the past year, have killed my financial and artistic fears, but with them, my motivation. It's the double-edged sword of success, my attitude towards success, my view of success, and my desire for that success. Truth is, I always saw success as a resting place (a final resting place?), a place where I could finally stop pushing, trying, making the effort, and place where I would be free of all burdens. On a financial level, having lots of money, or enough money so as "not to worry" defined this success place. Well, in my mind, I finally got there. What a bore! What a dull, lifeless place!

And speaking of this phrase, "not to worry," I heard it so many times from my mother and father. "Become a teacher," they would say. "Then you won't have to worry about money, then you can do what you want." Ugh, ugh, ugh! How I hated that attitude! And yet, it probably stuck in the bottom of my mind. Indeed, the secure life of a public school teacher was indeed a resting place. True, you had eight months of slavery, but at least you had the summers, holidays, and weekends off. I, as an artist/entrepreneur, am never off. I work all the time, summers, holidays, weekends, during the week, always – and I love it! But, of course, I have to smooth out the psychological bumps from my past, and dealing with this success/motivation syndrome is part of it.

In fact, maybe this new and present hurting-leg syndrome is a subtle form of visit to the old neighborhood where I hear the voice of my mother, and father in the background, saying, "Become a teacher. You won't have to worry." It's as if worrying is the worst thing that can happen to you. Worry itself, is a sign of failure. Smiling and

happy is a sign of competence, confidence, and success.

But I don't believe any of this (although secretly and deep in my brain, probably part of me does harbor this "don't worry" burden from childhood). I see worry as the sign of the hero, and taking part in the courageous artist-entrepreneur fight for self-survival. Indeed, my parents took, what I consider to be, the easy route. They gave up on their art and entrepreneurial skills to become "mere" school teachers, teaching bureaucrats, part of the great deadening Board of Education (which we always called the Bored of Education.) Yes, although I love and appreciate them and the fact they took care of us, brought us up, clothed, fed, and educated us. I still have total disdain for their unheroic way of making a living. I hate to say it, but it's true. And they wanted to impose, or at least convince me, to follow the same path. Ugh, ugh, ugh!

So my fear and worry have returned. Physical fears, body and health fears, fears that my body will fall apart. Then I will not be able to function as a folk dance teacher, or anything else.

Are they true? I don't know.

Do I want them? Maybe.

The artist (and artist-entrepreneur) as hero. The board of education school teacher as totally emasculated, giving up on his dreams. Sadly, that was my father. A sad aspect of him. It hurts me deeply to say it since I loved him so.

When you are emasculated, your legs (among other things, of course) are cut out from under you. Witness the relationship between my own legs, teaching folk dancing, teachers in general, Bored of Education teachers, mother and father saying, "Don't worry." A "don't worry" person is totally emasculated. A person living in but daily dealing with his fears, is a hero. Leading the courageous life, fighting the demons. He is my hero.

Strangely, the pains are draining out of my legs. They are beginning to feel better! Amazing.

“Sudden leg cure.” I’m “suffering” from SLC: Sudden leg cure syndrome. I’m afraid to believe how miraculous this is.

Is Sarno totally right? Is my problem truly all psychological, all psychosomatic? Too good to be true. Nevertheless, it could be true. Notice the “could be” of doubt creeping in. Yet I’ve turned the corner, Doubt is fading as I move above 50% into the believing category.

Is my tailor’s bunion pain part of my leg problem? Or is it a separate category? Personally, I believe it belong to my leg problem. Truth is, as I remember, I didn’t notice it until my leg problems began. Legs and bunion hurt (should) go in tandem. We’ll see.

Notice as I got up from this writing, I felt a sudden pain in my left knee. That means I’m onto something, and that is, I believe, the total relationship between leg pain and bunion hurt. They are together as one.

Again, it is a question of believing the shocking, miraculous messages from my mind.

Now I wonder if all my pains will miraculously disappear. Even the hypothenar muscle pains in my right thumb.

Somehow, strangely, left shoulder is not included in this constellation. I wonder why. Perhaps I can see it as related to the folk dance Florica shoulder hold.

Wow! I just leaped up from my chair. No knee or leg pain at all! Amazing.

Thursday, March 13, 2008

Business Dream

Reevaluating the Tour Business

What I also do not presently have is a powerful, gut-wrenching, dynamic business dream. Believe it or not, the tour business was such a dream. So was making money.

The tour business has dulled out; so has making money.

And somehow, I have also lost my zip for selling my books, CDs, and concerts since they don't make as much money as tours.

Is it possible to dream a new business dream? Are my dynamic business days over? Why have I given up on concerts, readings, and book sales? Is that why my body aches so?

What would Don Quixote do?

Do I need an (another) impossible dream?

My desire to learn Slavic, Semitic, Latin, Germanic, and other families of language, read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in ancient Greek, these were once parts of my impossible dreams. (They were born out of the tour business dream.)

This morning my business and financial imagination does not go beyond repeating the past, doing it again, more of the same. Thus I am not open to new things. I am living in my past glories.

Maybe I'm still in retreat and recovery from last year's smash business success. Maybe the pain of its ending has not yet subsided. Maybe I'm still angry it ended, mad that it is over. (Check out Sarno's repressed anger and its ache distractions.) Could this be right? Could I simply be furious that such incredible tour business glories are all over, ended, done? Have I, all along, denied the intensity of this anger, and my sadness that it is over? Has my mourning lasted so long? Does it take me so many months to face and realize this? Possibly.

I must and want to move on. Am I ready? And to what?

It all started after the Greek tour ended.

Let's look at the chronology:

Last November, after I returned from Greece, I spend a month in shock recovering from my incredibly successful sales year. During January, I "distracted" myself, by taking violin lessons; I also delved into my ancient classical music trauma – which I resolved. In February, I cut the Gordian knot of what I called my money trauma. This was coupled with the new semi-business distraction of booking my Raleigh folk dance workshop. This motivated me to write up all my dances, and put them in a book 46 Folk Dances, and produce 3 CDs to sell with it. Indeed, this business project was pleasant and good. But, since I know folk dancing never pays much money, it still ranks as semi. Along with violin lessons, and delving into my classical music trauma, I could consider it another form of tour business ending, anger "distraction."

Notice: During this entire post-Greek tour period I developed new body pains. They seemed to grow worse as the months progressed. I got sick in January, my legs fell apart in February, in March, the whole system seems to have shut down. During all these months, my left shoulder hurt. So did my right hypothenar thumb. I don't believe these sudden physical crashes are due to old age. Basically, these pains were such a puzzle.

In Sarnoina terms, could all these "new" pains be the result of repressed rage? Rage that I lost all my tour glories and goodies, rage it's all over, rage it has all ended?

Does the tour business really supply the most tension and thrills for me? What a terrible question for an artist. And this especially if the answer is yes.

I once decided to give up my tour business. Why? It was so frustrating and painful. But after I did, I got quite depressed. I had given up the frustrations, but also its possibilities of glory. Finally, I returned.

Am I at a similar place now?

No question, business and sales brings out my aggressive, out-going, fighting side. (My artistic side is inward, imaginative, dreamy, away from the world.) Perhaps by my present giving up the tour business attitude, I am losing, giving up, my vitally important aggressive and fighting outlet. These aggressive energies are turning inward on me, destroying my body, and creating its aches and pains.

Evidently, for survival, I must put my aggressive, fighting business mind on a pole. The tour business may be that pole.

Years ago, I gave up the tour business because of frustration and lack of success. This time I'm "giving up" the tour business because of success. Each time I give up, I end mad, frustrated, and depressed.

Although I hate to admit it (I'm an artist, after all), the tour business is very important, nay vital, for my psyche. This is the second time I've given it up. Neither time worked.

The arts are pleasant, fun, and worthy, folk dancing, guitar concerts, book writing, all are worthy, wonderful, fulfilling pursuits.

But evidently, I feel like they are not worth fighting for. There's just not enough money in it.

What a statement. What an admission. But it may be true, nevertheless.

Back to Fundamentals

You can't go backwards.

But you can go back to fundamentals.

That's where I want to go.

Back to the fundamentals of yoga. Running, and the others, too.

On Dance Descriptions

Writing dance descriptions is like writing poetry, writing a poem. It takes just as much time and care, caution and maturation.

Wednesday, March 19, 2008

Rebirth in the making. Wouldn't it be strange, ironical, and even right, if it started with Poland?

Was my drop-in visit to the Poland Folk Arts store in Santa Fe preordained? Was it a mere accident that they happened to have Pan Tadeusz by Adam (first man) Mickiewicz, a book that for years, I've wanted to see, and even read? And what about Art in Poland? The store owner told me it was a good deal, a good price at \$20. I saw it weighed a lot, plus would I ever read a book on art? But it was accompanied by mucho history, so again, I thought, I'll buy it. Maybe through it, I'll get interested in art, and even start reading and focusing on history again. All this will help my renaissance, my rebirth, and perhaps it will start its ascent in a Polish key.

Also, every morning of New Leaf writing in Santa Fe has begun with words like "a new star," "fresh beginning," "renaissance." What is happening?

I'm on the edge of a new start. And I could certainly use one.

What about my body? So many new A and P's. And these added to my old ones. Am I dumping garbage from the past, cleansing myself, unconsciously taking the necessary first steps towards rebirth?

David said I "must" move to a new level. Well, he didn't use the word "must," I did. In any case, it was a world beyond money and material concerns, a world filled with brilliance, dynamism, excitement, and calm, focused fire.

I'd love to enter such a world. Indeed, it would fulfill a dream beyond dreams.

Idea: Turn Them All into Poetry

Wouldn't it be strange if the (new) pains behind my knees were, in some mysterious way, related to writing? Wouldn't it be strange if now, they disappear after diving into this new commitment to focused editing of both New Leaf 6-8, and Zany.

(Notice how I have quickly moved from "Turn Them All into Poetry" idea to "commitment.")

Writing-wise, this is a new direction.

To actually desire to slowly, diligently, and with total power of my focused attention, a la the attention I am paying to editing my 46 Folk Dances, is indeed a renaissance of personal power, and a totally new attitude and direction, as well.

The pain of making a non-monetary commitment, the “pain in my knee,” as opposed to “pain in my neck.” Well, actually there is already a pain in my neck, or a pain as expressed by the painful burden in/on my left shoulder.

Dedicating my time and editing effort to writing, to editing my work, a non-paying activity. Can I afford to give myself this pleasure? Is resistance to it being expressed in my knees? Left shoulder, too?

Try this: When pains appear in my knees, or even shoulder, think writing.

In other words, these pains have nothing to do with my knees or shoulder. They have to do with giving myself the pleasure of committing myself to the non-paying activity of writing.

And that is a terror I have been avoiding, refusing to deal with, unconsciously, fearing to face: Giving up control of my financial flow. If I allow myself to dive into writing with full commitment, I’ll lose my focus on selling, making money, and supporting myself. This fearful focus began when I got married and has held me in place over forty years.

Giving up such an attitude, climbing to the next level, diving into the next world, is certainly a giant leap.

I left Teaneck and flew to Santa Fe as a folk dance teacher; I left Santa Fe and returned to Teaneck as a writer.

A professional writer.

What does that mean? Or rather, what does it mean to me?

I’m looking for a new challenge, business, even career.

I will always write.

But now add: Sell my writing!

Process:

I Need a Big Dream!

Yesterday, I finished my 46 Folk Dances, a giant project which has consumed my mind over the past two or even three months is completed. Done! Finally, a breath of freedom.

Last night, to help me celebrate, I took a long Spring walk. After I crossed over Route 4, I had a strange new vision: I saw hundreds of seeds freshly planted on a lawn. Then the lawn itself became my knee. I pictured these seeds, now planted in my knees, spreading to my legs, ankles, and entire body. Suddenly, they burst through the ground, turning first into green buds (stalks), then into blossoming flowers.

My legs, ankles, knees, and thighs were bursting to create new dances! Soon my shoulders and thumb joined in. Soon my entire body began breaking its chains, leaning, lurching, jumping, yearning, poised to erupt, ready to burst into an awesome stretch of unfettered creativity.

During the post-Greek tour period, my mind had been held down, restrained, fettered, and imprisoned. Could that have been the deep-down reason for the past months of aches and pains? Now, with the completion of 46 Folk Dances, the seeds planted during the post-Greek tour are suddenly ready to burst free!

Byzantine Art and Architecture

Something different. As I drift into tour specialization (seems for next year, the next few years, I'll be focusing on Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey), I need something new to study, inspire, uplift, and interest me. How about studying Byzantine architecture? Or even Byzantine art? In English. (Throw in some Bulgarian, Greek, and Turkish.)

The Radical Jumping Method

I am working differently.

I call my new method the radical jumping method. I hope to make this totally acceptable.

What is the radical jumping method? It means without any problem, effort, or pressure, jumping from one activity to another.

Thus, when tired of writing, I jump to guitar; when tired of guitar, I jump to violin; when tired of violin, I jump to Bulgarian language study; when tired of Bulgarian language, I jump to yoga exercises; when tired of yoga, I jump to business desk work; when tired of business desk work, I jump to sales. Etc.

The radical jumping method means becoming aware of the moment of fatigue, catching it as soon as possible, then jumping to another or next activity. It is a comfortable, new, sensible, and workable method.

Hatred of Deadlines

Don't deny your (own) hatreds. Better to use them to fulfill your dreams!

How?

I'll take dealing with deadlines as an example:

I don't hate deadlines. But they make me uncomfortable.

On the other hand, maybe I should hate deadlines. Then plug into that hatred. After all, hatred has great power. Maybe I should plug into the power and energy of my hatred, and, in the paradox and humorous contradiction of reverse order, use it to fulfill my deadlines!

The above Deadlines and Fears piece is psychologically astute. Understanding my mind and its pole needs, puts me on the cusp of a new Whole-Life Plan.

Next question: What will my new deadlines be?

As a start, I'll need deadlines in all my miracle schedule events.

Fear and Motivation

I am in the process of reviewing Fear and Motivation in a most positive way: Scaring the shit out of myself giving a concert, and this by planning to play my hardest, most challenging of pieces.

Thus my life up ahead can be one of perpetual fear (coupled with) and perpetual motivation! I love it!

Why did I not figure this out before? Why did it take forty years (maybe even longer.) Well, Moses spent forty years in the desert, why not me?

Perhaps this is why I went through the past months of aches and pains, in order to come to grips with this issue, and finally resolve it in such an unusual way. There is also the possibility that for forty years I was disguising, nay hiding, this positive use of energy fear behind the shut-down financial fears. Who knows? In any case, this positive blending of deadlines, fears, and motivation, is a great move forward.

Scaring myself in good. But scaring the shit out of myself is even better. I am onto a secret elixir of motivation. Who knows what other creative ways I can find to motivate myself in the miracle schedule of my life.

Choreographic Madness!

This is cause for celebration: My creative self has merged with my dancing self resulting in a gigantic Choreographic Whole. What a wonderful joy and pleasure.

I wonder if that is why my legs have (and are) aching so. This (creative) choreographic force has been growing within them, swelling, expanding, and finally bursting to be free!

My leg pains are creative pains, growth and expansion pains, choreographic pains.

I am no longer a folk dance teacher; although I have been surrounded, trained,

educated, and imbued with the forms, norms, and traditions of folk dancing, I am no longer bound by them. Over the years, I have imbibed and absorbed them all. They forms are now deeply embedded in my being. Indeed, not only are the part of me, they are now me. The choreographic self is me, and I am the choreographic self.

What does this mean? It means that before every folk dance class I lead and give, I will improvise and create new dances “on the spot.” If they are good, they will grow into fixed choreographies which I will write down. Indeed, in writing my 46 Folk Dances, I have developed a skill, the skill of writing down dances in a manner that is accurate and clean. In fact, they look like poetry on the written page.

My legs ache, They ache with joy, creation, burstings, choreographic madness, and expansion. This is a day to celebrate.

Sunday, April 6, 2008

Folk Singer

We went to Teaneck Performs last night. When I heard the first singer I had a thought, or rather a resigned kind of vision. I won't call it a revelation since it did not feel upward or heaven bound – rather, instead, heavy, earthbound, resigned, yet true and right.

Here it is:

My “work” will be folk singing.

My play, relaxation, whatever you call it, will be classical guitar. My classical guitar playing will move into the same vacation, off-beat, non-public categories as running, yoga, violin, gaida, and perhaps even study.

Why will my “work” be folk singing? First, it is easy and based on my natural talent with people. And this especially leading group songs. No performance fears or anxieties here. It's all easy. Since a “folk performance,” would most likely begin with group singing, it could be dynamic, different, improvised, spontaneous, and fun, too.

My present sadness and heaviness come from dropping my old classical guitarist

self-image and self-concept. But in doing so, I release myself from a huge burden. I free my mind and soul. I no longer have to prove myself. Ultimately, this is all to the good. But since classical guitar training, practice, self-image, along with my constant push and desire to prove I could play, were so much a part of me, I'm sad for their loss, and mourn their death.

I organize and lead groups for tours, weekends, and folk dance classes. As a folk singer, I would and do also lead groups. Leading is one of my natural talents. No performance anxiety there. Concerns, yes. But no big fears.

And it only took seventy years to realize this.

Cold and Sore Throat as Distractions

Trace the globe bitterly.

Truth is, I was doing well until I got sick. I was on the path, on the way, rolling along, fresh shinings in the distance. Daily commitments, daily runs, daily yogas, daily mores, all lined up in a row. A rebirth and reconstitution in the making.

The finale came with a great Friday night of dancing in Darien. Then, boom. I slept only four hours, woke up feeling off-kilter and vaguely miserable, spent the day rewriting my 46 Folk Dances and still feeling vaguely sick with cold and vague sore throat, I nevertheless, went to the Teaneck Artist-Perform concert. There I vowed to become a folk singer.

Sunday morning, I woke up sick and miserable. I spent the day between sleeping, then trying to cure myself by playing violin and guitar.

Now it's Monday morning. I feel vaguely better. . . but not best. All my guts and drive have dribbled from my being. The great highs of rebirth, which came last week, have somehow vanished.

So what happened? And, more important, what will happen?

Time indeed to get back to where I was. Or rather, to move forward to where I was.

Seems every time I find and get a new self-definition, I get sick. Yes, the old body falls apart, disintegrates in sickness, soon to be replaced by a new one, integrated in new and vital healthy pursuits.

Presently, I am between lives. No wonder my passing phase is sickness. But why choose a trickling cold? But notice, no complaints about aches and pains. They are gone. I haven't given them a thought. And I felt so good Friday night as I led the men's version of Reka (Zborenka) and did my squats. In spite of a so-called two weeks of "bad knees," foot aches, and thigh pains, I could still do them! I'm still functioning and dancing. Yes! Thank you, my dance group. Thank you, Michael, for mentally pushing me. I drove home from the dance feeling absolutely glorious! When I got home, I couldn't sleep that night, and. . . I got sick. Is the cold and sore throat my new form of push down, my new way of suppressing the glories of my folk dance excitement? Could it be, in fact, repressing the general excitement of rebirth that I felt all week? Does cold and sore throat now replace aches and pains? Are these my new mental distractions created by my frightened mind to distract me? Frightened by what? Glories of self-growth, dynamic rebirth, and excitement, of course.

Cold, sore throat, sniffles, rivers of snot, all created by my mind as distractions? Could be. In fact, I believe they are.

What would my inner Sarno say?

This psychogenesis of my cold idea is not mentioned in Sarno's book. He does not talk about it, or discount it. It is my own extension. And why not? It is certainly possible. Only I can know, and find out if it is true.

Deep in my heart, and mind, I believe it is. . . .

And it is very "logical" for my mind and personality type. It follows my former psychological patterns: I do try suppressing excitement by creating "other" sicknesses, diseases, or aches and pains.

Why couldn't and shouldn't a cold and sore throat be part of my "protective" arsenal? Throat: I don't want to "talk" about it; cold: bury my feelings under a river of

snot.

Suppression of Excitement

I have been sick three times since I returned from Greece. Always with colds.
(Also aches and pains.)

I have not been sick so often in years. Also, I have been so successful in years.
And this both financially and psychologically. On both levels it has been a breakthrough
year or two.

So why three times sick? Why now?

Knowing my personality, I see it as the usual: Suppression of excitement:
suppression of running wild on the lawn, suppression of success excitement.

What else could it be? Answer: Nothing else.

So what do I do? How do I handle it? Good question. I think self-awareness is
the only answer.

I am right. I gave myself my cold to suppress my excitement. Excitement hit its
height when I spoke to Marjolein after our Friday night dance in Darien. She was so
happy and impressed by the existence and publication my 46 Folk Dances, and the
growth success of our Friday night Darien folk dance group.

I drove home mentally on air. What a great night! What a great group! I am so
proud of myself! How lucky and happy I am!

Then, bango, I got sick the next day. Or rather, I made myself sick the next day.
It's so obvious why.

Me, proud of myself? Whack! What would mother say? Whack, whack.
Smothering and put downs mostly through non-recognition.

Again, self-awareness is the only cure.

Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Is life tightening or expanding? Tightening moves it towards perfection and

perfectionism. Witness the editorial tightening, perfecting, and perfectionism of 46 Folk Dances.

Expansion moves towards editorial openness. What am I talking about here? I'm don't yet quite know. But certainly this sickness whack on the head has caused me to rethink my future. And not, I hate to say it, in a positive way. In fact, this sickness – the third one this year – has thrown my mental fissures for a loop. I'm really off balance, out of kilter, and off key this morning.

Maybe I'm just down from finishing my book. The great cycle of focused folk dance work is over. I'd love to find a new project to lift me. I seemed to have found it a few days ago. But this sudden sickness, cold and sore throat, has destroyed my perspective. I just can't settle for living in a trough.

I need a new project! Resting, taking a vacation, lying down, taking it easy, is no solution.

I'll probably be down until I find one.

Wednesday, April 9, 2008

Hope for Wholeness

Can the performance of my Folk Show bring me wholeness?

I hope so.

How?

The Folk Show brings – or can bring – everything together in one evening, in one show. It's so open-ended, almost anything goes or can go.

Even dance and athletics can dribble in, gaida and violin, too. Readings, ad libs, stories, culture corner, history talks, and linguistics. Zany and my zany personality can be part of the show. In fact, I can even weave in a personal with background and info about myself, and, in the process, sell promote, advertise, and sell my tours! (Aha, that's how!)

Indeed, everything and anything I can think of can be part of the show.

The events and doings of my entire miracle schedule can be put into and be part of this show. In other words, it is a Whole Show.

The Folk Show is a Whole Show. And vice versa.

What's a good name? The Whole Show? The Folk Show? The Folk Show is a Whole Show? The Whole Show is a Folk Show?

How do I get my knees into this show? How do I make my hips part of it? How do I make folk dance steps, and folk dancing, part of it?

In fact, a minor (maybe major) miracle has just taken place. I have finally solved my performance question and problem. A forty-year question was always, Should I start my program with classical guitar or folk singing? With this came the deeper question, Am I a classical guitarist and musician, or a folk singer? Always they felt like two separate programs, two separate moods, and thus basically, incompatible with each other. And then of course, I always wanted to "throw in" other things, readings, ad libs, stories, etc. All different moods, different shows, really,

But with the Folk Show all of these questions have been resolved. How? They don't matter anymore! They are irrelevant and beside the point. Why? Because the program is now about all these things, the whole shebang, a creative, on-the-spot, spontaneous, almost anything goes program. It no longer matters how or where I begin it, or even how or where I end it. It's an entirely different program. Rather than trying to fit the whole into each particular piece, I am now making each piece part of the whole.

Quantity has piled up, Ossa has been piled upon Helion, guitar piece has been piled up folk song, and that upon ad lib, and that upon reading, and that upon gaida piece, and that upon more and more, until suddenly, a qualitative change has occurred. A totally new program, and of course, along with it, a totally new approach to the program.

It's been a breakthrough year. Another big one just occurred. No wonder my body has been falling apart.

I wonder if now my body will start piecing itself together.

I hope so. I started out writing about hope for wholeness.

Thursday, April 10, 2008

Even Deeper?

It's not business as usual.

I am in a new place where I can start with the assumption that nothing works the way it used to. Everything is fresh, new, slow, and different.

Where will I find my hope and direction?

This year I found it by going deeper. During this next year or period, can I find it, or better, will my next direction be, to go even deeper?

Seems I have little desire to go to new places, study new things, explore new venues. How and where then will I learn? How will I keep the miracle aspects of my study miracle schedule? Will it be through even deeper exploration of old places, things, and venues?

Can one go even deeper into Leyenda? Can one focus on one word, and enter so deeply into only one exercise? Can one really sing one song, play one piece, dance one dance, study one language, delve deeply into only one word? Maybe.

Could a key word here be "one?"

My Art Form

(Spontaneous Deliverance: the Most Adventurous and Fun)

Both at the concert, The Folk Show, and the folk dance workshop I teach, I want to be in the position to improvise the whole thing, the create it spontaneously, the build it on the spot out of the human material at hand.

The art form I love and want to present, in concert, folk dance teaching, and even tour leading, is one that is improvised, spontaneous, and created on-the-spot.

In order to do this, I must be prepared to perform, lead, or teach "anything." All my skills and talents must be fresh at my finger tips, ready to use at a moment's notice.

For concerts I must have all my songs, stories, ad libs, bits, solo guitar pieces at my finger tips; same for folk dance teaching: all my dances at toe tips and ready to go.

Then, before my concert or dance teaching begins, as I stand poised and ready to step out on stage, I throw all preparations away, walk out with a blank slate, free and empty mind, and get ready to fly.

This is the best art form for me, the most adventurous, and the most fun!

Friday, April 11, 2008

I Need the Thrill of a New Adventure

Should I put 10G into the market?

I would be doing it simply for thrills, stimulate my interest in something, take a chance, get my blood to, if not boil, at least move a bit.

It would mean admitting and acknowledging that I am bored and stuck. This time around I would not be doing it for the same reasons I did in the past. Then I was on the road of a twenty-five year project, trying to support myself while I became an artist. I also believed I could make money in it. I ended up thinking about it from mucho to constantly; it was both a thrill and a fear. Basically, I liked, nay, loved it!

Yes, I hate to admit it, but I loved the thrills, chills, chances, and deep cyclic learning involved in the stock market. And this even though I lost most of my money.

No question, I miss those chances now. Presently, I am financially, and perhaps even mentally, much more "stable." But this stable state, although vaguely pleasant, is really quite dull. My endorphins are sitting still, or even sleeping in a pleasant, warm bathtub. And I may be fooling myself even here. Perhaps that bathtub is not so pleasant after all.

I am taking no chances, getting no thrills, opening doors to no new adventures. Although this has been a "good" year with business quite "stable," and mental world delving into and even resolving long time traumas and problems, it has also been, emotionally, a rather quiet, even depressing year. And this with everything admittedly

going quite “well.”

All this wellness, goodness, and stability have caused my engine to basically grind to a halt. Perhaps that is what is reflected in the constant and puzzling aches in my body. Indeed, as I stand in my flatlands, my plain of stability surrounded by my forest of success, I nevertheless ache for something.

I ache for the thrill of new adventure; I ache to take new chances, and strange uplift and pulsing energy that the financial fears and hopes of the stock market once brought me.

Yes, once upon a time the stock market did it, even though I lost almost everything.

Must I reenter the stock market? Do I want to occupy and fill my mind with this stuff again? Is there any other way I can find my thrills, chills, chances, and adventures? What could take their place?

Maybe, for me, nothing can. Ugh, ugh, ugh, I hate to think it. Am I that shallow? Maybe.

No question, I need the thrill of a new adventure. Otherwise my brain, along with my body, will die.

Is there any thrill in pushing beyond my boundaries, and taking a chance? Yes, absolutely.

Can such chances be taken in miracle schedule events? Can such thrills be found in writing up a storm, practicing up a storm, running up a storm, yoga and studying up a storm? Well, yes. . . if I will do them.

Yes. I must admit I am bored. It feels like I have spent the year in a small mental box, ironing out lots of personal difficulties, traumas, problems, attitudes, views, dilemmas, and more. It's been a straight-jacket year. Perhaps, after 2007 put me in a better financial place, all this was a necessary next step in personal development. Well, whatever it is or was, it is now over, done, and finished.

Saturday, April 12, 2008

Guitar Composing

Could I, should I learn to compose for guitar?

I'm doing it, composing, for my other art forms: writing, folk dancing(choreography), but so far, nothing in music. (Yes, I've added violin and gaida, but these are not composing skills.)

I can't see myself learning new guitar pieces. Would composing on guitar bring me new excitement? Would it enhance my practicing and playing?

And not jazz. I don't like jazz.

It would have to be some kind of combination of classical and folk. Simple and beautiful music. Lovely improvisations which might lead to writing them down. A la folk dance choreography.

Jealousy Leads to Choreography

Jealousy of others points to an internal need. It is not about others, but about yourself. It illuminates your deeper, even deepest desires.

This year's post-L folk dance teaching jealousy has little to nothing to do with L. Rather it is about my long time desire to come out, to admit, to tell and show the world that I choreograph folk dances; it is about giving myself confidence as a folk dance choreographer. That's why I was jealous of L. By teaching folk dancing on my Greek tour, he was "having all the fun." But more important, I felt a stab of non-recognition when he did my dance, Maica, and did not give me credit for creating it. Generally, no one on the Greek tour even knew I choreographed Maica, or even that I choreographed dances at all, that the dances they did and liked were choreographed by me! No one knew. In fact, some folks on the Greek tours didn't even know I taught folk dancing! Well, to me, that was fun and funny, The fun of hiding out, of potentially surprising them some day, showing them what I can really do.

But this fun aspect definitely did not happen during the Maica non-recognition

incident. In fact, this non-recognition stabbed me to the heart. I could not just pass it off or forget about it. I had to do something! And I did. In fact, I've spend the last six months doing something about it! Result is the upcoming Raleigh workshop, and the creation of my book 50 Folk Dances.

I did something about it big time!

Thursday, April 17, 2008

Six New Projects

Although editing 50 Folk Dances has shot my brain, nevertheless, this morning I stand at the beginning of a new day.

This great folk dance, writing, and publishing project has helped me grow in self-confidence, focus, and inner peace. Although extremely time consuming and difficult, a good part of me loved this project. Now I am 99% finished! This is cause for celebration!

How can I celebrate?

By starting another project, of course.

My biggest obstacle in running my projects is my monkey mind. The intensity of its jumps often make me nauseous. I sometimes "cough up" a nauseating, excremental feeling of overwhelmed-by-excitement.

Can I do anything about this? Should I bother trying?

Or is it better to simply deal with this intensity and jumping mind as it comes, see it as part of the game, part of "business as usual?"

No question, I am "afflicted" by the jumps of monkey mind. But is it worth paying that much attention to it? Probably not.

After all, nausea, coughing-it-up, and overwhelmed-by-excitement are small prices to pay for living in fields I absolutely love!

Developing a New Habit

The obstacle in my path, the rock in my road, has been my classical music trauma. But I cut that Gordian knot in January, the obstacle has fallen away, the trauma dribbled into nothingness, all traces of its poison dissolved and washed away.

I am now free to actually enjoy, have fun, playing classical guitar! And this in public!

The prize stands before me. All I need do is grab it.

What is stopping me? Nothing.

It's just a question of developing a new habit.

A grab-the-prize habit.

So grab it. Get used to it!

Friday, April 18, 2008

Unrecognizable Linguistic Me

Unrecognizable is the way to go. It is also the way it seems to be happening. And now, happily and differently, in languages.

I won't even call it "study." I spread many language books out on the dining room table: Italian, French, Romanian (strangely, not Spanish, yet), Bulgarian (no other Slavic language), Latin, Greek, Hungarian, Turkish, Hebrew, and Arabic. These are the linguistic families and areas I have always loved. True, I am leaving out many others, the entire Teutonic linguistic family, some of the Latin languages (Spanish, Portuguese), and some others, namely, Finnish, Lithuanian, Estonian, Latvian, Armenian, and Georgian, and some I can't think of at the moment. Maybe I'll touch on them in the future.

But for now, the main thing is that I'm dabbling and jumping, hopping and leaping, swimming in all of them; I'm jumping around, moving from language to language, word to word. Somehow it no longer matters what language I'm doing, how long or when I study it, whether I even learn or know it or not. Both the idea of being or

becoming dilettante (formerly, a pejorative word), or of never-learn-any-one-of-them-well, have dribbled away.

Is this Unrecognizable Me expressed linguistically, the birth of a new language self? Probably.

I wanted something new, or at least a new way, of returning to linguistic study. This universal linguistic jumping method may be it.

Saturday, April 19, 2008

Reading History Books in Their National Language

Last summer in Plovdiv I bought a Bulgarian history book written in Bulgarian. This morning I'm reading in it. I like it.

Now here's an interesting thought and direction: I like history, and I like foreign languages. Why not read history books in their national (foreign) language?! Yes, a great way to both combine my interest and challenge me. (I might also throw in novels, but we'll see.)

One thing I seem to have lost, or given up, during this past year, is the idea of getting anywhere. Yes, I still want a direction, purpose, and meaning to what I'm doing, but the idea of reaching some end, accomplishing something, even finishing anything I start, have somehow all dribbled away.

So it seems my new challenge is to find a path, a direction, walk on it, and yet never expect or even desire to reach the end of my destination. In fact, in my heart, I know there really is no end. And once I reach a so-called "end," and finishing of my so-called purpose, then I almost immediately start searching for another purpose, another road or direction. With a path to walk on, I am lost. I only need (or needed) the illusion of an ending, a purpose, in order to put me on the path. Once walking on the path, I am happy. Or at least focused and concentrated; my mind is busy and active moving up and down a pole, and, as such, cannot eat me up.

I need to keep my mind busy. Otherwise it will eat me up, destroy me. I must

put it on a pole. There it moves up and down. This ostensibly useless action keeps me healthy.

Thursday, April 24, 20

Boredom and Performing

With the Euro up, the dollar down, and tour prices rises to almost out of sight, I wonder if my tour business should slowly begin to assume second place.

Who would sign up for an Israel tour at almost \$5,000 or \$4,895? Suppose Greece, Turkey, and even Bulgaria rise in cost? This coupled with the perceived slowdown of the USA economy put my tours in jeopardy.

Why am I talking this way? Why am I even thinking about such things?

Several reasons:

1. An economic reality does exist. Prices are high, registration is low to average.
2. I've completed most of my 2008 sales calls.
3. But there is a third factor looming. Last night I wrote "Maybe I should do bookings, namely concerts and folk dance teaching workshops, because (get this) I've got nothing else to do! Meaning I am bored, I am ready. Also I cannot find anything I am interested in studying. This may mean I'm "stuffed to the gills with learning." The next step is not necessarily to study and learn more, but rather to find a place where I can use all the experience, learning, and knowledge I have acquired. Where is this place? Somewhere in the outside world. It's a performance place. It's a place where I must make an appearance, stand before others, present, show, display, demonstrate what I can do, and, in the process, perhaps pursue a different kind of experiential learning. A different form of "study." Is this possible? Is this the "real" call to performance? Will boredom and a "stuffed mind" be what pushes me out of the house?

What would Zany say?

Sales for the 2008 tour season is just about over. What is left to do is "simply" tour details, and final preparations. Thus I am now in the process of preparing my

program and mind for the 2009 season.

What my above paragraphs point to is a possible change in primary activities. During the past few years, tours have been primary. Is it possible that soon performance and personal appearances will become primary?

Friday, April 25, 2008

Do I Really Have to Practice?

I have an important booking and concert guitar question: At this point in my development and career, do I really have to practice?

No question that I have to play!

But do I still have to practice?

Maybe all I need is to brush up, keep my fingers in shape.

What am I saying? At this point, I'm "good enough." All that's left, all I need to do on the guitar is play and have fun.

Well, that's a tall order. But I may be ready for it.

I've been practicing certain guitar pieces slowly, carefully, diligently, for years. In spite of this, when played in tempo, they have not improved!

My conclusion: At this point, my slow practice will no longer improve my playing. I have reached an end. I might as well play the pieces in tempo, dive in, give them my all I've got, go at them full playing mode.

Is this a new stage of guitar playing and personal development? Will it also affect other areas of my life?

Sunday, April 27, 2008

Stage Fright, Money, and Death

Is this turn-about and return time? I certainly hope so.

Three important issues: Stage fright, money, and death.

Stage fright and money deal with motivation; death deals with the end of

motivation.

The desire to end stage fright, coupled with the desire to make money, can and does motivate me. The idea of “why bother doing any of this, since eventually I will die anyway, and all will be forgotten and useless,” definitely cuts down my desire to do anything; it destroys my motivation. It creates my present wet blanket. It appears in my mind to put me down, cut me off, destroy my enthusiasm. It’s the “Stop it. Calm down! Don’t run wild on the lawn” effect, coupled with the subtle warning that, if you give it your all, you’ll hurt yourself. Where does this attitude originate? Well, according to all my psychotherapy, it came from Ma. But it may, no doubt is, coupled with some kind of self-preservation attitude that I created, originated, and presently still buy into (bought into?). Note that suddenly I am “going blind.” The dizzy and blurred vision light effect suddenly rising. In the past, this scaring phenomenon has always signaled anger and rising rage. Are the enraging aspects of death and its squashing, put-down effects starting to hit me? Note that just talking about this rage, here and now, writing directly about it in the journal, is slowly and immediately softening the blurred vision. Could I really be so right? (The question itself defers the anger, and thus the blurred vision slightly returns.)

Let’s face it: I am enraged. I probably have been so for months, and certainly since I returned from Greece last November. After that, it seemed that my psyche “stopped” and with it, my body fell apart. It is only now starting to come back together. (And the blurring returns.) I ride on the edge of the rising rage wave, the blistering anger current. I have been sitting on myself for months, holding myself back. Why, I don’t exactly know. But it is certainly making me furious.

What about my great motivators, money and stage fight? For months, they have been pushed to the back.

Is death “realistic?” Or is it simply a cover I create to cripple and push down my enthusiasm?

Well, we know that, just as sure as there is darkness, the sun will always rise

again. Thus, on this deepest of psychological levels, death itself, like my present existence, is an illusion. Life, in its eternal energy form, never ends. Death of the life energy contains, the breaking of the energy container form, ever continues. Forms are born and die, but the energy of life stays forever. All this philosophy is good to simply remind myself that the mental form and image of death I am creating is not death itself, but simply a childhood tool I still presently create in order to suppress my latent, eternal energy, and keep me down.

I created this “Why bother? I shall soon die” death wet blanket. After I returned from Greece last November. I have been living within its illusion ever since. Why have I done this? But part of it has to do with the success of making money, and my vision of success. . . which both cuts my motivation and returns me to my childhood, “happy,” taken-care-of-state, where Ma (and Pa, too) simply took care of everything and I could always go out into the park and play, or stay in my room and play violin all day. Ah, what a blissful state that was! And presently, with some money in my pocket, I could recreate it! And all I have to do is cut off my aggressive, sales-oriented, competitive, go-out-and-get-‘em instincts.

Note I used the word “competitive.”

All the above I know. And yet I keep saying it over and over again. (Note: My blurred vision has just about disappeared!) Maybe knowing it intellectually is one thing—and I can achieve such knowing in just a few seconds or minutes, but working through it is another—that may take weeks, months, even years(witness my classical music trauma).

Monday, April 28, 2008

Vital Links to my Happiness Being

I feel dirty and impure this morning. Why? Mostly because I have not fulfilled certain legs of my dreams: Mainly, I have not practiced guitar. . or violin, or gaida. Also, did not yogalize, or even run. Two main dreams down. Bad news for the pure.

Thus guitar practice, (some singing), and violin, gaida, yoga, run. . . Very important, nay vital, as part of my happiness being.

I Can “Afford” to Have Fun!

Folk dance teaching hardly pays any money. This has always been the case.

Yet I now have an amazing thought: Due to my improved financial position, I can now afford to have fun giving folk dance workshops; I can afford teaching and leading folk dancing!

“What should I do with my money? What shall I do with the relative peace of mind have a small financial buffer has given me?” have been asking this question all year.

Best answer: Have fun with it! And, truth is, teaching and leading folk dancing is one of my best ways of having fun!

“I can afford to have fun!” What a wonderful place to be! This is the startling new position my year of aches, pains, and suffering has brought.

Monday, May 5, 2008

Disdain Versus Desire

“If you write a book and no one reads it, then you haven’t helped people.” Reid Tracy of Hay House.

Expanded: If you give a concert and no one comes, then you haven’t helped people. If you teach a folk dance class and no one comes, then you haven’t helped people. If you lead a tour, and no one comes, then you haven’t helped people. Etc.

Suppose you write a book, give a concert, run a folk dance class, lead a tour, and only a few come? Well, at least you’ve helped a few.

The bottom-line question here: Is my goal to help people? Has it ever been to help people? Hasn’t helping others always come second? Primary, has always been to create, inspire, and fulfill myself. Secondarily, after the creation has been created, and

coming almost as an afterthought, has been the question “Will anyone be interested in what I have created?”

This philosophy and attitude have been mine. . . up to now. But, upon further reflection, is it really true? Is it really complete? Truth is, I love when people buy my creations and products. When love-in-the-mail checks come in, I feel the mitzvah magic, the wonderful high of realization and acceptance. The glory of mitzvah comes from the warm thrill of helping others. Seeing stars of glory and happiness shine in their eyes.

Is this a bottom-line thrill I usually, often, and mostly hesitate, even hate to admit? Do I avoid it at all or most costs? I yes, why? Creating has always had a one-two punch. First comes creating; second is showing, demonstrating, communicating, bringing forth, affecting others, selling, and marketing.

In fact, once I create it, I most often try avoiding the sales aspect, say “Fuck it,” and in great frustration, pile my creations in the basement.

Indeed, sales are a measure of helping others. Only my communist and artist in-room upbringing keeps me from admitting the importance of helping others through the dreaded “sales” word.

Do I even want to help? If yes, how much? Or will I simply disdain sales forever?

My conflict and struggle is between disdain and desire.

Disdaining sales makes me feel haughty, righteous, “better-than-them,” superior, snobbish, pomposity, and self-congratulations, and filled with the wonder of a strange negative power.

Yet, when I make a sale, I feel a beautiful warmth of love flow through me, and a crying, melt-down magnificent and complete peace fills my being.

The “Threat” of Sales

Never Ending Conflict

Another threat and problem: Sales take me away from my creative center by

putting my mind on others. They focus my attention on what others might want. Thus, they pull me out of my center and weaken me.

Is this the root of my so-called “disdain”? Great question.

And yet, paradoxically, when someone buys one of my products or services, I feel elevated, strengthened.

Which comes first? Which is more important? A chicken and egg question.

Back to the never ending conflict. (Looking for something eternal? Here it is.) Back to dialectical materialism. Thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, and the dialectical union of inner and outer, the creation of “both.”

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Burning Desire

The insult of non-recognition of me as choreographer of Maica, Maica resulted in months of writing 50 Folk Dances, going public as a choreographer, and perhaps even a “new career” teaching folk dancing to local folk dance groups and even groups around the country.

In other words, non-recognition (and completion) created some kind of burning desire within me to act.

I have a need to write. I also have a desire for others to read my books and recognize me as a writer. But, is this a mere desire, or a burning desire?

To my credit, I recognized how important it was for me to be recognized as a choreographer. I also recognized my desire for completion. I moved from closet choreographer to gone public choreographer. Now, in order to sell or promote my dances, I must present them to other groups. This puts me on the cusp of a “new career.”

Note: There is little to no money in my teaching of folk dancing. I wrote 50 Folk Dances for the recognition and desire for completion, not the money.

Note: There is little to no money in writing, or selling and promoting my books. However, I have a desire (burning desire?) for recognition and completion. It comes when others learn my dances, buy my CDs 50 Folk Dances, and my other books.

I am searching, not for mere desire, but for burning desire. Money alone will not do it. Will recognition and completion do the trick?

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

The Unknown Never Goes Away

I am sick with fear about my upcoming weekend job folk dance teaching job in Raleigh. My stomach and joints hurt. My back went out yesterday. Performance and other anxieties stalking; fear, and borders of terror everywhere.

Of course, all this is nothing new. But that statement, in its attempt to throw away the terror, simply does not, and never has, worked.

What to do? Have a conversation with my mind? Ride it? Both? Something different? Nothing?

Or, realize it is an eternal fear. The naked terror of the Unknown. It will never go away. Why? Because the Unknown will never go away.

Once I thought if I played guitar better, I would have less performance anxiety. Totally untrue. Although it would be nice to play guitar better, performance anxiety, a kind, clinical term for the terror of facing the Unknown, is forever.

Just as elation is followed by depression, so depression is followed by elation. This is true both personally and politically, since politics is merely group magnification of the personal.

Thus the internet and entrepreneurial boom of the 90's (elation), was followed by the dot-com bust of 2001, and the slow descent into the present mental malaise, depression, and downward vision of America.

How to handle such spiritual cycles? Don't bother trying. They simply have to run their course.

Friday, May 16, 2008

Love Them!

I'm not disgusted yet, but I'm getting closer. . . thank God!

Disgust expressed in shoulders, legs, knees, quadriceps, even a touch of instep. Yes, my body is speaking again! Thank God!

What is it saying? Something about my new self-definition as a folk dance teacher and choreographer. This coupled with a rebirth of my former definition as a guitarist/performer. (This creates my right thumb discomfort, as well as a strange sudden new subtle tingling in my left pinky tip, born, I believe, from over-pressing on the guitar strings. This new "pinky power pain" is sustained by concern for my upcoming May 30th Tenafly Senior Center concert.)

Yes, but again, strangely, something new is happening: I am "happy" that my fears and pains are returning! Yes, they make me tremble, quake, focus, concentrate my energies. But they also show I am still alive! True, sometimes when they are overwhelming, it feels like they are "too much." But what, after all, is "too much?" Who can measure this? Who can even say it is "too much?" Maybe it is just right. Maybe that's exactly the way it should be. After all, I need challenges. I always create and face new ones. This is good. Pains and fears, as symbols for my challenges, are really peripheral. I always manage to handle and get through them. But without challenges to uplift me, I would fall into a pit of boredom and eventually die. So these challenges, along with the fears and pains they create, actually keep me alive! Thus, a better way to look at fears and pains is to bless each one as it comes. These are living forces displaying their power and essence in full regalia before my eyes! They are my energy messengers. Better to just appreciate, thank, and love them.

I wonder if “pain” has something to do with machismo, and “pleasant” something to do with the feminine. By creating and dealing with pain, I prove I am manly, masculine, tough. I can take it.

By gently ushering myself into the pleasant, giving in to it, giving up control, I am feminizing myself.

Do men become more feminine as they age? Is delving in, seeing, and accepting your feminine side part of wisdom?

Sunday, May 18, 2008

How Will Zany Return?

When, How, and If, Will the Fire Start?

I know the future is in the past. But what past is that? And what future?

Lost in space.

Only new goals with new sperm cells will make me happy. But if future is in the past, what will these goals be? Will they be deepening goals? If yes, I know the areas. But when, how, and if, will the fire start?

It will start with a fresh body, fresh guitar, fresh yoga. . . and fresh writing. A new novel? Novels are my future business and life plans in disguise.

Does it concern Zany? What will he do now? He has left his armchair. Transition is over. He finished the exploratory visit to Mount Ararat. Returning to America, his heart, mind, and brain no longer lost, sitting, sedate, and transitioning, what will happen? He stands poised and boiling, leaning over the abyss, ready to jump. . .into what?

How will he return? That is my question! Violin? Concert stage? If yes, in what mental mood?

Will he deepen and develop his style, the Zany musical vision? Will he lead a music tour to Slovakia, Tunisia, or Mars, start and organize a tour company, write a book, run a marathon, train for yoga Olympics, study history and languages?

Does folk dancing fit in to this return? I doubt it, but – who knows?

Monday, May 19, 2008

New Guitar Practice and Playing Mode

After my fifteen, twenty or whatever minute warm-up (which will include Villa Lobos "Prelude No, 1," Tarrega's "Alhambra," and Albemniz's "Leyenda," and even Tarrega's "Alard," I will play all my pieces as if I am performing them for an audience.

But I will be playing them, performing them, in the new Jim Gold classic guitar style, my new personal and personalized touch. Classic guitar my way.

This is not necessarily a different way of playing, but it is definitely a different way of thinking. By playing guitar my way, in public, the unique, personal, and personalized Jim Gold way (slow, thoughtful, sensual, romantic), I have gone public with my thinking.

Strangely, I do not call it my way of feeling, or even my way of self-expression. Rather I use the more rational term of "thinking." I'm not sure quite why yet.

Perhaps it is (partly) because I want to pour all my years of intellectual study, my knowledge of history, culture, language, travel, geography, and more into the very music I am playing. I want to give them, my audience, not only my thoughts and knowledge, but also my thought process.

Maybe this has something to do with "maturity," and, after a depressing (due to temporary loss of miracle schedule values) year of transition, true acceptance and entry into post-seventy life.

Maybe somehow, through some kind of magical alchemy of transition, I finally "deserve" to offer all my selves, all aspects of my true self, to the public.

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

"Ultimate Wisdom:" A Strange Place To Be

The study of history and languages used to give me confidence and knowledge.

For tour and travel confidence, I no longer “need” these studies anymore. Nevertheless, for some reason, I need to study something.

I need another reason to study: a visceral, guttural, basic reason.

Along with my fears went my visceral desires.

What am I afraid of now? All I can think of is old age. And even that, I’m not sure about. It seems more an annoyance than an actual visceral, guttural, basic fear.

If I can find new fears, can I find new visceral desires? Maybe.

But truth is that presently I cannot find a really good fear I totally believe in.

Can I simply “settle” for living as fully as possible in each moment?

Is that all that’s left? Maybe.

Of course, such a philosophy and attitude is the ultimate wisdom. I could say I’ve arrived at a state of ultimate wisdom. But, if this is so (indeed it could be, nay, is!), then it feels so strange and new. As such it feels vaguely unpleasant and even a bit depressing. The rhythm, mood, and taste of this “ultimate state” are so different. I don’t know what to do with them. Perhaps that is their nature: There is, precisely, nothing to make of them.

I am so used to being goal oriented, future directed. The state of “ultimate wisdom,” with its focus on the here-and-now, has neither.

How can I exist with no goals, no thoughts of the future? How can I live totally in the present? Where is the spark, fire, and joy? Where is the hope of future reward?

Nowhere is the answer.

You’d think I’d be happy in such a state. After all, I have “arrived” in the total focused present. Wouldn’t some call this the Garden of Eden. Paradise, itself? Isn’t this what heaven in all about?

According to my readings, yes. But it doesn’t feel like heaven, the Garden of Eden, or paradise. It doesn’t feel like hell either. Or even limbo.

It just feels so strange. I don’t know what to make of it.

Perhaps that is why I have been depressed and puzzled all year. I am at the

doorway to a new state.

No question I have fulfilled all my life goals. Thus I can no longer get excited about the future. The present is all I have left. Of course, the ability to live totally in the present has always been the “goal” of all those searching for enlightenment; it is sign, symbol, and lifestyle of ultimate wisdom.

Again, you’d think I would be “happy” in such a place. And perhaps, in the “future,” when I get used to it, I will be. But for now, I remain puzzled, off balance, and vaguely lost.

Well, I have no choice. That’s where I am. Deal with it. Start with guitar. Play totally in the presence. No hope of future rewards, audience kudos, or reaching some pinnacle of virtuosity. Today, here-and-now, present. Guitarwise, that’s all I have left.

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Spanish Classical Guitar

I wonder if the basement of my mind’s seemingly accidental but sudden drift into the Spanish language has something to do with my return to classical guitar. . . and especially for the first time in my life, to playing it my way.

Spanish and the classical guitar, Spanish classical guitar. Remember Jimenez del Oro.

In dream and sleep, I go deep inside the guitar. I find and walk on the path of My Way.

Suddenly, My Way has capital letters. Why? It relates and connects. My Way is my mystic connection to the Higher Force.

Will I find a Spanish connection through the Alhambra mystics?

The soft touch of the finger tips and the powerful pounding thrust of the thumb have to somehow be mystically combined.

I have some kind of mystical connection to Alhambra in particular, and arpeggios (harp-eggios) in general.

A right hand connection.

I've been out of It too long. I have to enter the Mystery again.

Friday, May 23, 2008

My show begins the moment I sit down with my guitar, with my first legato. (It actually begins the moment I walk on stage.)

Thus, in a sense, my shows begins every morning I practice; my show begins – with a fresh, new legato – every day.

Daily Jumping Off the Cliff

Dare I daily dip into guitar, and other emotional gear?

Of course, there is nothing else left to do. I've been all other places.

Jumping (daily) off the cliff is the next frontier.

Nevertheless, it is a courageous and daring to daily jump.

If I don't do it, my body will ache as I stand in place, poised and ready to jump but doing nothing. Only the jump will save me.

A scary place. But, at this point, the only place to be.

Jumping off the cliff answers all questions about why my body hurts, persistent aches and pains, and low level depression.

Saturday, May 24, 2008

The Connection Between Cliff and Abyss

In jumping over the cliff, notice a very tiny connection between the edge of the cliff and the abyss below.

I first noticed this while playing the Villa-Lobos Prelude No. 4 arpeggios. The connection appears somewhere between the thumb and index finger, the cliff and the abyss.

Is this the God connection that saves all jumpers?

Its recognition gives you spiritual protection when you jump.

With this recognition comes the realization that cliff and abyss are One.

How to put this vision into practice?

Sunday, May 25, 2008

Awed, Amazed, Confused, Baffled, and Dazed

What is my relationship to money? In the past, I loved it. But during this year, I have somehow “rejected” it. I have, somehow, been trying to give it little attention.

Why is this?

I think somehow, post-Greece, I have been trying to dampen the excitement of the 2007 financial success year. And that, basically, has been the reason for my nine-month, subtle but underlying depression. And this, even while the nine-month period has been filled with breakthroughs and successes. Witness the classical music trauma breakthrough in January and February, and the writing of 50 Folk Dances and subsequent coming out of the folk dance closet. Now, as both a choreographer and classical guitarist (almost), I feel comfortable, confident, even great!

True, yoga, running, and studies have slipped by the boards. Also, my body has been beset by “new” aches. But are they really new? Or are they “expressions” of joy-energy suppression?

Another question: Am I really depressed by this year’s successes? Somehow, I don’t think so. Truly, I don’t know, can’t, couldn’t figure out what has happened to me. Thus, better words for my nine-month state are: awed, amazed, confused, baffled, and dazed.

Now, back to money. Can it excite me again? After all, it was once one of my prime motivating factors, my “inspiration” for growth, development, and expansion. Also a measurement for success, and even happiness. How joyous I felt when a check, a “love” check, came in the mail!

I have recently suppressed that joy. Thousands of dollars in potential future tour

earnings have rolled in, and I have just quietly, calmly, and coolly “accepted” them as part of a “normal” day. This is absurd and terrible! I should be expressing or at least in touch with my true feelings, which are, jumping for joy! Another check, another victory. Wow and hallelujah! But instead I have just “accepted” it, suppressed all signs of elation, dropped my hallelujahs in favor of dull “acceptance.”

No wonder I’m depressed. Or rather, confused and out of touch.

Or maybe it is now time to deal with and move past my biggest trauma, mainly my own suppression of joy and elation. In fact, I wonder if that is the fundamental reason I have not been able to play the “Alhambra,” or move fast and confident in all my arpeggios. Are arpeggios, and even fast scales, expressions of ebullience, elation, and joy? Indeed, they could well be.

This could explain my guitar “lifetime” of arpeggio suppression. After all, I had no trouble with arpeggios until I started studying with Alexander Bellow. After him, I could no longer play “Alhambra.” Before then, during my guitar lessons with Rolando Valdes-Blaine, I don’t remember having any trouble at all! Is it possible that Bellow traumatized me for forty years, put me in the Mosesian desert for forty arid, bumpy arpeggio years? Yes.

Bellow fed into my own half-desire to suppress my passion, elation, and mother-dumping, joyous running wild on the lawn. Well, if you’re Jewish (or even if you’re not), some things may indeed take forty years to accomplish.

Suppression of joy could explain the arpeggio psychological stumbling block. Thus, arpeggios are a joy to play. Think joy, elation, running wild on the lawn (wild running), wahoo, and hallelujah when playing them.

Start off with “Alhambra,” “Villa-Lobos Prelude No. 4,” “Leyenda,” “Alard,” and “Flamenco.”

Of course, one has to warm up. But beyond warm-ups, where does joy fit into knees and legs, shoulders, thumb, and lower back?

Where does joy (suppression) fit into so-called arthritis?

Where does joy fit into money?

Joy and Powers of Moderation

Why protect myself? Often the joy, excitement, and elation are so intense as to be hurtful, uncomfortable, and even dangerous. The idea that too much joy can kill you. Is this true? According to kabbalah, yes. That is why study of kabbalah is only for those over forty, those with enough wisdom, and powers of moderation, to handle God's joy packets.

What about some powers of moderation for me? Do I need and want such a thing? Well, no question, I need it.

But do I want it?

Well, I guess so. Because without some powers of moderation, I'll end up having nothing.

So joy is a good. But it is definitely something to watch and be careful with. Like handling a flame. Sure it lights the night. But it can also burn your house down.

Love as Motivator

My hesitation and confusion as I called people to rise-and-dance at yesterday's Westport bar mitzvah was because I realized that my forty-year, fear-as-motivation approach had run its course.

Well, if fear will no longer motivate me, what will?

I took a long run this morning. After about half an hour, suddenly, the word love popped into my head.

Love? Well. . . why not? Fear no longer works. Love could indeed be the next step, the next stop, the next stage. Love also contains unity. Exactly the desire, focus, and thought mode I create when leading a group.

Believe in the New Life!

Daily Practice its Precepts

All the pains, aches, and depressions of the past year have been due to the letting go, loss, abandonment, and dying of the old self.

There has been disbelief, anger, even strange pleading for its life, then a letting go, giving up, and finally an (presently disbelieving, but it's true) acceptance.

Now my "job" is to make my peace with that acceptance, and to somehow enter and believe in the New Life.

How do I learn to believe it?

Daily practice the precepts of the New Life.

Wednesday, May 28, 2008

How to Have Fun on my Tours?

Shouldn't I be gloriously happy that I'm up to almost 40 people for my Greek 2008 tour? Of course, I'm not unhappy. But with my once-total focus on money dying, the burden of responsibility and concentration of running the tour feels like a "distraction."

A distraction from what?

The artistic side, the artist within. Remind myself once again: The original purpose of money was to give me security, and free me to be and become the artist I want to be. Well, now the money is in sight, almost here. Security is at hand. True, I have to give up a bit of ego to Lee, but, as I look at the financial rewards, it's certainly worth it.

Tour success points to and highlights my sales and organizational and skills and strengths. That's nice. But I see myself as an artist first. Parenthetically, I'm an organizer and salesman. Luckily, I'm good at it so I can make a living.

Nevertheless, if my artistic side is not fed, fostered, developed, and realized as my center, the organizational and sales side will wither into meaninglessness and die.

Certainly, I need both. But art and creation have to be my priority. Organization

and sales come second. An important second, but second, nevertheless.

This priority order I must always remember.

The miracle schedule reflects and expresses my artistic nature.

Maybe it is more of a time-space problem.

Truth is, I have to do both.

Well, if that is the case, since finances are in order, and financial need is no longer casting its giant shadow over me, and since I will continue running tours, and perhaps even expanding my tour market, how can I have fun running my tours?

How can I expand to enjoyment? Enjoyment will, of course, include numbers and finance. But, with those in order, how can I move “beyond” them?

Or are numbers and finance an enjoyment in themselves? If this is so, can I learn to enjoy the growth of numbers and money? Somehow, I doubt it. And this because I have always seen them as means to an end.

As I stand at a new level of financial stability, how can I enjoy running my tours?

What can I do on tour to increase my fun?

Give lectures, play guitar, teach folk dancing, other?

Somehow, playing guitar and teaching folk dancing are out. First, I will never bring my guitar: too much of a hassle carrying it around and getting it on board the plane. Second, teaching folk dancing is also out: first of all, I don't want to, since I do it all the time; secondly, I'd have to bring all my folk dance equipment (again, too much of a hassle); thirdly, I'd have to psyche myself up after a long day of tour focus; fourthly, since I always do it at home, it would be “more of the same.” True, the tourists would never know about my skills and talents as a folk dance teacher. But, of course, they don't know about my other skill, either. And if it was really important to me, I could try doing workshops around the country, a la Raleigh.

Could I lead some dances while Lee teaches, or in Bulgaria at clubs, or special events? Somehow, I doubt that would fill the emptiness. Also, I somehow pride myself on staying in the background, a la bar mitzvah, watching, and, only if needed, stepping

in. So folk dance leading is also out.

So, in summary, as part of the tour-fun project, it seems that guitar and folk dance teaching are out.

That leaves lectures, and "other."

How to have fun on my tours? At the moment, I have no answer.

Maybe it's a question of finding some special pleasure, satisfaction, conquest, skill, heroism, and glory in the running of the tour itself! The glory of leadership. Can I find it?

It is a special place. Certainly, a different mode and feeling from being an artist.

Or is it? Maybe there is a special connection between artistry and leadership that I have yet to make.

If I could make such a unifying connection, I would feel complete.

Part of the art of leadership is the ability to seize the moment. (But the moment is so transitory. Leadership as a transient art, like performance.)

The wise say, "Live in the moment and you join eternity."

Does the moment live forever?

Is the present eternal?

Thursday, May 29, 2008

Celebrating my Birthday

Today is my birthday.

Should I celebrate?

Why? What did I do to get born? Was I responsible or involved in some way? Did I choose my parents and day of birth? Cosmically and metaphysically, was birth an event of my own choosing?

If yes, then there is cause to celebrate.

If my birth is an accident, with no purpose or reason, then what is there to celebrate? An accident is not an accomplishment. Why celebrate an accident?

On the other hand, if I had a role in it, a prominent role, if my spirit self decided it needed a stay on earth, chose my parents, caused itself (me) to be born, that's another story.

Does my soul, my metaphysical self, wander and wonder throughout the universe, eternally searching for learning, growth, development, and unity? And does it do this, whether residing in a physical structure or not?

There is no way to exactly know the answer to this question. So I will chose an answer based on my own desire.

Does wishing make it so? Does wanting create truth? Is desire a form of truth? Maybe.

I choose to believe I had a starring role in my own birth. For some reason, my soul needed earthly experiences. Therefore, it chose my parents, through whom my physical body was created. They gave me a house, an earthly container, to live in.

Why choose to believe this? It empowers me. It also makes sense in my quest for eternity.

Therefore, today, I'll celebrate this birthday, my next level forward on this earthly voyage.

The next question is: How shall I celebrate?

Letters from the Light

Are these cold chills of fear I feel, nay, the terror of darkness and the spirit world, the creepy goose-pimples of ghosts floating, of my mother (and sometimes, even my father) coming out of the walls at the farm, really fears of the Unknown?

Is the darkness of the Unknown truly such a terror?

Probably and yes.

I hate being afraid. Maybe it is time again to face such Darkness again.

The Creepiness. Is it the darkness of death I fear, or the spirit life, visitors from beyond, or all of them?

Probably all of them.

Do I fear them, not only because they are new, strange, and represent the great Unknown, but also because there is some kind of deeper truth to them? A truth to the spirit world. A truth to their floating and invisible transience.

And beyond them, an even deeper truth of the Spirit.

No question, my chills are real. But do my “mere” feelings mean there is some kind of truth to them, a truth beyond that I refuse to look at, recognize, deal with, a truth beyond the grave? And after moving through the tunnel of Darkness, do I really see and reach an everlasting Light?

Well, let’s start with the cold, chilling fear of Creepiness. It’s the child’s fear of darkness and the ghosts that inhabit it. Child’s fear? Adult fear, too.

Is there a “truth” to such a fear? Or is such fear based on falsity, untruth, an ignorance of the Truth and Light beyond?

If based on ignorance, where did such (the) ignorance come from? Why do I have it?

As an older, more mature person, maybe I am ready to jump into my fears, and look into these questions again.

These questions about death take the pressure off life. They remove one from the immediacy and long-range importance of daily events. Thus, dealing with questions about death and life beyond death (with its Posthumous Tours) is relaxing. Such questions create distance and perspective.

So ends a New Leaf