

Breakthrough Miracle

Wednesday, January 10, 2007

The Days of Speed are Over!

Slow, comfortable, easy, mellow, gorgeous guitar playing.

Days of fast, trying, and speed (pushing for speed and virtuosity) are over! Now there's a post-transitional plus!

Reading Musical Prodigies by Claude Kenneson has helped me realize, deal with, and free myself from a lifetime trauma of virtuosity. I can face and accept the glorious freedom of Speed is Over! Easy, Mellow, and Gorgeous is my "new" route of guitar playing. Comfortable and Slow are its by-products.

Now I have the courage and understanding to do it.

There is absolutely no more (virtuoso) pressure on me to play fast. Indeed, what a total Wow!

Sunday, January 14, 2007

Impossible Dreams to Follow

I hesitate to make a plan since my plans keep falling apart; I hesitate to make a schedule since that also keeps falling apart. Nevertheless, I like, want, and perhaps even need a plan and a schedule with which to fill the plan.

Perhaps the problem with past plans has been: they have been too realistic. Evidently, I need an impossible dream, an unrealistic plan, a totally unfillable schedule. I thrive on impossible dreams, unrealistic plans, wild fantasies. The idea and the dream itself drive me on. So, in this unthinkable, unrealistic, and impossible manner, and based on what I love to do, I shall offer the following plans, schedules, and ideas.

Dreamer of the Impossible Dream

Evidently, I feel cheated, inhibited, even imprisoned, when I focus on only one thing; evidently, I have to do (and dream of doing) “every” thing. Obviously, in terms of focus, during the period I am performing that one thing, that one function, I, like Mozart, do it with complete and total focus! And this, even though its time period may range from five minutes, to an hour, two hours, or even more. Thus, even as I jump from one thing to another, when I land on my subject, I zero in with complete focus. That is a characteristic of me, and a must.

In order to “do everything” I must totally give up the notion of doing anything well. Mine is a total dilettante approach. Luckily, I am now beyond the “You’re not serious; you’re just a dilettante” criticism.

How to be a “professional dilettante?” A more positive name for this is “renaissance man.” But somehow I don’t like this term; too high-falutin’. I don’t know what to call myself.

Perhaps persistent, constant, and irrepressible Dreamer of the Impossible Dream would be best.

I need some impossible dreams to drive me on. That’s just the way it is. I don’t have to accomplish any of these dreams; I just have to step on and travel their path.

Since all these dreams are impossible, new dreams may come along to be added to the old ones. Since accomplishment is not the question, pile on the dreams! It’s fun writing about, organizing, and planning their schedule, too. Whether any will ever be “fulfilled” is totally besides the point.

So the idea. . . and the skill. . . is: Do any of the above until my focus runs out of gas. Then (when it does) move on to something else.

2007 Rebirth: Blurs of Resistance

There are many good things in this new world. Yet my right eye is blinking,

blazing, and blurring. Even my lower back hurts! Backache and headache, the signs are all there. Rage, anger, and resistance.

As I go into the New Year's world of 2007, I simultaneously resist it. Like a newborn baby, I enter kicking and screaming.

Wednesday, January 17, 2007

Whining and Complaining for the Fun of it:

I just feel like whining this morning. My back hurts. . . and I may know why. I've already outlined the reasons. Nevertheless, I say, so what? I still want to complain and whine. Maybe I do because it simply feels good. Yes, evidently, whining and complaining releases strange enzymes of soothing balm within my body. Maybe I simply need them. So, even though everything is going well, I will nevertheless whine and complain. . . for the fun of it!

But I do wonder why my back hurts. Late afternoon Monday I did a great yoga routine with six scorpion poses, among others. I usually do three. Plus I did everything else. Yes, I did more than usual. Did I hurt my back in the process? I doubt it, at least not in the long-standing, several-day manner. It must be due to "something else." And I relate it not only to the positives of Bulgarian, violin, Dreamweaver, Zany, (and guitar, too), but even to the great yoga session itself! Aha, I like it. And consider that I had a great hour and a half run the day before. That's two good exercise days in a row! A good thing! A good-in-itself. Indeed, following the training and order of my personality, after such a good thing, a whack is in order. Well, I just took one. . . in my back! A whack in the back. Yes, I deserve it for such goodness. I may even need it to appease the dictates of my sado-masochistic personality.

The mother I invented, that nagging fiction lurking in my mind and haunting my imagination, would be proud and happy.

Maybe it's soothing to punish myself for good things. It reminds me of Ma; it puts me closer to her. A slap in the face is a soothing reminder that I am my mother's son.

Am I just spouting words? Or is the above very psychologically astute? If yes, dare I admit it? I would trace my back pain to a reactive "punishment" for a good yoga session!

As I think these (punishing, self-punishment) thoughts, my back pain is getting worse. Is this a subtle form of return to the old neighborhood? And this before, or as I leap into my 2007 New Year's beautiful fours! I believe it is.

Well, give me a break. I do not want to go back to the old neighborhood! Now that I have unmasked my dark habits and ancient psychologies, let me accept my progress and break free. I shall release myself from the punishing old neighborhood prison.

"Do Your Work, and Shut Up!"

The trauma of freedom: Partly it's the trauma consists partly of giving myself the freedom to do what I love.

It's much harder than you think. And it is a trauma. Courage is needed to believe, face, accept, and grab it.

Dive into the maelstrom of pain. Fight the demons of its psychological and physical expression.

Israel (formerly Jacob) wrestled with God. He ended up with a bum leg, but limped away from the fight a better man.

I'm scaring the shit out of myself, coming very close to the edge. letting my traumatic imagination run wild.

Time to set limits.

I need my Discipline Mama to step in and say, "Stop it! Shut up! Do your

work!"

Ah, feeling slightly better; my pain just subsided. The screaming harpy of discipline has stepped in to save, help, and guide me back from the edge. "Get back, you idiot!" she shouts. "Do your work, and shut up!"

Thursday, January 18, 2007

Home at Zero

I had my first Bulgarian lesson with Mariana Ivanov yesterday. Very intense. Somehow the lessons terrify me. Thank God! I don't know why, and I don't care why. Yes, thank God something bothers me, challenges me, means something to me, is important enough to worry and frighten me. I'm alive again! Specifically and concretely, I'm starting out at the beginning!

Evidently, I like to be frightened, I want to be frightened, I need to be frightened. I'm only frightened by things that are important to me. Such fear wakes me up, makes me feel alive.

I hate the feeling that I "know everything," that "I've been there, done that." It is truly an end-of-the-road, finale, and death of a dream feeling. I love learning, having a teacher, and being taught. I love my lessons. It's taken so long to return to my wonderful, wide open home of zero.

If tours are no longer the challenge they used to be, at least learning Bulgarian is. Yes, I need new challenges! Will I soon be adding computers (Dreamweaver and Photoshop), and even learning the violin?

It's true, I may have a "problem" with boundaries. But nevertheless, I now want to flood myself with teachers!

This is the first time I have felt this healthy, challenged, and alive for at least a year, maybe two. Certainly, it was absent during the long transitional period. Before that, I think it existed but in fading form.

I wonder what will happen to the pains in my left shoulder and back, now that I'm on the cusp of being alive again. Certainly, this leap into the terrifying world of Bulgarian learning was the cause of my strange and sudden back pain which started late Monday night. My left shoulder is longer range. I wonder if it might be related to my transitional period; after all, it started during that time. Will it grind to a close as I re-enter the living world of learning?

I feel like I haven't learned anything new for years. First, I was stuck in "success" with its completion and concomitant dying of my dreams; then came the period of stuck-in-transition. Hopefully, I've finally made the break. I'm stepping out of my cocoon, and getting ready to fly again. Bulgarian lessons are the first concrete and specific step.

In a sense, I am returning to the past. But this time without the hindrances, worries, trial and tribulations, of developing an entire new tour business and learning the technique how to lead, run, and organize a new tour company and business. JGI exists. Sure it still takes focus and concentration, but nevertheless, its organization and running it is now "easy."

This frees me to focus more on new learning.

Maybe I'm just totally sick of everything I've done in the past, I just want to move on. Maybe my body hurts because, as a precursor of my mind, it is in total rebellion; it simply refuses to go through the same old motions, over and over again. "No, no, no!" it is screaming. I however, don't know what it is saying, why it is saying it, or how it wants me to remedy the situation. So the I in my brain is stuck and lost, and has been for years. . . or at least months.

Violin Traumas Revisited

Sarno strikes again!

My new left forearm tendon pain started when I taught Zane violin, bought him a violin, and returned to my own violin playing. I relived my teenage violin years through Zane. A week after he left, when visiting the Teaneck library, my eyes suddenly fell upon Musical Prodigies. I picked it up and read about the musical heroes of my past. I so admired them. Since they all played better at four than I could ever play at seventeen, what chance did I have? None.

I am looking into, facing, returning to, my violin playing, violin lessons, and general musical traumas of my teenage years. Wouldn't this "explain" the sudden birth and creation of my "new" left hand tendon pains?

Sunday, January 21, 2007

Performing Victory!

I played for our group last night. (That I even dared to get up, perform before our group, deal with and go past my performing trauma, and all without pay, is its own kind of miracle.) I started out with Capricho Arabe; played it stiff but okay. Followed it Farruca; again, stiff but better. Then I sang Mule Skinner Blues and Palace of the Czar. Of course, they were fine.

Barry suggested I play Recuerdos de la Alhambra. To my amazement, I did! It went over. People liked it. Wow!

Then I played Serenade by Malats; stiff but passable. Finally, I ended with Romance D'Amor; again stiff but passable.

All in all, it was a great night of victories. Why? The crowning achievement was playing Alhambra in public. The crowning comments (by Eugenia and Barry) were that although I missed many of the tremolo trebles, it didn't much matter since I played it with such sensitivity and expression. Yes, in spite of a weak tremolo technique, I have something to offer. Now, playing in public and "demonstrating" my weakness before

others, for some strange and wonderful reason, doesn't even matter anymore! I emphasized the bass, did the best I could; it all came through. What a victory!

Suppose I interpreted my aches and pains as repressions of excitement, denials of passion and the Wow State.

Would it be true? I don't know. It always proves to be true, but never seems so. The appearance of each individual ache and pain always seem so primary, strange, new, and different. It's as if they never happened before, never occurred, have no history, are absolutely unique.

But, of course, this is not only untrue, it is impossible. Everything moves in cycles; so do my aches and pains. What is their meaning? Why do I create them?

Could I really be right? Am I really so smart, perceptive, wise, and powerful? Dare I be right? This is powerful, useful, and healing wisdom. Believing it would be a major advance, a giant step in my self-confidence and psychological thinking.

Monday, January 22, 2007

Go for the Corybantes!

The Corybantes are represented as a kind of inspired people, subject to Bacchic frenzy, and inspiring terror at the celebration of the sacred rites by means of war-dances, noise, cymbals, drums, and arms. They have been called attendants of Rhea 1, identified as Cybele, the Mother of the Gods worshiped in Phrygia, and guardians of Dionysus 2 in his growing days. It is also told that the Corybantes came from Colchis (today Georgia in the Caucasus), and were given as armed ministers to Rhea 1 by the Titans.

The CORYBANTES are inclined to dancing and to religious frenzy, and worship the Mother of the Gods with orgies.)

This is a return to the mad shoe vision with power, confidence, and a vengeance.

But the vengeance doesn't have as much rage, anger, and repressions as the past. Or, at least, I am much more aware of their influence, role in creating aches and pains, their expression through aches and pains, and ultimately, the cure of aches and pains themselves through the liberating effect, the free flow liberation of the running-wild-on-the-lawn, mad shoe vision.

Tuesday, January 23, 2007

Confidence in Doubts

I cannot accept goodness unequivocally. Or at least, I have a very difficult time doing so. As soon as it comes along, an equal and opposite internal reaction occurs.

Witness the guitar goodness manifested this morning in my right hand finger tips; the feeling of speed, power, and touch. No doubt, it was left over from yesterdays light and lighting tremolo playing, one filled with competence, confidence, and power.

Can I ever accept such goodness in my soul? Will I ever be able to "live with it?" Stay tuned to find out.

Constant doubts and self-doubting along the path. What and where is my confidence? Well, I have confidence in my self-doubts. Strange, indeed.

Tremolo

I'm playing tremolo beautifully now.

What does it mean to me?

In its magnificent oneness, the tremolo is a beautiful, breakdown-in-magnificence place where right hand fingers and thumb blend together in a moving fireball of passion, separation-destroying love, and white-hot cosmic unity.

The tremolo is the ultimate Trembling; it is the awe part of the awe and wonder of worship. Thus the tremolo is intimately and totally related to God. No wonder it is so vital to me, so important that I play it.

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Time to Return

There's a whole country out there, and then a whole world. Hardly anyone has ever heard of my tours, books, folk dancing, weekends, other offerings, or of me.

It would be a grand challenge to break this mold.

Is that what is depressing me, making me mad? I'm sick of being in this box. The low attendance at Tuesday night folk dancing confirms it. I also know I'll do nothing to build up this tiny class. The best thing is to let it die by itself. Then, if I like, I can start over totally fresh. But I probably won't start at all. I have too many classes already. Unless, of course, someone offers me an actual large-paying job.

This vague depression has hung over me for a year during my transition period. It has abated somewhat as I move into my next phase. Yet it lingers with a vague headache.

Could it be caused by the stuck-in-a-box feeling? A disguised non-sales thing? My Bulgarian lessons have caused this grey cloud to diminish. Add to this my flying guitar, and even a touch of violin. Staying busy keeps me rolling higher. New causes are on the horizon.

What is making me vaguely mad, pushing me vaguely down? Stuck in the box? Mommy, must I now go outside to play, out into the world?

It's the return of the old conflict: I don't want to do it, but I have to. During my transition period, I mostly followed the "don't want to" mode. But I know if I follow the "have to," dive in, and actually do it, I end up being happier. The dreaded "sales thing" is also involved in the "have to."

With my first Bulgarian lesson, I ended my transitional period. I am moving on and into the next level. Yet in this new place, all my former conflicts, desires, and goals have re-emerged. None has gone away as I had hoped; none of the problems has been solved. My conflicts never end; they just move on to new levels. I'm not complaining about this, only amazed and puzzled. Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose.

At least I know where I am. Where? Nowhere, everywhere, a different place, the same place, both, all, cosmic unity, diversity, and the oneness of division. Whatever you want to call it.

I have returned to the old neighborhood. But now it is completely new. I'm walking down the same streets, but they look different; I have the same friends and family, but they look different; same business and artistic problems, but they look different. The physical surroundings look the same but feel different, the mental surroundings, too.

What about my success? Well, that so-called success was an illusion, a temporary respite from the conflicts and problems that beset and enhance the old neighborhood. Part of me always wanted to escape. By calling myself successful, and coating it with the "been-there-done-that" feeling, I managed to temporarily step away from the grand paradox, and avoid facing the conflicts and annoying problems that irritate but also enrich my life.

What a laugh. The joke's on me. After all that whining, suffering, wonder, thought, as those twists, and turns, transitions, ups and downs, and more, I'm back where I started, and this both happily and unhappily. Even the success state was paradox since I was not happy in it. What kind of success is it, if I'm not happy? Perhaps happiness, like touching God, is a temporary state, a spike suddenly driven upward that falls back to earth just as quickly. It is there to remind you of the higher forces but not to place you among them permanently.

Even my vaunted self-confidence, although true, was coated with: "Been there, done that, look how good I am!" I no longer had to face reality, to worry or tremble in fear before tour, business, performing, and other challenges. I could take a vacation from my emotions, put life-giving depressions and elations on hold, stay calm and quiet in my happily medicated dream creation, my self-induced state of bored and boring success.

But there's lots of life in this joke.

Vacation is one thing, escape is another.

If one extends vacation beyond its natural life, it turns into an escape.

I took a long vacation from reality, vacation from my conflicts, from my self. It was basically boring but necessary. Everyone needs a break. After about twenty or twenty-five years, I needed one, too. So I took it. It lasted about a year or two. But it's over now. Time to come home from Cape Cod. Time to return to my Teaneck trials, tribulations, triumphs, and losses.

Practice

"Alhambra" may never get better. Oh, the past few days I've been playing it great, but that has happened before and it never lasted. That's depressing (but of course this depressing thought was always part of the old neighborhood, a neighborhood to which I am returning). And part of me like the perpetual challenge the "Alhambra" always gave me. It "forced" me to constantly practice with the false hope that, through constant practice, I could somehow improve.

What have I learned? I like the constant practice. But as for improvement, focusing on the end product, it does not work. A false motivation. Ultimately, I'll practice because it is fun and a good in itself.

Practice for process, not results. My law of satisfaction states: Be not attached to fruits of your labor, but rather to love of the labor itself. I can't go wrong following that kind of dictum.

Worry about the future, and thoughts about results are forms of idolatry. Focus on "small things," the particulars in the here-and-now, is the best way to connect and (indirectly) focus on God.

Depth Exploration and relaxation Technique

The technique of depth exploration: In terms of guitar, Alhambra, and tremolo

depth, I am also moving down, down, down into the next level of relaxation.

Once again, reaching this tremolo relaxation point is somehow connected to the inside of my right index finger. Touch, feel, relax it. A return to the index finger; back to the old neighborhood, but with a new look.

Right Index Finger and Solar Plexus

Index and Abdomen,

Stunning guitar discovery: As I play and try to relax, wouldn't it be something to find that the root of my right hand index finger, its problems, and relaxations, is found, not in the finger itself, but in the solar plexis! Notice I work my abdominal muscles as I try to focus on and relax my index finger.

What is the relationship between index and abdomen, between right index finger and solar plexus? (And how about left index finger with its bar problems?)

I don't know about the above. . . .But I'm back on the "Alhambra" trail. It is (after all) part of the past, part of my return. I've been on the search for forty years; I still haven't found or been able to play (for long) the perfect Alhambra. Oh, I've touched it, had moments of illumination when I played it wonderfully, magnificently, perfectly, with soaring speed, volume, and beauty. But the moments never lasted. They reminded me of great "Alhambra" possibilities; but I could never sustain them, remain in the pristine, beautiful, and higher atmosphere. I always fell back to earth. It is my personal, guitaristic form of search for the Holy Grail. That is (perhaps) why it will never end.

I also recognize that I love the search. The momentary elation I feel after I have found it, that joyful but soon stagnant "success place," is usually (truthfully it is always; I'll use the adverb) followed by a down period, a depression. Evidently, my positive mind prefers the dynamics of a searching state. So psychologically, and unconsciously

may even destroy the beautiful Alhambra I create, in order to fall back to earth, so I can step on the path of process, and begin again.

Maybe unconsciously, I want my perfect Alhambra to fail. The beauty of the Holy Grail is found in the search for it, the dream, the power and flight of the questing imagination.

Ultimately, who would want the physical thing, the material entity of the frail Grail itself? After all, it's only a cup.

Thus I may never play the Alhambra perfectly. . . and I may never want to.

Sunday, January 28, 2007

Save Myself

I felt a sudden down when I awoke this morning. That quick and vague morning depression returns. Truly, it happens almost every morning. (But not necessarily after I've had a great previous night of working, dance teaching, a concert, etc. Does it happen on tour? I don't think so. But it does happen after watching television! And we watched three hours of Soprano DVD's last night. Aha, that's it, at least for this morning. That post-TV wasted, down feeling. I have it after movies, too. That's the "sad fact" I woke up to this morning. The waste and destruction of my imagination that I almost always feel after watching TV. No wonder I feel down, at least for this morning.

Watching TV is, for whatever reason, truly a poison for me. I try to please my wife by watching it, but actually, although it is sometimes has a sleep lure, and I can easily be sucked into it, it is really terrible for my brain and soul.

Could I act on this feeling? Should I act on this knowledge? Would it mean never watching TV again? Or watching it in a totally minimal fashion, and this with the realization that I'll feel robbed and down afterwards?

It's almost like over-eating. When I start I'm happy, but then I lose control, the

taste and eating itself take over, and soon I've stuffed myself with everything in sight, and feel gluttoned and miserable for several hours afterwards. It's a control problem. No control. I lose control; I give up control to the "outer" forces of either eating or TV.

It's a conflict. I know it's bad for me, but watching TV will make her happy. And I want to please her. What to do? Well, actually, I know what to do: Stop watching it! Stop trying to please her, at least, in this fashion. Deep down, I also believe that watching TV is bad for her, and that if I could ever wean her away from it, it would help her insomnia, let her sleep better, be healthier for her in every way. I doubt I would ever succeed in this venture, just as I doubt I could ever change her political views. Nevertheless, I know it's true; I know I'm right. Well, you can't change people's religion whether it is a political or TV watching religion.

Truly, TV watching is a noxious, evil influence. It's as if someone came into my house, robbed my imagination, stole my brain, and left me empty, void, battered, and useless, a helpless wimp lying on the floor. Ugh, ugh, ugh! I hate it!

This is a serious give-in problem. My wife is suffering from TV sickness. It's an incurable disease, unless, of course, she chooses to cure it. (But just like being a Bush-hating, global warming believer, and supporter of other Democratic Party illusions, part of the problem is she sees nothing wrong with it.)

Maybe the best approach is to save myself. At least that is in the realm of possibility. I can do it. Let the rest of the world go to hell, if it chooses.

Make never to hardly-never watching TV part of the mental health portion of my new 2007 life.

Affirmations

I went for a slow, hour-long run. I had "new" pains in my legs. I've had them for a few weeks now.

1. Maybe the pains in my legs are growing pains of rebirth.

2. The pains in my legs are growing pains of rebirth.

The first is a question. The second is an affirmation. Which is better for my psyche? I know the first is true. But so is the second.

Is caution and hesitation, a necessary first step before the power of affirmation can set in? Perhaps, maybe, yes! Such caution falls into the category of smart, even wise. (Too much caution is paralyzing, but that is another matter).

Caution is a prelude to affirmation.

Monday, January 29, 2007

If yesterday's running pains in my legs (and other pains of my body, in general) are not pains of rebirth, a new life ahead, what else could they be? Pains of the final descent, pains of stiffness, ultimate loss of consciousness, and death. Can I, could I accept this? Is it even true? Yes, of course, there is descent and ultimate death. But just as the sun sets, darkness comes, then is transformed into light by the morning sun, seeing pains as the final descent denies the cycles of rebirth. Since cycles of death and rebirth exist, seeing pain as permanent would be an illusion. Sure enough, even as I sit here writing, the pain is diminishing. My mind is shifting, moving on to other things. Although pain is a temporary fact of life, so is everything else.

Why am I thrown by these pains? Why do I have to re-examine these temporary annoyances anew each day in order to unravel and untie their meaning? Perhaps it is part of the New Leaf cycle, Starting Fresh Each Day: Adventures in the Creative Life. I wrote that myself. I might try believing it. Imagine, believing my own writing! Yesterday, at Jean McNally's reading, someone asked me what my books were about. My New Leaf subtitle, underlined above, would be a good answer.

I wonder if these "new" aches and sudden higher aching level have something to do with the exciting, wide-open world opening before me. This world has a new energy level filled with fire and dynamism; it is lacking many hang-ups, brakes,

resistances, fears, and hesitations I had in the old world.

I stand at the edge of a cliff peering into the fire below. A wild jump will put me exactly where I've always wanted to be. Do I want to be where I want to be? Can I stand it? That is the question. It is (perhaps?) is the cause of my "new" aches, and higher aching level.

Tuesday, January 30, 2007

World of Affirmations

I'm siding with affirmations.

Two days ago, after my run, I asked: "Is caution and hesitation, a necessary first step before the power of affirmation can set in?"

My answer today is, maybe yes, maybe no. But doesn't matter. Truth is, my caution and hesitation, based on old fears that something "unknown" will hit me, comes from the old neighborhood. Life in the new neighborhood tells me that, even if I am suddenly and unexpectedly hit, I will somehow handle it. In other words, my energy and competence will kick in and I'll survive. With this in mind, I can comfortably and gladly move into the new World of Affirmations! Positive affirmations.

This is indeed, a brand new approach to my brand new world.

In this world, I do not have to create my own fears before concerts in particular, and other public performances, such as folk dance teacher, leading a tour, and more. I can approach them calmly and with focus. That is my first affirmation.

I also shall not get overwhelmed by the flood of ideas I get, and all the work it engenders in my mind, work which I then have to do. That is my second affirmations.

Note that both affirmations, although positive, are framed in the negative. "I shall not fear performances, I shall not become overwhelmed." Would it be better, more helpful, to frame these in a positive mode? I don't know. That is my next question in and for the World of Affirmations.

Third affirmation: I shall look at my pains as growing pains, doorways to the next level, pathways to future worlds of light and illumination; the pains are the visceral reflections of destruction and breakdown of my old body which must precede the building of my new body to fit and handle my new mind.

This affirmation life would be a fundamental attitude change and approach for the 2007 New Year, and my new life, in general.

I have a fourth affirmation: Put the three affirmations above into practice.

Seeing, understanding, believing, and following the above affirmations is a tremendous, beautiful, wonderful, and qualitative breakthrough for me. I love its power!

Can I accept its beauty? After all, I have breakthroughs almost every day. Is this one just “another one”? Is it really so significant? Must I diminish its power by calling it “another one?”

Well, isn't this kind of diminishment part of the pre-affirmation life? It creates the hesitancy and caution of the pre-affirmation life, and is thus a subtle form of throwback to the old neighborhood, a self-diminishment of starting fresh every day.

How to handle it? Does it need a new affirmation?

What would the affirmation be?

Drop self-doubt.

Do I even dare think of such a thing?

Although self-doubt creates lots of pain, isn't it also the cause, reason, and font of wisdom? Do I need self-doubt to “make myself humble” and move up Jacob's ladder? By now, at this advanced age, don't I, shouldn't I know the truth? And accept its findings?

What are its findings?

Perhaps by now, I know who I am, what I can do, my strengths and weaknesses. I know myself. How much more can I know myself? If not now, when? There is no

more reason for self-doubt.

What a frightening, but reasonable thought!

Wouldn't drop self-doubt be part of affirmation one?

No question, self-doubt knocks my intuition and wisdom on its head. As a knocker, it belongs to the old neighborhood.

Aches I've felt during the past few weeks could show (do show) destruction of my old body; this body is dying in order to make room for a new one. My pains are "growing pains.

Above: "Could show" represents hesitancy and caution of the old neighborhood. Parenthetical "do show" represents the drop self-doubt, new neighborhood of affirmation life.

The Affirmation Life

The coffee shot through me. A momentary thrill of realization consumed my body. I see at the visceral birth of a whole new attitude. The affirmation life!

I love it!

Affirmation: Calm, focus, exhilaration.

(In this affirmation practice is assumed.)

The first, early morning, yogic cobra sends the dark energy of sexual exhilaration and liberation, a mysterious path of tantric energy, coursing throughout my body. Use it.

The left shoulder pain has something to do with restriction of exhilaration and liberation.

Friday, February 2, 2007

Discovery of the Joy and Exhilaration Finger:

Right Index Finger Points the Right Way

This is crazy. As I look for exhilaration, physical fun in and through the fingers, I find that my joy and exhilaration spot is on the right side of my index finger! This is the finger which has given me so much tremolo and arpeggio trouble over the years. When I touch, feel, and play using this “certain spot,” on the right tip of the finger where it almost brushes the nail, I feel power, strength, and mingled with it, a vague kind of joy. And exhilaration.

Could this be what I have been avoiding all these years? Is this the root of my psychological block against the Alhambra, and all arpeggios? The right index finger has always been the key to running wild on the guitar lawn, and mad shoe playing. In the past, it has always been restrained.

Is this an amazing discovery, or what?

I notice as soon as I made this awesome discovery, my left shoulder hurt. Could the cause of pain there be for the same reason? Restraining of joy, retreat from exhilaration, the hold-back shoulder.

Is my left shoulder, subtly and actually, my hidden joy and exhilaration shoulder? A reflection of the index finger?

As I speak about this, I want to believe it is true. And again, part of me knows it is true.

Sunday, February 4, 2007

New Concert Form

I have a concert coming up next Saturday at the Cosmo Club in Montclair. As I played, nay “worked on,” “Alhambra” for the millionth time, before Friday night’s folk dance class in Darien, these thoughts suddenly popped into my head: “All I have to do is sing and be a personality.”

What does this mean? At the Cosmo Club, and, in general, at all concerts and

performances, I don't have to prove myself anymore. Oh, sure, I can "throw in" a few classical guitar pieces, maybe after a few songs, stories, ad libs, after having relaxed the audience and myself, when the mood seems right. Basically, I have moved beyond proving myself. I have removed the "classical guitar/prove myself albatross that has been on my back for most, if not all, of my performing life.

I can go up on stage with "no plan," choose from my menu of songs, ad libs, stories, readings, classical, flamencan guitar, gaida, or whatever; I can do whatever comes into my head. I can walk out on stage a free man.

Walk out on stage a free man! Walk into the world of serendipity, pick delectables from my menu on the spot. Now there's a program filled with pleasure and surprise!

It is my new concert form.

Wednesday, February 7, 2007

Focus on Tone

Focus on tone is the gateway to memory and the unconscious.

My guitar pieces and songs are embedded in my unconscious. Their memory can be blocked, but never forgotten.

Focus on guitar tone (when playing), and I will never forget my guitar pieces; focus on vocal tone (when singing), and I will never forget my songs.

What about dancing? Haven't thought about it yet. Probably body tone. . . among other things.

Thursday, February 8, 2007

Total Well-Being

I have a feeling of total well-being. It started late yesterday afternoon, lasted into the evening; upon waking this morning I still have it.

Such a feeling of well being is rare, indeed. Of course, feelings never last, but

nevertheless, I'd sure like to keep this one. In order to do that, I have to figure out how I got it. Is it an accident? Or is there a fundamental reason why I feel it?

Did anything different happen yesterday? Anything I did or thought that was unusual?

First thing that comes to mind is: In the morning, after a short Bulgarian study stint, I began practicing for the upcoming Cosmo Club concert I am giving in Montclair this Saturday night. I sang for a half hour to forty-five minutes.

What could this have done?

First, breathing and singing bring oxygen to mind and body early in the morning. Second, singing encourages, opens up, and fosters my strong aspect, namely, my verbal, ad lib, performing self. It puts classical guitar second. Classical guitar practice always "tells" me I have to improve something, namely, perfect my "Alhambra," and beyond that, my entire classical repertoire. It tells and reminds me that I am less than I could be; it brings back childhood memories of diminishment and put-down. No matter how much I practice classical guitar, these old memories and habits of thought never leave me.

However, singing, like folk dancing and folk dance teaching, is easy. Basically, I feel, and have always felt, that there is "nothing to it." Most people tell me that is because I am dealing with the "real me." My talents include an ability to seize the moment whether it be in performing, running a tour, being a social director, or simply standing at a party kibbitzing with people. I love the verbal play of improvising on my feet; I'm natural, easy, and good at it.

Classical guitar playing has always, by contrast, been my Achilles heel. The rest have never been a problem. They are easy, nothing at all. I never practice them. I may leave them alone for months. Then, when I perform, they come back immediately. I never forget my songs. And, if I do, I simply and easily improvise and make up others.

But classical guitar playing remains ever a terror.

Yesterday, for some strange reason, I dropped my terror and went straight for

singing with all its positive implications. This was a performing thought I had for the first time in Darien last Friday. Four days later, yesterday, it came to fruition.

Is that why I'm feeling such total well-being?

Psychology, Superiority, and Diminishment

"Folk singer" is a term which, although totally easy, I have always looked upon with snobbish disdain. Perhaps it is because folk singing itself is so easy. After all, I have been trained as a classical musician! Yes, look how important, good, wonderful, and elite I am besides you peasants! Tell me, my stupid and talentless folk singers, how good do you really have to be in order to merely play three chords on the guitar? I myself have lived among the stars, the great classical musicians and composers of the past, Mozart, Beethoven, and more. I myself have touched the complexities and glories of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto! Plus the Bruch Concerto, Lalo's Symphony Espagnol, and more. Look how marvelous I am next to you beginners.

I might look into the roots of classical elitism and anti-folk singer snobbishness. Hasn't it always covered latent feelings of inferiority? Don't I hide feelings of self-diminishment behind this so-called classical superiority? Indeed.

One Foot in the Promised Land

Fun and Enjoyable, but not Necessary

A giant forty-year old albatross is lifting from my back.

Why now? Who knows?

Perhaps I'm just lucky. But luck is for Norwegians.

Or maybe the Higher Powers wanted me to spend forty years in the desert. This sounds more reasonable. After all, I'm Jewish.

Total Well-Being is the Promised Land.

It doesn't mean I can rest easy. But I can certainly rest differently. Struggles are easier when you have one foot in the Promised Land.

Bulgarian: Six Week Period

Six weeks is my “period” time. It takes six weeks of daily practice and lessons to “get into” Bulgarian. I wonder, I guess, I believe, I know this is true of other learning activities.

I might also practice speaking Bulgarian to Bernice, and anyone and everyone else. They may not understand it, but they rarely understand me when I speak English. Also, it may pique their interest in what I am saying!

Kakvo znatchi tova? What does that mean?

Write in Bulgarian. Use the Latin alphabet instead of the Cyrillic. Follow Bulgarian words, phrases, and sentences with English translations. (Or can I buy, find, download the Cyrillic alphabet and use it?)

Saturday, February 10, 2007

Return to Folk Dancing

What does returning to folk dancing mean?

First, it means focusing and finding the next generation, the forty-to-sixty crowd, new dancers who can both afford to go on tours, and something else I can't think of yet.

Secondly, new folk dance study – for myself. What does that mean?

Well, I'm starting with Bulgarian: I immediately see extending my study to reading Bulgarian history in Bulgarian. Also attending workshops, learning new choreographies from other teachers, and who knows what.

Finally, it means building up my folk dance groups! The question: “Why should I bother? Why should I put in the effort since folk dance classes do not pay?” has been vaguely answered. It's a return thing. I started out a bit over twenty-five years ago with a vision of making a living in folk dancing. I would do this with a combination of classes, weekends, and tours. I succeeded. After two years at the top, and then living in the filled-with-nothingness, transitional world of transition and post-transition, I was

finally ready to return. Then “Return to what?” became the question. Return to my past loves was the answer. So, even though everything has changed, basically, nothing has changed since then. I’m back to where I started, but this time with a new, reinvigorated, wiser, more worldly and confident me. That’s the only difference. But it is a big difference. Life in the material world, making a living, is still a pain in the ass; but I know most of the pains quite a bit better. That’s the only. . . but big difference. Age and experience have made me more patient and wiser; I can more easily accept and deal with my loves and passions.

Of course, business-wise, my folk dance classes, although they have paid little, are still the foundation for my weekends and my tours. True, my weekends are down to one a year, and my tours are now advertising, and picking up people nationally. But on this national level, I am aiming (as Lee suggested, and I agreed) at folk dancers! Thus my tour base, in advertising and meaning, is a folk dance base. By building up my folk dance classes I am increasing this base.

Programming

Laughs, Comedy, Whimsy, Humor, and Relaxation

Actually, performance-wise, I am, strangely, most comfortable, especially in the opening, with comedy.

Can this whimsy, fantasy, imagination, off-the-wall border humor that I do, that I need to do in the beginning of a program, be called comedy? Well, what did Victor Borge or Tom Lehrer do? Of course, I also love Seeger, Dylan composer type stuff, Beethoven, Tarrega, and the classical others? But, of course, they could come later in the program.

Maybe this is the social persona, the mask, the persona-lity I need to present in the beginning of the program, in order to “introduce” myself, and both relax myself (most important) and defend against potential (and unfortunately, childhood expected) audience barbs.

Well, for whatever reason, this kind of “spontaneous fantasy through comic release” may be my best kind of introduction and opening for me. (I just don’t like or feel comfortable with the word “comedy.” Perhaps whimsy or humor, whimsy and humor, (whimsical humor) would be better.

My whimsy gets a laugh, and audience laughs relax me, but I wouldn’t call it comedy.

Sunday, February 11, 2007

Leading the Credential-Free Life

I would think that, at this age, with so much life experience, I would be beyond credentials. At least I would hope so. Well, I’m starting and traveling on a new road. One of my goals as a performer is to simply be able to stand before others and vibrate.

Here’s a new affirmation: Make the credential-free life part of the trip.

The thing is about my song – I really don’t have to practice them, unless, of course, I feel like it, want to, or it gives me some kind of pleasure. In that sense, it’s like Bulgarian, classic guitar, and violin.

Truly, I don’t have to do anything. I may not even have to find performing work.

Where does all this lack of “have to’s” leave me?

Peaceful, relaxed, unpushy. And somewhat in wonder at my morning state.

Wanting More as a Good-In-Itself

Don’t I, doesn’t one, always want more? Isn’t this part of the growth and development gene?

If this is so, and I believe it is, then I still want more for my classical guitar playing, songs, stories, and all; and this, even though I may never use most of what I

learn in public. I also won't be using most of my Bulgarian. Yet the idea of wanting more, of striving for growth, development, self-improvement, of wanting more of oneself, is evidently, a good-in-itself.

There was a nuanced blip in my attitude towards performance which came out of my Cosmo Club concert. It gave birth to a desire to do more of my programs in a different program venue. Yes, the forty-year old performing pressure is off. Beyond that, basically, nothing has changed. More remains, as ever, a good-in-itself.

In spiritual parlance this would be called "ever moving towards the Light."

Positive View of Disappointment

Positive View of Non-Registrants and/or Tour Cancellations

My negative thoughts are a form of self-protection. Suppose I deeply believe they will register: I take a positive approach. Then people cancel! Suppose, instead of being disappointed, I consider their cancellations as positive! A hidden positive. I don't yet know why their cancellation is a good thing, but often so-called disappointments and "negative events" turn out to be good things. Something better comes in to take their place; the vacuum is filled with something better. This has truly happened so often that I consider it a truth. I don't always know what or why the universe is "doing" something to me, or the cosmic, long-term reason for a happening.

So, on a personal level, it might be good to see even disappointment and the potential for disappointment in a positive light. First, for me, on a personal, vibrational level, it will make me feel better. That in itself is a good thing. And, on a universal, cosmic level, it, no doubt, has its own reason for being right.

Result so far: Accept the positive view that they will all register! (Then, if they don't, consider it a positive as well. After all, they could have turned out to be a very negative, pain in the ass registrant, one who secretly, negatively, and eventually, even publically, works to ruin my tour.

So non-registrants, and even registrants who cancel, can and should be seen as

hidden tour improvements, positives in disguise!

Roll in the Joy of it!

Folks are e-mailing, calling, and registering for Bulgaria! Wow! This is so exciting!

Any negative thinking here only serves to bring me down and thus “relax” me. But, if I can handle “Wow! This is so exciting!” why bother relaxing? Why not simply roll in the joy of it!

What could be better? I could add running down the street, clicking my heels, and shouting “Wahoo!”

What’s the difference in meaning between “business” and “entrepreneur?”

“Entrepreneur” is classy, French, imaginative, creative, and dynamic. It includes artistic and spiritual aspects.

“Business” is dry, practical, down-to-earth, rational, plodding, unimaginative, calculating, an accountant’s term. It is more Marxist, capitalist, material, and boring.

The word “business” lacks imagination. It is more about management of existing resources, not the creation of new ones.

Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs are imaginative; they explore and create.

What a difference a word makes!

Friday, February 16, 2007

I wonder if by devoting myself to Bulgarian, by focusing on the country, its language, culture, history, and more, I am subtly effecting vibrations of the universe, which is quietly, subtly, and definitely, sending me people for my tour.

I want to believe this. It’s possible, too. What a good thing all around.

Politics and the news are part of the entertainment business.

No matter what political side you're on, reading the newspaper or hearing the news keeps you in a high state of anger and indignation at the stupidity and injustices of this world. Most of the time, there is little to nothing you can (or will) do about it except, of course, stew in your own juices.

Sure it's good entertainment. But beyond that, is reading and knowing about all this "news" worth the effort?

Monday, February 19, 2007

Exciting!

I looked at my e-mail. A letter from a Houston folk dancer expressing interest in our tour of Greece. Registrations for Bulgaria and Greece are trickling in. Plus, with Carol's work, ideas, and enthusiasm, and help, my new New Leaf compendium book is coming along, and adding Barry W.'s work, ideas, and computer skills, my new web site is almost finished.

Plus, my Bulgarian language skills are growing. Best of all, my guitar playing is flourishing in its new mode. Even Bernice commented on how beautifully I played "Leyenda," Bach's "Prelude in D minor" and one other piece I can't remember. I played all these pieces slowly, thoughtfully, using free stroke, and in the new, inward, for-myself-along, gnostic guitar method. This kind of practice started after my Cosmo Club performance last week. That's when I put together a New Jim Gold Show with new programming; it starts with "Oh Suzannah," followed by "Moscow Nights in Five Languages," "Long Island Yodel," "Tara the Stonecutter," and then, maybe a classical piece (I say "maybe"). This new show has mostly singing, and hardly any classical guitar.

Basically, all these openings and developments are so exciting!

Danger

What state of mind do I want? Which state do I prefer?

I know I have the ability to choose. Which one do I really prefer? That is the question.

I want excitement. But too much excitement bowls me over. Do I want balance, to modulate my excitement and create a balanced state of mind? Isn't that rather boring?

True, I can go over the cliff with too much excitement. But don't I enjoy the thrill of going over. . . and its danger?

Do I like the danger of the "too much" state? Do I really prefer imbalance over balance, imprudence over prudence, wild over calm? Sure I know you need both, and parts of me want both. Still and nevertheless, which one do I prefer?

I have to say, I lean to the side of danger. . . moderate danger, but danger nevertheless. Danger and excitement work together; they are a team. You walk along the edge of the abyss. On one side has the plummeting fall filled with shut-down, terrifying danger, the other, ever-expanding, breath-taking, high-riding, heaven-bound excitement.

Evidently, I need, want (and even love) danger. What a scary thought. What a revelation!

When I said "scary," I immediately thought about my wife. Behind her stands my mother, and perhaps women in general. Perhaps they are the promoters of balance, pushing the principle of moderation, the ones saying, "Calm down. Stop. Don't run wild."

These nay-sayers are both out there and within me. They are the fear-filled, "reasonable" voices of don't. "Don't fly, don't take a chance, don't even try."

I hate these voices. But I may presently, to my infinite pain, shame, and sorrow, pay too much attention to them.

The stock market was dangerous. . .and thrilling. Running tours to foreign lands (especially dealing with Soviet Union types) was dangerous in its potential for humiliation. In retrospect, it too was thrilling.

Well, I'm now more skilled at running tours; they are no longer so dangerous. I am out of the stock market, too.

So I'm (somewhat) out of danger. Is this quite dull?

Pushing the envelope, breaking down walls, moving beyond borders, seeing how far I can go, testing myself, riding on wings of curiosity, exploring, discovering, diving into the unknown. Danger, danger, danger.

What can I do now that is dangerous?

Perhaps I have underestimated, or not even considered, the role and importance of danger.

Where will I find my danger now?

Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Aiming for Forty:

Birth of FPM, Future Positive Mode

I see a "real" ending in sight. A small but potential torrent of tour registrations, this time for our Greek tour in October, "poured" in yesterday. I spoke to Else Dodge in Houston, Texas. At the end of the conversation, she said three (or was it four?) more couples from their Houston folk dance group were thinking of joining us. Suddenly, I realized Texas and our Greek tour was now in play. I then listed all the present registrants, then the possible ones (the GP's, or good potentials), and came up with 33 people! And it's only February. The tour is still eight months away. That gives me about three or even four more good months to sell it. I could hit forty, and this for Bulgaria, too.

Instead of living in the conditional tense, I've decided instead to directly aim for forty! Per four. That's a total of eighty people on two tours. This is, on the one hand, an amazing and unbelievable number; on the other hand, at the rate things are going and looking now, it is achievable. I have a choice to think positively (eighty people), or doubtfully and negatively – maybe, possibly, I might, will I?, could I? etc. get eight

people. In other words, casting doubt into the possibility.

Yes, I have choice, at least in my thinking. I'm choosing the positive approach. I'm thinking, visualizing, bringing in, eighty people. I see it in my mind. I'm there. The future in the present. No more life in conditional mode. I am living in a new tense. I'll call it positive future mode.