

Steady Playpen

Thursday, October 21, 2004

Choreography, Guitar, and Song

What's new in what I call my post-Lee Otterholt period?

1. By listening to and turning my old World of Guitar, Lincoln Adair record, and American Folk Songs and Ballads, into computer files, recording them, I have started a new phase of my musical and performing life. I have begun to unite the old guitar/song me, and the present guitar/son me into a new, transformed, reborn guitar/song me.

All this may signify a future return to the performing life. Somehow I picture it as happening during the 2005-06 season. This year is still dedicated to tours and sales of tour. . . or so we'll see. (Plus I've still got to learn how to make recordings. That would be the grand finale, the completion, of the many year computer learning plan.)

2. I've also started to write down all my choreographies. This is a kind of work I used to hate. Now, strangely, I am not only not hating it anymore, I'm even getting a touch of satisfaction out of the new choreographic writing skills I am developing. Only a touch, but a touch, nevertheless.

Combined with this is acceptance of myself as a gone-public choreographer.

Choreography: So, to summarize, by studying all the other ways other dance teachers write down their choreographies, I am developing my own way of writing down my choreographies.

Song: Also, my old voice has run its course; now I want to "learn to sing again," I want to practice and "get back to the way I used to sing" . . . with such a good voice. (Although I never thought it was particularly good back then.) Once upon a time I

wanted to forget everything I knew about singing. It came so easily. I wanted a vocal challenge. Well, now, after listening to my old records, I somewhat have one: To sing the “way I used to.”

None of this stuff about my voice is quite right. But something new is slowly happening, a new kind of beginning. It’s still the early stages; I’m groping; I don’t quite understand it yet.

Guitar: Over the years, guitar has definitely moved forward. (Nevertheless, I am amazed at my old speed of piccado and even tremolo as demonstrated on my old record.)

All three above are a development of gone-public.

Sales have temporarily drifted into the background. For the next month or so I’ll probably do minimal phone calls and etc.

My debt is evidently a long-time burden I don’t seem able to shake. Perhaps I’ll think long-term. It took twenty years to build it; it may take twenty years to fix it, pay it off.

The energizing aspects of fast: fast guitar playing, fast dancing (Krivatorena, Troaca, etc.), “fast” or rather more push-ups.

The energizing aspects of pushing oneself.

Fascinating Energy Thought, Approach, and Exploration

I have been suppressing my Alhambra energy for years. It is located somewhere within my tightness.

Perhaps now, by playing fast and tight, I can discover and unlock it.

As soon as I think of the Alhambra audience the trauma returns; I “tighten” and

lose it.

The tightness and trauma are related. My energy is in the tightness, but is blocked by the trauma.

Can I somehow wed tightness and trauma and turn it into a new form, and thus create a renaissance, a rebirth of energy?

It works, no question about it. Combining tightness and trauma, the synthesis of tightness and trauma, creates the energy. It energizes me.

I can't deny my tightness; I can't deny my trauma. They are both part of me. Thus they must be synthesized, combined, before the new guitar-playing, folk-dancing me can be created.

It's no big deal. It's done. It's fun, too. A play thing. Isn't this New Leaf called Playpen?

Alhambra as a plaything.

It's nothing. It just plopped into my lap like a wet fruit.

I'm sick and nauseous from this revelation. I wonder if this is the same nausea I often feel, if I often feel this nausea, when I stand at the border of my energy. . . but, due to preceding fears of tightness and trauma, do not grab it.

I wonder if this nausea is not my energy (in a repressed, twisted form) trying to bubble up. But its repressed, twisted form makes me nauseous.

Thus my energy is in the nausea. Like tightness, it contains the power.

I am probably nauseous over its (the energy) repression. This is exhibited in burping, too.

Tightness, nausea, burping, trauma: Wedding all to each other. Touching my energy. . . and power.

I am not so much afraid of my energy as I am of my power.

Of course, my energy is my power. But I see energy as more of a universal, an abstraction, I see power as more personal.

Why am I afraid of power? Because I will impose it upon others! (Strangely, I am not afraid of imposing it on myself!) Impose power is what I do as a leader, a public person, a gone-public person.

Thus the fear of power is related to the fear of going public.

Friday, October 22, 2004

In writing down my folk dance choreographies, b'simcha has totally fled. As for writing down choreographies, I never had any b'simcha in the first place.

Since Lee left, since I listened and recorded my old World of Guitar and other records, since I started writing down my choreographies, in this entire post-Otterholtian period, all my b'simcha has vanished. I am going through some kind of emotional whirlwind. Somehow, the bottom has fallen out.

It has something to do with the clashing of my old, ancient, and new, today life.

Many brand new events are in the whirlwind. They include writing my choreographies, singing, playing guitar with renewed energy (as above), throwing, once again, my all into exercises, folk dancing, and more (the days, nay year, of experimenting with "doing less" to see how my body (and mind) can take it) have ended; even performing is opening up again.

I've also completely stopped reading and studying. Maybe this will slowly translate into reading (and studying) my own New Leaf writings. Perhaps even editing? We'll see.

Thus the new possibilities are:

1. Writing my choreographies
2. Singing
3. Guitar playing with the new (above) energy and power.
4. Return to giving my "all" in folk dancing, yoga, running.
5. Reading, studying, editing my New Leaf. (Hmm and wow).
6. Eventually: return to performing, making CD's of my old records, etc.

Mucho hay in the wind.

Waves of old and new life meet, ocean and land clash. Crashing waves on the beaches of New Land.

Ocean and land merge to configure a new country, even a new continent.

A cosmic shift. See at it that way.

My energy is found in my tensions. That is the truth I am looking into.

There has been, is taking place, has taken place, a tremendous qualitative change.

Instead of "curing" my tensions, I am diving into them, diving into their energy.

This may be the easiest route; the road of non-resistance.

Learning how to dive into each misery. . . and turn it into an energy source!

It may take a life time to learn this, but it's worth it.

What a Leyenda! Crash, crash. I just tore it off.

It frightens me. I am retreating back into my shell. Should I? Do I need such protection and restoration? Or can I continue, floating easily on the river, diving into its turbulent, swirling, swift-flowing waters without rest.

Do I need a break, a relaxation?

Or is ease in the turbulence its own form of rest?

I'll aim for ease in the turbulence, living in the friction of discomfort, diving into the tension. It may be its own form of "relaxation."

How do you handle the fear?

Maybe you do more, more, more, faster, faster, faster, until it breaks. Then comes the relaxation.

The trauma of how good I am.

I sang Long Journey. What a beautiful song! How magnificent, philosophical, sad, and elevating! I broke down crying.

How could I sing such a song? How could I have written it? How could I let such a beautiful, moving, powerful creation lie dormant for so many years? Never going public, never believing enough in myself to show or sing it to anyone?

The trauma of goodness, the trauma of how good I am: for me it is one of the most powerful traumas. Is this also true for others?

Is it really the trauma of how good I am? Or is it the trauma of realizing my connection to God?

What is my goodness but Goodness, and ultimately, Godness.

This feeling of union with Magnificence, of breaking down before the incredible power of its Beauty, is really the ultimate humility before the Higher Power.

Indeed, my goodness is my connection to Magnificence. And in this secular world, such mystical union with the Highest Force is misunderstood, frowned upon, looked at as crazy, psychotic, and thus its feeling, and certainly its public expression, can be a worldly danger.

But fuck it. I'm going public with it anyway.

My ignorance has been in denying its overwhelming importance.

Saturday, October 23, 2004

Putting the Pieces Together

Not much time or mental space for wildness. It's a mop-up year. I'm putting the pieces of the past together for future use.

Romance D'Amor. So beautiful. I'm so lucky to play guitar. Looking inwards. Inward is outward.

"New Voice"

I heard my old World of Guitar record. To my surprise, I sang well; I had a good voice.

Now, thirty years later, my voice may well be "different." Perhaps it has "changed" like my guitar playing has changed. My guitar playing has slowed down, become deeper, more profound, more rubato-like. Perhaps this is true of my voice as well. It has become a "new voice," deeper, more profound, bass, lower, rich, tonal. . . . Consider this.

Monday, October 25, 2004

Entering New Leaf and the Political World

Michelle called with two possible jobs during my next March Budapest and Vienna tour. I decided to take them provisionally meaning, 1. If the second job come in I'll take them both. 2. I'll either not go on my Budapest and Vienna tour (let Adam lead it as he usually does.) or if I get a big enough registration, I'll go on the tour a day or two late.

I also recognize that my Norway tour, even with my hoped-for strong Lee Otterholt presence, may not happen. Lee may sell no one.

It has been a rather down week. Part of it was the recovery and realization that, not only have I done all I can for my tours, but that despite that, they may not go. Of

course, it is still too early to tell. Nevertheless, I can now recognize that possibility.

After a “week in Post-Otterholtian recovery” I am now ready to move on.

On to what?

First, here’s what I wrote by hand in my journal during our overnight stay at the Marriott Hotel in Princeton.

“A dead hand. . .but ready to read.

“With whom will I consult? Who will lead the way, show me the direction?

“I am the wise man. I will consult with myself, lead my own way, find my own direction.

“But what of others? Won’t they show me a thing or two?

“Who are others?

“They are myself. I am me; others are me. The little self is in the ego; the Self is universal.

“We are one. All is One.

“When I read my own work, when I delve into and remind myself of the wisdom in New Leaf, I am consulting with “others.”

“Thus I return to the past to understand and direct my present.

“It is time to read my New Leaves for their wisdom and fun. This is and will be my “new form” of editing.

“Back to learning and using Quark. Start on New Leaf Volume III.”

Also I bought two new books in Princeton: The Diary of Anais Nin and The Road to Serfdom by F.A. Hayek.

Do these books point me in new and future directions? Are they symbols of my future reading, study, and approach? I believe they are.

The Diary symbolizes my new commitment to “editing” (I’d better find a better word) my New Leaf journals. I’ll work on Quark.

Road to Serfdom may symbolize my actual reading and study of politics. My

personal meaning of freedom and its expression through political and social means.

I am always tongue-tied and frustrated in the expression of my political view. This has been a life-long frustration. The words just don't come out. True, I live now mostly among the opposition, and my views may indeed be dangerous for my job. Among the folk dance world, I may indeed lose customers if I express my views. But this danger is not what frustrates me. (I can recognize and deal with such a realistic, job-related danger; I can deal with the intolerance of my tolerance loving liberal friends.)

But no. I have a built-in, life long, type of aversion to expressing myself in politics. As soon as I open my mouth, my tongue starts moving backwards; I retreat into the center of my mind, and there I find a field full of mush. And this despite the fact that I am smart, know many facts, and am well read history. I am not going to analysis why I am always so tongue-tied (it's no doubt an upbringing thing); but now (perhaps) am ready to try moving past it.

Such a move will not help me economically. It's won't get me more bookings, more jobs, more customers for my tours, weekends, and dance classes. (But of course, neither does my writing.) But it may relieve me of a deep and ongoing frustration; it may also help me face and deal with my own amazing intolerance, the constant feeling arising in my mind when I talk to the opposition. It is expressed in the sentence: "I can't believe how stupid these people are? It is absolutely amazing. How can so-called educated people be so naive and dumb?"

Deep in my heart, I cannot understand why and how others cannot see things the way I do. Of course, I am too socially "smart" to say this in public. But nevertheless, deep in my heart, I truly believe it.

Are my thoughts and thought-process really so unique? Am I really that different? Why don't people see things the way I do? It is all so obvious to me.

Nevertheless, just because the sun is rising, and then shining in their eyes, does not mean they can or will see it. And nothing I say or do will make them see it. The blind evidently, remain blind. They are invested in their blindness. Nothing but a

catastrophic miracle will make them change. And even that might not work. I stand amazed at my powerlessness to change the mind of others.

I still cannot comprehend this.

Nevertheless, I might be able to lessen my own frustration, and even “accept” the folly of others, if I sink my mind into social readings and political works.

We’ll see where this leads, or if indeed, it leads anywhere.

But at least for now, it is a new reading direction.

Also I may tie my deep love of personal and artistic freedom, something I know I have, to a more abstract, political love of freedom.

I hate slavery, bureaucracy, and most often, the opinion of others (when it doesn’t agree with mine.)

Does this express intolerance, a belief in myself, or combination of both? Good questions.

This may also be part of my love of intellect which I discovered at the University of Rochester, Aix-en-Provence, and the University of Chicago; there I discovered books, reading, philosophy, and ideas. True, I always loved them reading about them, and the fact that such ethereal things existed. But my own inadequacies, plus the dozens of intellectual snobs around me, helped silence any verbal displays.

Plus I didn’t quite understand, or felt it would be made fun of, my own passion, deep emotions, and love of learning. My love was based more on the spiritual Melt-down and Magnificence of a Beethoven symphony. It was a mystical, non-verbal, spiritual melt-down, an oceanic merging with the universe. How could I explain such a thing to my secular, non-religious, semi-communist friends, or even to myself who, at that time, believed in all that shit?

In an case, I’ve come a long way in the past years. I am ready to unveil and face my long buried political self, give it a voice, and move on.

But the foundation of my love of freedom, intellect, the arts, and the artistic vision is based primarily and thoroughly on love. And that love is and was discovered at an early age, a teen age. It unveiling itself during the Beethovenian melt-down, oceanic, merging-with-the-universal, mystical, religious experience I always found in music.

Wednesday, October 27, 2004

Preparations for Fiction. . .and a Post-Transitional Life

The Mop-Up Year

Yes, I'd like to return to fiction. . . some day. But how?

Although I need this process of journal writing to clear and understand my mind, I'm getting tired of writing or reading it. Seems I'm somewhat repeating myself. I may well be ready for some new voice, some new way of writing. . . but somehow, not yet. It feels that this year has to first run its tour, sales, performance, book publishing, CD production, and miscellaneous course.

But maybe it will take less than another transitional year. I've thrown the idea out there, written it down.

The writing of New Leaf is a ten-year process that appears to have run its course, and served its purpose. It may take a year to wind it down, but essentially it feels like it is "over."

Of course, I will keep writing in this journal fashion. It is and always will be good for my mind. But its importance, like the former importance of performing, tours, and my other lives, will fade into the background.

I sense that I am preparing for a new voice. I don't what it is yet. Until it forms more fully, perhaps during this new transitional year, I will occupy myself with worldly things: details, mop-ups such as producing my own CD's, recording my old songs, and "new" classical guitar playing. writing down my old choreographies, looking through, pruning and preparing to publish my New Leaves, and tour and booking sales.

Pulling and putting all the loose strands together.

Yesterday I wrote:

“So important to reread my own New Leaf for personal direction and inspiration.”

“I need the cleansing of the Great Depression.”

“I need to be very busy to be “happy;” very busy. . .pushing meaningful work.”

Rebirth of the Body and Mind

All the aches and pains I have been experiencing since the beginning of my August tours to Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary, pains which I am just now starting to face and come to grips with, are probably manifestations of my body and mind, with its old way of thinking having served its purpose, slowly breaking down and destroying itself before the new body needed for the new life up ahead can be created.

The body dies, and with it the mind.

On its ashes a new body and mind is resurrected.

One needs the Great Depression to both clean out remnants of the old; this creates a vacuum, a “depression,” into which the new will flow.

Strangely, part of last year’s experiment was to see you little I could do with my body, I much I could hold back, minimize my exercise routines, and see how long I could survive.

“Can I survive doing less?” was my question.

The answer was yes, but without high feelings, the stimulating, world-blowing, mind-boggling endorphin release of giving it my all. Taking a chance of hurting myself by “doing too much,” taking a chance of injury and pain in order to break boundaries. This was my strange experiment. Can I give up my loves, my wild passions which often damage, hurt, and destroy my body, can I give them up and still survive? If I can, would I even want to survive that way?

This was, strangely, my question. At this point, the experiment has run its course. It was successful. It answered my question. The answer I came up with is: no.

I am ready to return to my passion. Notice I wrote a whole New Leaf named "Beyond Passion." This was a record of my experimental "no passion," "passionless," "dumping and vague suppression of passion," period. My newest Leaf is called Playpen. This one may combine passion, which I evidently am returning to on a new level, with the newly August tour-discovered focus on doing the best job possible, concentration combined with b'simcha fun. This is the ultimate meaning of Playpen, to turn the world into my playpen. How to do this: focus on turning the higher forces loose in my land; open the spigot. Let the endorphin, passion, fun-release program ride!

Relationship to Passion as Reflected in my New Leaves

Thus my running wild on the lawn is all about my relationship to passion. Looking back, first I dove into passion (New Leaf: Passion), then I retreated from it (Beyond Passion), now I am returning on a new level (Playpen).

Passion: Jan-Oct. 2003

Beyond Passion: Jan-Oct. 2004

Playpen: Oct, 2004-

Fascinating: my journals are a record of my emotional changes and growth. Each period takes almost a year. Thus so important to keep dates, and a record.

What is the result of this experiment? What are my conclusions after a year of looking beyond passion?

There is nothing Beyond Passion, except perhaps passion on "new level," a deeper, more focused, and intense passion.

Playpen may not be the appropriate name for this new passion place. Perhaps Fire and Flame, Sun and Light would be better.

The question I ask is: How can I handle the fire, flame, sun, heat, and light.

Novel: Jacob and the Flames of Kabbalah

Thursday, October 28, 2004

To reinvigorate the old programs on a playpen level.

They are old programs. But they are the programs I love. And they must be brought back to life.

1. Yoga. I'm dropping the name calliyoga.

Even though my guitar playing is in my own style, I haven't changed its name from guitar playing to calli-guitar. Why then do it with yoga? I do yoga my own way; I've developed my own style. Everyone eventually does. Why bother then changing its name? Leave the old name, accept the fact that everyone "changes" their own yoga, does in their own way, in their own style. Same as guitar, running, and everything else.

Sure my push-ups, sit-ups, and squats, my callisthenics, are part of yoga. . . but they are still yoga.

It is all one Yoga.

The Folk Dance Party (as in "We're Having A")

"Folk Dancers of the World Unite.

You have nothing to lose but your pains!"

Our party is all-inclusive: We go in all directions!

Moving to the right, to the left, into the center. . . we even go backwards! We travel sideways. We jump and squat; up and down. We do diagonals. . . to the right or left, into the center and out.

How do we keep order in our party? No one disagrees with us. Led by the cry, "Dance in the same direction as everyone else!" the line or circle of dancers, holding hands in relaxed, loose, friendly fashion, simply tramples right over the resistor. Non-

verbally direction is the way to go.

Our slogan: "Onwards and sideways!"

Base it on the Communist Manifest: Folk Dancers of the World Unite. You have nothing to lose but your pains!

Friday, October 29, 2004

Fine-Tuning

I must say that, to my amazement and surprise, reading my New Leaf 3 in the morning is better than reading someone else's work. In the process of rereading it, I fine-tune it.

Fine-tuning is a much better word for me than editing. I hate editing! But I don't mind fine-tuning at all. In fact, I like it! Its like perfecting a guitar piece; I play it over and over again, for weeks, months, years, and, in the process, I make tiny changes and "improvements." Editing is shit. But I can see that fine-tuning might be, can be, is fun.

I've always needed the proper word, the proper attitude and approach. Now I've got it. Fine-tuning is the way to go, not only in writing, but in the activities of my miracle schedule life.

Reconciliation Brings "Objectivity" and Fine-Tunement

But reading and fine-tuning my New Leaf Journal reminds me of the best things I can do, did do, and will do with my life.

And for some reason, I am now a little more distant from it, a little more objective. This new mental state has happened, taken place since I was able to hear my old records, and then my files and a CD out of them. Somehow I am reconciling with my past. Past and present lives are coming together. I am able to recognize that I was once "good" and this fact no longer destroys me. I am able to look into the fire and fires of the past and not be devoured by the flames. The past is not as hot, and as painful, as

it used to be.

I don't know why that is. Perhaps it is simply a development, the right time in my life to reconcile past and present. But for whatever reason, it is happening. And I am now able to attach my past to my present and fine-tune them both.

Yes, for some developmental reason, it is no longer painful to look at the past; no longer painful to see my former (or even present) "goodness."

Mother's clamp-down lid has finally faded away.

"Fine-tuning" is a juicy musical term, whereas "editing" is dry and dusty.

But I also want to move on to new adventure.

Can the freshness and excitement of new adventures be found in fine-tuning?

Adventure is found in focus, concentration, and giving-it-my all. This leads to break-throughs; break-throughs are the essence of adventure.

The "falling asleep" phenomenon is the resistance to breaking through. It is the wall of sleep I erect to "protect" myself from the fire of break-through.

What can I do about this? For the moment, nothing. Being aware of it is the first step. (Maybe the only step).

It is the constant eternal conflict. Let's face it: sleep is pleasant. But fire is exciting. Which is "better?" Is there a "better?"

I suppose deep down I believe fire is better than sleep. But of course, I cannot have one without the other. Each has its own goodness in its own time.

Therefore, or but, at morning practice, should I "follow my feelings" and give in to sleep? Or should I fight them, go past them, and dive into the fire?

"My goodness!" is usually an expression of surprise.

If I can accept "my goodness," I can move beyond it?

"Beyond goodness:" I wonder what that means.

Saturday, October 30, 2004

Due to fear of the spontaneous forces of a free society, unleashed largely by the French Revolution, the French utopians developed the governing ideas of socialism.

Is that why I "secretly" never understood all these intellectual discussions by my socialist/communist friends, Mark Axelrod, the Socialist Club I belonged to, even that Russian history professor everyone admired, at the University of Chicago?

Perhaps "secretly," and deep in my heart, I was always the rebel, the individualist, the artist seeking my own personal vision; perhaps secretly I sensed a deep danger in the authoritarian dictates of socialism and communism (and my mother) but was, as yet, too self-ignorant to acknowledge or even consciously understand it.

But I sensed it. And in my instinctual self-preservation mode, I retreated from it. One of my retreat methods was to "not understand" it, to become "anti-intellectual," ever hating the snobbery and pomposity of such elites, and developing my own love of the "common man" (which I express in my folk dance classes by including everyone, every klutz and clod on the block.

I have a deep love of the klutz. I prize them well above the intellectual snobs, and pompous know-it-alls of my University of Chicago days. But I only recognize this belatedly, forty years later. . . like now.

Their deadly authoritarianism created a "death by intellect." And this, even though I have always loved learning. But I emphasize the love more than the learning, the heart more than the head or intellect.

So many intellectuals bought into the doctrines and philosophy of socialism and communism. They still do. They believed its specious promises of greater freedom from economic necessity. Why are they so fooled? Why are they still such fools? This question has still not been answered.

Why are most intellectuals so afraid? Why are these so-called smart people so often fooled? Is it due to a deep fear of spontaneous power, of the power of Spontaneity, of the spontaneous power released by a free society, of the deep, unparalleled power released in each individual by freedom? Are they basically afraid of their own power? Are they afraid of their own freedom?

And why should they be so afraid of their own power and freedom? Does it have something to do with (repression by) their mothers?

Are most intellectuals cowards who have retreated into their intellect for protection?

Do they suffer from a deep-seated inferiority complex which they have yet to face? Did this start in childhood, during school days or earlier, when they were threatened or beaten up by the local kids in their neighborhood?

Were they taught not to fight or worse, that they couldn't fight?

Could it also be a fear of competition?

Sunday, October 31, 2004

Facts

A fact may exist in "objective" truth, yet its interpretation is always subjective.

Thus most fact are subjective. The sun rises every day is a fact. Yet: What is the meaning of a sun rise? How does it effect me? Why does it come up in the first place? All these questions release the important subjective content of the sunrise fact.

Certainly in political debates, most, if not all facts, are twisted and turned to

promote the personal view of the partisan.

Competition

Competition versus planning is similar to spontaneity versus organization. One can either be spontaneous or organized (planned) but one cannot be both. When one tries to be, both forces are vitiated; and an "interior product" results.

The competitive society versus the planned society, the forces of individual creativity versus the lop-offs of and bureaucratic government planning; rule and decision by individual creativity and incentive versus rule by the flattened out decisions of committee.

I fall flat on the side of individual creativity; sure I need planning but I want to plan my own. When I look around at my competitors their strengths will help me plan and freely make a decision of what is best for me to do.

Differences and ideas in these societal and political fields are slowly and fuzzily forming in my mind.

True, I have always hated my competition and wanted to destroy it, kill it off. Competitors whether they are Karl Finger, Andre Segovia, (or even my little sister in childhood) always make me feel somewhat diminished and awful. Yet I also realize that without them, there would be no folk dance, guitar, or other field for me. Their existence also gives me ideas and directions which way to go. Although I hate them, I also need them.

I have always been too disturbed, jealous, and envious of my competitors to look at the effect and influence of their competition upon me. Competition, entrepreneurism, and capitalism are triplets.

I have always tried to avoid the downward disgust and self-diminishment the feeling of competition has engendered in me.

I am now starting to look at it.

I wonder if, psychologically, the stuffed down, drip-and- cough in my throat is

related to the stuff-down, put-down, self-diminishment, “drip and cough” of my incipient dealings with competition.

Instead of avoiding competition, seeing competition as good for me. What a change in view this would be! A true embrace of entrepreneurship, capitalism, and economic (mental, and even spiritual) freedom.

Competition creates freedom. While planning (over-planning, really; the over-planned society) limits freedom, competition (the spontaneous combustion of free ideas) creates freedom.

Competition touches that feeling of grit and dynamism in my stomach. It dumps my solar plexus energy into the market place.

It grounds me in the dynamism of (material and economic) reality.

The old “Why bother?” feeling just arose. I’ll be dead soon so why bother. . . with anything? Why bother with competition.

What about competition and death? Should I compete with death?

Again, I wonder what these thoughts have to do with my cold, sniffles, nasal congestion, drip, and cough? Is the discomfort, nay rise of the ancient trauma, dealing with these issues in such depth for the first time, creating it? Possibly.

I have usually denied the effects of competition; I deny that I even compete. I deny that I even have any competitors. I try to stay in my own entrepreneurial world because it is just too painful to look that fact that at outside competition actually exists.

Does this painful view of competition stem from competing with my twin sister at an early age? Does it come from being brought up a communist, learning to hate the capitalist, competitive society? Both?

Whatever, I am starting to deal with it.

One thing I can see is that dealing with it, looking at it, activates the energy enzymes in my stomach; it wakes me up and focuses me.

There must be something good in this new solar plexus, energy arousal, this competitive wake up.

Think about my competitors: How will I fight and compete with them? How will I compete and get better than Segovia? How will I sell my weekends and tours and get more customers than Karl? Etc.

Should I compete? Yes.

How will I compete? How will competition with my peers inspire me to greater heights? Good question.

Maybe I'll begin by competing today. Right now!

How could I have been so naive and missed the dynamism of competition for so many years? Answer: easily.

It is not a crime to borrow money. Nor is it a disease. In fact, on one level, it is a creative effort.

Money, debt, and the market were creative in their destructiveness. For one thing, it destroyed my desire. . . and "need" to be in the market.

Competing with myself: Jim, how many push-ups can you do?

Competing with others: Jim, can you get more customers than Karl? Can you play guitar better than Segovia?

Big energizers here. See them as such.

Just as I hate my competitors, I also love them.

Monday, November 1, 2004

Mourning: A Dying Week

Just as I am going backwards, to re-record old songs and records, review and write down old choreographies, and edit old New Leaves. so should I also be moving forward with and towards something new.

Just as old friends are dying, as I mourn the past, and my past lives with them, so too should I be looking towards the future. Towards the younger people behind me, and also towards a life beyond death.

The old dies, the new is born. . .and reborn.

I need a mop-up phase; I am going through that now.

I need a mourning phase; I've mourned the passing of my old life, and its attachments and old friends such as Batya, Eleni's husband, David (who I did not know), and now, newly discovered, death of my old and wonderful mime teacher, Tony Montanaro.

So many deaths, so many passings. Sure it puts my mortality right up front. And how soon and eventually my wife, my family, my friends, me, all of us, will be on their way. What fear and unbearable sadness it will bring.

Beyond the mop-up phase is the mourning. I'm in that mourning phase this morning.

Yes, mourning is a transient phase. And surly it makes everything I do not seem worthwhile. It is the biggest "Why bother?" supporter I know. Why bother going on, why bother doing anything when all of it, with friends, family, and all attachments simply wither away and slowly, or quickly, die?

Call this a sad and down essay: indeed, yes.

How to go past the mourning? Go right into it. Live in the knots and drowning. The darkness subsumes a frying crocodile, a drying tamborilo.

How to move beyond mourning? Drown in its sorrow; wait for the rowboat to

appear. Then pick up the oars, put the heavy, new, sad burdens in the boat, and row on out.

But there is no rowing for me now. I'm in the thick of the sad-hanging trees and mourning swamp.

Learning about the death of Tony Montanaro was the final blow in a dying week.

Call Me Stupid

Debt does help me keep my mind focused on the present. It presents me with a constant financial and business challenge. It keeps me awake and concentrated on survival.

Is it annoying? Yes. But more annoying than the debt is her constant worry and criticism. Yes, the debt is annoying. But I'll handle it. Her constant harping is more annoying. Can I handle that?

The first question is: What is it in me that makes her harping so annoying? Why does or should it bother me so? Probably because, even though there is not much more I can do about it than I am doing, I agree with her.

Or, do I really agree with her?

Well, I agree it is annoying. But I also have confidence to believe that I'll survive it. And this even if I can never pay it off.

Maybe it is similar to voting for Kerry. No matter how much you try, there is no convincing the political opposition. They (she) just believes in her candidate and party and that's it. No changing their bedrock belief.

Her "belief" and attitude towards my debt is the same as her belief and attitude towards the democratic party and John Kerry. There is absolutely no changing her position.

I'm running up the same doctrinaire attitude I grew up with: my mother's fears, rigidity, and attitude. There is absolutely no convincing her, no showing her that I exist, that I have my own approach to things, that, for me, my approach is right, that

she may not like my approach but at least she can accept and respect it. None of that exists.

It is a childhood thing come to the financial present. No matter how I handle it, as long as the debt exists (and even after, if she likes) she can always point to me, say I'm wrong, and call me stupid.

I always have to be on guard against these accusations, protect myself from them, and deep down, they always hurt. But, on the other hand, they will never go away.

How to deal with them? Like mourning, dive right into them; live in and among their misery. Eventually and slowly, the boat will come; you can pick up the oars, get in, place the burden in front of you, and row on out.

True, the burden never leaves the boat. But soon you will be on the open seas with a wide vista in front of you to expand your horizon. Then, although the burden never goes away, it does fade into less significance.

Put my mind on something else; get involved in something more important.

That is the healing power and beauty of work.

New Guitar Playing

All my new guitar playing, even Leyenda, Alhambra, Farruca the flamencan dances, Jota, luxurious Caprichio Arabe, and more, is slower, deeper, more thoughtful. Each phrase is milked for its uniqueness, inner dynamics, and beauty.

Farruca is the prototype of a new and future guitar playing style. It is based on slow, thoughtful, unique, dynamic interpretation; it is a true discovery and expression of my own style.

These are fruits of a post-transitional world I now live in.

I no longer have to learn and develop more technique (tremolo, etc.) Rather I am

using what I know in the service of interpretation and self-expression.

Indeed, this is quite a new land, quite a new place.

Can such post-transformational ideas and developments be applied not only in song, but in dance, yoga, running, and callisthenics?

Slow, thoughtful, in the service of self-expression. . . inner dynamics, and unique.

...

This is the beginning and birth of a brand new way of doing things.

The beginning will be preparing to re-record all my old songs. First step is reinterpreting, redoing, looking them over a la Farruca style.

I wonder if death is its own kind of growth, a development in its own right.

I wonder if death is just an annoyance like so many other problems.

Tuesday, November 2, 2004

Birth takes a long time. . . and so does rebirth.

Yesterday I discovered that in my kind of guitar pace and style so-called slow is comfortable.

The Qualitative Approach

I am desperately searching for a new way of doing things; starting with the guitar.

I am desperately searching for a new way to play guitar.

The quantitative idea of practicing an hour a day (minimum) used to work; it represents an old approach, an old way of thinking. It is the quantitative approach. It

also expresses itself through numbers. Repetitions. Do 150 push-ups, sit-ups. Practice guitar for one hour (60 minutes).

But the quantitative approach says nothing about quality.

What about the qualitative approach? Perhaps, since the quantitative approach seem somewhat dead, I am ready for the qualitative approach.

This means following the “slow, thoughtful, in the service of self-expression, inner dynamics, unique” approach in everything I do. I can start off with guitar practice: start thinking and playing right away with “qualitative” scales.

It also means doing “qualitative” push-ups, asanas, and more.

Numbers are quantity; self-expression is quality.

Numbers are a stepping stone to self-expression.

Quantity is a stepping stone to quality. Quantity is the means; quality is the end.

Quantity is the road, “on the way”, getting there.

Quality is the place,

Being there.

Jumping in:

Quantity is the “jumping”

Quality is the “in.”

The qualitative approach is definitely the “jump right in” approach.

Wednesday, November 3, 2004

1. Dutch film maker shot by Muslim extremist (for making film critical of Islam). Holland (and Europe) may (will) wake up to the dangers of terrorism and Islamic fascists.

2. Gentile students at City College are taking classes in Judaism. They see Jews as a successful immigrant group. They ask “ How do you guys do it?”

3. Nicholas Kristof writes an op ed article critical of the Democratic Party! This pre-election article sees the party as elitist, distant from the values of blue-collar workers, representing upper-middle class, liberal values, and in denial.

Amazing stuff. Islamic fascism on the way out (many years); Jews on the way up; the Democratic Party self-destructs. Soon it will either disappear (this I doubt) or reevaluate itself, and eventually return to competitive, ordinary-people representing mode.

Ben has follicular lymphoma, a cancer of the lymph glands. What a shock! The election seems pale in comparison.

Thursday, November 4, 2004

Post-election life:

1. Learning to play guitar the new, self-expression way.

Friday, November 5, 2004

Cultural Shifts. . . Forty Years in the (Democratic) Desert

In the 1960's, expressing emotion became the litmus test for authenticity and authority. If you feel something deeply and express it, it must be true. Thus the emotion of “hatred” for Bush became in important (the most important, the “only” important) part of the Democratic Platform.

Also came admiration of childlike fears. “I’m frightened” became an accepted and admired (for the authenticity) political and otherwise emotion.

From this also came, no doubt, admiration (and even respect) for the victim and victimhood. “I’m a victim! My victimhood is important. You must pay attention, feel

sympathy, and listened to me because my downtrodden state is based on an authentic emotion.”

A cultural shift: Instead of being somewhat ashamed of feeling hatred, fear, fearful, of becoming a victim, and thus fighting against it with all your might, you drift into admiration of these miserable states. The advent and near worship of psychology, the growth of the “psychology business, nay industry, helped created a gigantic cultural shift, a worship respect, and admiration of business increasing negative emotions. These helped increase patient attendance, and feed the nascent, new and growing, psychology business. It started in the 1960's (but I believe, had it's roots in the communist party hatred of free enterprise, capitalism, and the capitalist class.)

Indeed, people are now proud of their fears, proud to express them. It makes them feel and appear “more authentic.”

There is a whole industry based on opening up and exploring childlike fears, expressing childhood and childlike hatred, and other emotions. Usually, the only emotion missing is joy! How much money can you make with joy, anyway? Who'll go to a therapist to learn how to handle joy?

Joy is out. Fear, misery, negativity pay more; they are all better for business; they simply make more money.

Maybe the above is all due to the fact that the human psyche thrives in opposition. This is true in the individual psyche and in politics, which is a collective expression of many individuals psyches. This cycle opposition grew, developed, and is now in the process of dying; it has taken about forty years. Moses and God knew something about the number forty and the forty year period. Old way, attitudes, and the generations that embody them must, evidently, die before you can move on to the next stage of development. Make way for the next generation.

Singing for my health. Let the deep, resounding, healthy, vocal vibrations fill and cure the body.

Sunday, November 7, 2004

Just because those around me are depressed about the election results is no reason for me to suppress my jubilation. Although, I don't have to rub it in and gloat, nevertheless, I have to admit, I do enjoy the arrogant, stunned political opposition in pain and disarray.

It is a sad, nostalgic time. I am reviewing my past. Two Sundays ago I listened to my old records. Yesterday, I dipped into the cupboard and pulled out a sheaf, nay envelopes, filled with old letters, complementary of ancient performances, folk dances, weekends, and other deeds.

It is hard to get my bearings. I've stopped reading and studying. I'm playing guitar, and even starting to sing, again. Also, I'm doing a somewhat return to yoga. I'm returning to the past, daring to look at it again, daring to draw from it certain pieces to sew together in a new cloth tableau; I'm creating the a foundation, based on the past, so that I can eventually, once again, head into the future.

But I'm not there yet. I'm dwelling, nostalgic and somewhat sad, in the past. What is nostalgia? Why is nostalgia with its revisit of the past, so "sad?" It point to the transience of human existence. And no doubt, before I can absorb and accept my past, I have to make some kind of peace with it, incorporate it into my being. In so doing, I'll slowly drop my attachment to its old forms. Then I can move on.

Perhaps the pain of loss, the sadness of nostalgia, comes in the breaking of these old attachments bonds. The new seeds cannot be planted or flourish while the garden still contains remnants of old plants and flowers.

Tony Montanaro's poetry is profound and beautiful. A mime come to

posthumous life on paper.

Is That Why. . . ?

In mid-life, Tony moved to Maine and built the Celebration Mime Theater.

In mid-life, I developed the (folk) tour business. . .and folk dancing.

What, if anything, is the meaning of this?

Are the tour business and folk dancing and expansion of my performing skills, my form of Celebration Mime Theater? Am I now ready to return to actual physical performance?

Is that why I picked up my Rubio guitar, and am reviewing my past performing accomplishments and their letters of praise?

Is this what I am "transitioning" to. . . ?

Does the nostalgia and its sadness signify a mourning for the past, and, in the process, the "death" of the past to be replaced by a new and firmer foundation in the present. The nostalgia is the first and necessary step in the process of giving up old attachments, and using them as fertilizer for the moving-on life ahead.

Since I have always seen myself fundamentally as a musician (and an athlete), why did I go into folk dancing in the first place?

It's traumatic to think, or even admit, that I can play tremolo. I've hidden behind my inability to play it, the "tremolo wall," for so many years.

It has been the fence, the self-imposed limit, around which I have built up an entire other folk dance and tour life. A life to fill out the empty, who-am-I? spaces, and develop self-confidence.

Thank God the sun comes up.

Thank God it doesn't depend on how I feel.

Monday, November 8, 2004

At the Border of New Stage

What are the "depressing" things facing me now?

1. Victory at the polls.
2. Deaths of many acquaintances (six in the last month).
3. Nostalgia and revisits to the past. (Through CD making of old records, reading of old letters, etc.)
4. Loss of the vitality derived from not finding or even searching for new directions, purposes, and projects.

All the above "depressing events" are occurring even as business improves, and the money is slowly dribbling in. I wonder if this "money dribble," this vague hint of success in the financial field, this imminent victory is also contributing to my depressing state. After all, victories, successes, and completions usually bring me down.

Is it simply another return to the depression of success? I must admit, everything is in order and "going well."

It seems I am at the border of a new stage of life. And I can't quite figure it out yet.

Does the word "stage" have any significance? Does it point towards future performances, comedy, comedian approach to the stage, a combination of Tony Montanaro mime, Victor Borge comedy, and the old line World of Guitar approach?

And yet, at the moment, I have no energy or desire to "do" anything. I stand somewhat puzzled by my state. Perhaps I am still waiting in the wings (another "stage" term).

Am I getting ready to return to some kind of stage performance? But in a new way? I don't know. We'll see.

The only thing I can think of now is doing all the things I used to do but in another way. This seems okay, but only okay. Although I'm trying to find energy in finding depth, I'm not, at the moment, succeeding. I may really need something really new, something absolutely new. But what? A totally new field, a totally new activity? The old activities in a totally new way? A new vision? What? (Talk about lost.) I have no idea.

No question I am afraid to accept a smooth Alhambra. If I do, I'll then have to face the down, non-motivational, but successful "Now what? feeling.

Can I be courageous. . . for a change?

Where will a successful Alhambra lead?

(I'm afraid it will lead to the dead land of non-motivation. Again questions of direction, purpose, and goals).

Perhaps it is a question of the difference between "to" and "through," the difference between place and process. Instead of leading to this dead land, it will lead through it.

On to somewhere else.

Where?

What lies beyond the land of Alhambra?

Comedy?

This will be a difficult year. It is not a question of finding or developing new skills; rather it is one of synthesizing, putting together the skills and talents I already have (and these from over my entire lifetime) in a new and cohesive way.

It is a time of reflection and philosophy. A synthesizing, who-am-I time. A new stage of development, new theater, new performance, which requires a new platform, a new synthesis stage.

It may be all the old coming together in a "new" way. Or it could be that the

“new” is: there will be “nothing new.” An acceptance of what is.

Boring, sad, dull. . . but nevertheless, possible.

Would this synthesized, “nothing new” approach really be sad, boring, and dull? I hate to think so. Hopefully, I am missing something here.

Tuesday, November 9, 2004

Backwards May Be Forwards

For real satisfaction, focus, and even joy, do something incredibly hard!

Maybe at this point, I’ve already found and done all the good (miracle schedule) things in life. Maybe I’m at the “recognition point,” and, if so, the only direction for me to go is backwards. Maybe, at this point, forwards is backwards.

Evidently, for me, I have found my area, set my field. Evidently, for me, miracle schedule holds all. I look beyond it and I see nothing; blank and empty. Thus evidently, for me, there is nothing beyond miracle schedule. That’s why, in terms of direction, where I should look and go, backwards is forwards.

Evidently, for me, miracle schedule has, had, and always will have everything I need, want, and desire. It even contains study, which in itself, opens up whole “new” areas. But the flow of study is ancient and old; backwards with visions of the past and “been there already.” But it is not “been there, done that.” So used up aspects are gone when you look at the miracle aspect of the miracle schedule. “Done that” can be part of the dry, desiccated aspects of “schedule.” But nothing can remove the eternal fire, inspiration, and God-connection of a miracle.

Going forwards by going backwards; back to the future. Recognize that I have discovered a vitally important guide post. Although it needs a human, mind-creating “schedule” to hold it, nothing beats a miracle.

Moving forwards by going backwards: for the now me, it’s the only way.

And where, in the miracle schedule, will I find something incredibly hard? In intensity. Performing them in and through intensity!

Death and Obstacles

How do you face death?

How do you face obstacles in your life?

Is death “just another obstacle” on the path?

Yes and it’s a big one.

But no matter how big, it is still “only” an obstacle.

How do you face an obstacle? How do you handle opposition?

A good question especially when the transience of death stands ever at your door.

Obstacles are the opposition; they challenge you at every step.

Although they may appear as enemies, they are actually “friends” in disguise that help you grow. (In Hebrew, the word ra (resh, ayin) means friend and enemy.)

Does this mean that loving your enemies and hating your friends is the same as loving your friends and hating your enemies? Probably.

In any case, death is here to stay. . . but so is life.

Thursday, November 11, 2004

I’m moving on to Catskill.

Today I end New Leaf. . . forever.

Two minutes later.

Well, so much for my plan to end New Leaf forever. Yet the Playpen approach still holds.

And I do want to make plans.

And I do want to put my life together again. All great aspects have fallen away during the past month.

I want to return to writing, yoga, running, even studying; also guitar, singing, and even business. In fact, all the wonderful things I “used to” do.

As of today:

1. Writing would, will be in the “Catskill mode.”

2. Study would, will be of Japan.

Nothing else in mind, at the moment.

What about Catskill and music, Catskill and yoga, Catskill and running, Catskill and dance? Are these new roads into the post-sixty-seven future? The fruition of Nouvelle Feuille? The alter ego rises, a compliment and going past of Jacov Gelt.

Suppose I see myself as someone else? Suppose I see myself as Catskill? Suppose I give myself a new identity? Suppose I become my alter ego?

How would I play guitar as Catskill?

How would I do yoga, run, write, dance, do business as Catskill?

Interesting. . . and impressive!

I would become “someone else;” I would become one of my characters. A post-transformation transformation, an alter ego more and beyond.

I’m sick of my old life. How would I lead my life as someone else? Start off by leading it as Catskill. See what happens, where it leads.

Chapters

Catskill runs his music

Catskill runs in running

Catskill runs his business

Catskil does his yoga

Catskill as a linguist
Catskill as historian
Catskill as traveler
Catskill as tour guide
Catskill as guide for the perplexed
Catskill talks about body, mind, and spirit
Catskill talks aches, pains, and ode to a hip

Friday, November 12, 2004

Adding Some Physical Reality to my Journal

Shouldn't I give a few sentences of physical reality to my journal? For example, this writing is taking place at the Land of the Vikings Lodge in Sherman, Pa. where I am now running a Mad Shoe Weekend. The morning air is crisp and cold; a light snow covers the ground. I sit alone at a round table in the morning dining room, pen in hand, writing in my journal. I've just finished making delicious coffee in the LOV coffee maker. Tony Montanaro's book, Mime Spoken Here, lies in front of me. I imbibe of its magnificent pages.

Here are some mental results:

Find a cause or Montanaro "premise" in every guitar piece I play. How to apply my mind to guitar playing.

Start with scales (even legato warm-ups)

Scale Thoughts

Going up: The universe is expanding

Going down: The universe is contracting, winding down

Bar scales: Bars across the universe. Safety, stops, notes cannot fall beneath the bar.

Arpeggio Thoughts

A harp resounding throughout the universe.

Apply my mind to Alhambra. This has never been done before!

When a physical pain appears, rather than jump, retreat, or react, try to watch it.

Watch it sit;

Watch it move.

Do I still need negative thoughts and pain to motivate me?

This old path is fading into yesterday; it is dying.

Should I now ride solely on the spirit?

The rising answer is "Yes!"

Saturday, November 13, 2004

Monday, November 15, 2004

The burning passion is being replaced by a steady calm. . . and of course, confidence.

Notice the "of course." The now focus is on calm, steady calm. After many years, confidence, self-confidence, is "taken for granted."

The steady calm of (and in) the playpen.

This morning I am giving a "physical reality" to my guitar music by focusing on feeling the strings as I play: Feeling the string roll from my finger tip, across my nail, and then following the sound in produces on its expanding way through the universe.

The focus is mental, the feeling is physical, the resulting (visual and aural) expansion is spiritual.

Luxuriate in the physical sensation of playing.

I'm heading towards steady calm and, of course, self-confidence, in Alhambra. Getting closer. Closer, closer. But I'm not quite there yet. Almost.

When that confidence and steady calm is "taken for granted" then I'll be there.

First step is to see the Farruca as slow.

Saturday, November 13, 2004

I have to say something, express something in Alhambra.

What?

I don't know. . .yet. (For years, my Alhambra message, whatever it is, has been covered over by technical questions.)

The St. Louie Tickle is sad. That's it's paradox. (I thought ragtime music was "happy," but it is really tinged with the blues of sadness.

Sunday, November 14, 2004

Total calm (and control) reigned throughout this Mad Shoe LOV Weekend. Even, smooth, calm.

Slight ripple in my ancient way of guitar playing.

Guitar playing reflects my mood which, in turn, reflects my Weekend attitude and approach. The "ego my" and "ego I" are largely out of the Weekend.

Calm, quiet, and obvious confidence reign.

I'm on all the right, good roads. That is the non-hubris case today, and this despite aches. Even these physical annoyances have "improved."

But also, there is no "progress." I am "beyond progress." Rather I feel alive and

well in the here-and-now rippling world.

Tuesday, November 16, 2004

Maybe it's an age or success thing, but something has cracked inside of me.

Said it all, Done it all

Maybe my writing period is over and I'm just beating a dead horse trying to "recapture" it. (It feels hard, strange, unfamiliar, and the feel of "old roads," going back to the voice of Catskill.)

Maybe it's a "new" guitar, recording, performing, and music period coming up. . . Or something else.

Maybe I can't face the "fact" that I need some time off, a break, perhaps even a long break, from writing. Maybe it has served (most of) its purpose.

Maybe giving it up is part of the vacuum I must create as I step forward and move into a "new life" with its new attitudes, calm and confident purposes.

In any case, for now, I feel I've said it all and done it all.

Indeed, recording and learning about recording is something I have not yet done.

I have Home Studio computer lesson with Les this Thursday. We'll see where that leads.

In any case, I love my slow, luxuriant, exploratory guitar playing!

Another thing I have not "done" in a completed sense, is the Publicity Road.

Am I at the cusp of two, nay three, or four new directions?

1. Guitar and the Farruca effect (Playing it slowly with all the luxuriant discoveries that come with it)
2. Publicity: for my Weekends, Tours, even folk dance classes.
3. Poetry: Revisit the Psalms, Batya Hebrew. . . and Hopkins?
4. Japan

Maybe it will be time to write and explore poetry? Psalms and poetry?

Wednesday, November 17, 2004

I miss my depressions. They are my creative links.

I am hoping to return to one.

Consolidation. . .and Sales

A period of consolidation. Lasting a year. . .to September or November of 2005.
(After that, who knows?)

This is a sales year. (Perhaps that is why no other "creative projects" stick.)

Thursday, November 18, 2004

Inner Madman

Normal is kind of a boring state of mind.

We need madmen. . .to go to Mars, and conquer space both inner and outer.

Where is my inner madman? Hiding and/or resting, no doubt.

I need to find and return to my inner madman.

Who are the madmen of history? They are my heros.

Any novel I write, should be about a madman, such a madman. Otherwise, why bother.

Is Catskill Moses a madman? Partly.

Or would a historical subject like Columbus be better?

Could I combine both in one?

Catskill Moses as the Columbus of the Mind.

Or do I need an entirely new character?

There are no miracles left in my miracle schedule. I need some new miracles.

Only a madman can find them.

It doesn't have to be brand new; it can be built on the ashes of the old. But it has to be very daring!

How to put miracles back into the miracle schedule?

1. Perfect a yoga posture I can't do.
2. Teach folk dance steps that are (very) difficult: Slap steps and combinations, etc.
3. Play guitar a mile a minute: Madman Guitar!

First signs of life, here.

Although they may do them, madmen are not concerned with sales. Madmen are involved with visions!

Can there be a madman's vision of sales? A madman spreading the gospel? Was St. Paul a madman?

The madman's approach to guitar, the madman element, has certainly been lacking up to now. A madman's Alhambra, Leyenda, Farruca, Soleares, Bulerias, St. Louie Tickle, and more.

4. In singing it's the mad yodeler.
5. What's mad running? It might be speed or fast running.
6. A folk dance class is a "mad people" event; so is a folk dance weekend.
7. Stretches: Focus on the mad current of energy coursing through your body, through your stretches.

Friday, November 19, 2004

Three-Step Recovery and Rebirth Program

I'm sick of my life. Rebirth begins today. Misery has run its course.

Yesterday I started reading the Psalms in Hebrew. That was the first step. Then I "discovered," or rather, rediscovered the inner madman approach. That was the second step. Then at noon, Les came over to teach me how to use Home Studio. Although it took him two hours to get the program to work, and it still doesn't work completely (he's coming over again today), still it was the beginning of my computer home recording life. That was the third step.

So far rebirth is a three step program.

Alhambra: The calm, quiet, focused, fiery inner madman.

Maybe my yoga is part of my guitar practice! By "freeing me from my body" through its exercises, it helps me focus on the guitar. An echad here. One guitar practice with rivulets (of yoga, push-ups, even vocals) flowing off to the side and thus sustaining it.

Performance as Motivation

Maybe the desire, hope, anticipation, and even knowledge that I will one day perform it (publically) is my final and ultimate motivation.

One day I will stand before others and do my thing. . .(and I will do it well, and I won't be humiliated.)

Desire to do it well, and fear of public humiliation as a good and positive motivation.

A little motivational fear here wouldn't hurt, mixed with a desire to do it well.

I want to excel before others; I want their admiration, love respect, and approval.

The universe doesn't care about this. But I do.

Displaying myself for approval: "Look how good I am, look how high I kick my leg, how well I play the guitar. Admire me, Mommy; admire me everyone!"

This is not a bad source of continual motivation.

One of the discomforts of this approach is it shows how vulnerable I am, vulnerable to the fickle opinions of others.

But it's true, nevertheless. Such is life, at least my life.

It keeps me on the abyss of fear and humiliation. But my position, this place on the abyss, keeps me motivated. It's not a bad place to be especially when you consider that the alternative is vitiated energy and alienated deadness.

I was looking for a "new" source of motivation. Well, I've found one!

This also keeps my connection to humanity going constantly.

Thus I am doing everything, my exercises, my yoga, push-ups, squats, vocal exercises, whatever, ultimately, to show others; I'm doing them all for an imaginary, present and future audience.

Indeed, not a bad source of motivation!

Ultimately, I am a performer. So why shouldn't all of the above be true.

Ultimately, I am performer. And this in everything I do. My aim is always to ultimately connect with the audience. And this whether I study Hebrew, stretch my leg, run down the street. Secretly, in the back of my mind, I am training for my future appearance before others.

That is my forever motivation!

I am ever connected to others. Thus why shouldn't I want their approval. This motivation is normal and good. Naturally, I won't always get it, but that is really besides the point. The source and process of motivation is important, not its result.

Motivation is energy; being motivated is tuning in to your energy.

Since motivation is energy, and connecting to an audience energizes me, then I should, can, and will use this mental image in all my endeavors. I shall “see the audience in front of me.” It will watch me do my push-ups, etc.

The audience is a form of energy. Since I am connected to them, and they are connected to me, then focusing on them is also focusing on my own energy.

Their energy and my energy are connected. We are one. All is One.

This is like public yoga, public guitar practice.

If you look at it, ultimately, the reason I am practicing squats is so that I can get strong. Why do I want to get strong? So I can eventually show off in front of my dancers! I’ll do Russian squat steps, or Tsamikos leaps, squats, and back bends. They’ll admire me.

I suppose this is also true for my push-ups, sit-ups, scorpions, head-stands, and other yoga postures. I want to get more flexible and stronger so that ultimately I can say: “See how strong and flexible I am. See how good I am. Admire me.”

Well, if that is the fundamental source of my motivation, then go for it!

Saturday, November 20, 2004

The Torah without tourism.

Space Travel

Maybe I’ve already done the earth travel thing; maybe it’s now time to explore space travel. Perhaps I might start studying for my next trip, preparing, learning the terrain, language,. Geography, etc.

My next big trip will be to Mars.

I'll have to learn about the stars, planets, and astronomy.

Indeed, a new direction, something I haven't done before.

My guitar playing could be in outer space, too. Not a bad place to go.

Sunday, November 21, 2004

Collapse Day

Why are Jews Jews? What means this intense connection?

I'm coming back. I'm reading the Psalms and studying Hebrew. . . with a vengeance.

Actually, I'm at the edge of vengeance. I wonder where such a phrase came from.

Before you can move on to the next life, the previous life has to thoroughly die. This total destruction of past forms may takes years.

A total collapse of the inner world: it must take place before the new world can be born.

Today is collapse day.

Too Stuffed

It's so stuffingly easy. I try and even want to return, to reenter the old world of unsmooth; but I wonder if I ever will. . .or even can.

There is no going back. And this even though I am used to, habituated, and even desire the "comfort" of the old world miseries. But I can't go back. I'm too stuffed.

It's all starting with the tremolo, arpeggio, and even scale world. Will it spread into other areas? Intellectually, I think yes. We'll see.

Death and Rebirth is Exhausting

I wonder if that is why I have been so tired, and even sick lately. Really I have felt this way, on one level or another, since I returned from Nova Scotia.

Is it all part of the dying and rebirth process? It's just exhausting to let your old body, mind, and even parts of the spirit (or at least attitude) die; after that comes the growth process of rebirth. Also exhausting. The whole death/rebirth process is exhausting; it puts me at the edge of sickness.

Is the process "sickening" as well?

Probably.

I am being reborn into a Flowing Alhambra; I am entering the Garden of Leyenda; and through lose and flowing flamencan piccados, joining my fish scale primordial ancestors.

It's birth into the space beyond Senior Citizen land with all its concomitant blessings.

Today I'm afraid to run, afraid I'll get exhausted, and sick. Isn't that interesting?

Monday, November 22, 2004

Benefits of Feeling Down

As I face my guitar this morning, I'm looking for a down so I can pick myself up.

It's new: Adding relaxation to my yoga and squats.

Meltdown. Break down of ego.

I'm crying. Why? Finally, I break into the incredibly beauty of the Alhambra. I play it with emotion and feeling.

Next step: Playing it with feeling means its ready for the public! Wow! Play it

with that in mind.

There's so much feeling, so much emotion locked up in it. Alhambra is the emotional center of my classical guitar-playing universe.

It's been a long journey. For some reason, it feels like I've arrived.

Play with Emotion and Feeling

Goal of all guitar playing: To surmount technique, move through and "beyond" it, to play with emotion and feeling.

Playing guitar with emotion and feeling, from St. Louie Tickle to Alhambra, that will be my "goal."

Playpen gone public. Emotion and Feeling Style of Guitar Playing.

It is a step beyond relaxation. Emotion and Feeling is the next step. It connects emotion to spirit to universe to cosmos to others to unity to oneness to God.

This is the place to go. There is no other place to be.

Can I make such a connection in yoga, running, and dancing? In other areas? We'll see.

Beyond relaxation. Emotions and feeling.

First comes the emotion, the feeling of feelings. This is followed by their expression through an art form. What kind of art form? Any kind. Music, yoga, art, dance, the art of dealing with people, the art of living, the art of life. All forms can be turned into art forms.

This is certainly the new direction I have been looking for. Can I stay in it? I have no choice. I have been everywhere else, been there, done this, done that. There is nothing left to do, no other place to go.

Tuesday, November 23, 2004

The wild spirit rides. I refuse to be tamed.

Many people in the anti-smoke group suffer from a goodness epidemic.

There will never be an end to Alhambra growth. . .or to any other kind of growth for that matter.

Aiming for an end, a permanent end, is to live with a permanent illusion. Such an illusion often serves as a motivating force; in this sense it is "good." But truth is always better. . .although sometimes, in the short run, more painful.

New Guitar-Playing Art Form

I must remember I am an American playing Spanish classical and flamencan music. Thus I can never play them as an authentic, ethnic Spaniard. My style of playing both flamencan and Spanish classics is an American style; or perhaps a hybrid American-Spanish style. As such, it is a totally new art form.

It is an American art form; it is a Bronx, Jewish, American, educated, studied, synthesized, unique American art form.

Just like I am an American teaching ethnic foreign folk dances, developing and teaching them through an American style, so this is also true for my playing of classical and especially flamencan gypsy guitar music. I am not a gypsy (although in my heart I often wonder), I am not a Spaniard (although in my heart I often speak Spanish).

Yet, when I play, because of my background and training, I am creating a totally new guitar-playing art form. Accept it. Relish it. Luxuriate in it.

"Oy Veh" Bach

I can also not play Bach like an eighteenth-century German, since I am not one. However, I can play it like a twenty-first century Jewish American from the Bronx. This

gives Bach a totally new look, a new slant. It's an "Oy Veh" Bach.

It's an "Oy Veh" Bach mixed with a Mad Shoe, "Oy Veh" Bach blended with running wild on the lawn.

Thus I'll never (be able to) play flamencan guitar like a Spanish gypsy. My only choice is to play it in the totally new American art form.

This is not a bad thing. But it certainly is different!

What is Eternity?

What is eternity?

It is realizing that there is never an end to growth.

What does eternity feel like?

Like the flow of growing pains.

Playpen Bach

What is my identity? A mix of many talents, many styles, many educations, many elements.

Play the pieces with my own unique identity in mind. Meditate on it while playing. Think on it. Project it outwards. Ex-press it.

My own playpen Bach, my own playpen Farruca, and more.

I am an American (whatever that means.) I should play my international guitar and teach international folk dancing that way.

Thursday, November 25, 2004

In Hebrew I am dwelling on one page, even one word. No rush at all. This is

different. Luxuriating in the page, word, or both. Also I want to really learn it, deep in my soul, like a guitar piece that I practice over and over again, and end up really knowing.

My Nero computer program doesn't work.

How do I handle computer problems?

Usually, I go ballistic with a combination of panic and frustration.

Is there a better way? Here's my test.

Guitar Thanksgiving

I am not practicing in the usual sense. It is more a learning to live with, living with, the results of years of practice.

In the past few days, I have been playing better than I ever played in my whole life! Loose, relaxed, no pressure, no worry, no sense of audience watching, no sense of others judging, slow, easy, with total feeling and expression.

One cannot "practice" such a blessed state. It is more accepting a gift that has been finally bestowed upon me (from above). Indeed, it is a Thanksgiving.

My computer frustrations stand in dire contrast to this thanksgiving state. A good question to ask is: Why has this contradictory state appeared now? To test me? Or perhaps, to remember and count my blessings even as I stand in a field of frustration.

There is a definite qualitative difference in my playing.

The Purpose of Frustration

Time to take a Recording and Computer Course. Home Studio, Nero, other.

The study begins among the frustration. The frustration itself pushes me. Its “purpose” is to force, motivate, inspire me study in order to relieve the frustration.

The anger generated by frustration ultimately energized me. It pushes me to “do something about it.” Study and learning is the first pro-active step.

It starts with the question: “What the fuck is wrong with this goddamn computer program?”

The Power of Frustration

Hidden behind frustration is anger; hidden behind anger is energy; hidden behind energy is motivation; hidden behind motivation is power!

(The power to change the world!)

My guitar playing is so slow and luxuriant. Even my fast playing is slow and luxuriant!

Friday, November 26, 2004

Perseverance and Patience

I have no sound on my computer. Very frustrating, indeed. I spent all day yesterday working on it. Still no results.

Do patience and perseverance bring results. . .and ultimately, confidence?
Probably. . . no doubt.

Perseverance and patience is tested and developed in the field of frustration.

Saturday, November 27, 2004

This is true depression: I am depressed because my Nero program does not work: I can't play my music files.

This is not cosmic depression, the “artistic” depression that begins when all goals, meaning, and purpose disappears. It is rather based on a specific anger and frustration, that my fucking Nero doesn’t work and that I can’t figure out how to make it work no matter how hard I try.

I am now totally dependant on others, on Nuby or maybe, hopefully, even Les.

Who can figure out a Nero problem? Nuby, my teacher, is the only one I can think of. And I hope I can find him, contact him. How totally frustrating and enraging.

The fact that Home Studio doesn’t work is a very minor annoyance. Afer all, I don’t need Home Studio to survive. But I do need my Nero!

Evidently, before I move on, I have to solve this Nero problem. It is at the top of my list.

I’ll begin by calling every “expert” I know.

It seems like everything I have learned in the past has served its purpose, is no longer useful, and can be thrown out. In fact, I even have trouble remembering it and its foremr importance.

It seems I am entering kind of a “flow state.” Everything is blending together, flowing down a similar stream of oneness.

This is especially true and expressed in my guitar playing where former “fast” has somehow become and blended into “slow.”

It has become, is becoming, one long river of notes, a flowing, yet somehow “shapeless,” stream of music.

Perhaps “shapeless” is not quite the right word; even a flowing river has shape; after all, it forms a river.

Where am I? Certainly it is the border of a new land; or at least, a new river.

I like to think these changes have cosmic significance; and perhaps they do!

Is this the pre-death phase where everything drops?

At the moment, it feels like my tie to the Nero computer frustration is the only one remaining from my “former life.”

A Glimpse of the Flowing Future

The sudden feeling is that the upcoming Florida Folk Dance Camp “doesn’t matter.”

Neither does my concert next Sunday.

It’s all merging into this gigantic flow, one long river of music, and what happens along the banks is “besides the point.” They are transient “pleasant” events, but compared to the “permanent” flow of the river, very effervescent and minor. Sure I’ll do them; but their big-league former significance has been largely diminished. Especially when I compare them to the river.

Of course, I could make them part of the river. . . which, in fact, they are.

Would that mean that all events I participate in, or even do not participate in, all events in the outside world, are part of the river? Of course, they are. But it is up to me to understand this, see it, and join.

“Flow” is the Meaning

Running Wild on the Guitar Lawn!

In playing Zambra and Recuerdos de Seville I have just overthrown thirty years of guitar playing! No wonder I’m so spacy.

In Zambra: relaxed right hand makes the left hand legatos flow.

In Recuerdos de Sevilla: relaxed and fast right hand tremolos and arpeggios make it move and flow: a totally different piece!

And it only took thirty years (or was it thirty-five) to approach and execute this change.

Big life changes here. What do they mean?

Even the “What do they mean?” question is fading. Maybe it is because by playing

this way, I am entering the meaning, becoming the meaning, living in the meaning itself.

Maybe such “flow” is the meaning.

Indeed, this is running wild on the guitar lawn! Thus it is not such a strange place after all. It’s just I have never or rarely achieved such a place as an adult, and certainly never or rarely as a guitar player. But it has always been (part of) my dream!

Running Wild!

Is this flow even hinted at by the “Etty way” I am reading Hebrew? Maybe I will run wild on the Hebrew lawn as well.

Maybe I am opening the doors to running wild in all directions. Wouldn’t that be nice.

But this so-called “wild running” it tempered, nay “controlled” by years of practice. Thus I am running wild in a flowing but channeled river.

The “Mature” Child

Running wild on the lawn, or flow, is not an unrealistic state. It just takes many years to reach and achieve it.

The child has to be reborn through an adulthood and maturation process. Once this has been completed, the matured adult can return to childhood. . .but this time as a “mature” child.

Check out, remember, and focus on, the running wild feeling in my muscle(s).

I wonder if this fatigue, this feeling of weakness and a touch of stomach sickness, is partly based on a “freedom panic,” the existential panic from the freedom of running wild.

Isn’t slavery safer?

Yes, but you die in it.

Jean Paul Sartre said man is free to chose his own form of slavery. Can one . . .
.should I, become a slave to running wild?

Sunday, November 28, 2004

Lots of new ideas born this morning:

Long-Range Goals and Directions

1. Take lessons in Hebrew (with Etty)
 - a. Perfect Hebrew skills. Practice pronunciation and reading the Tannach.
“Check-ups:” Monthly or less,
 - b. Tour to Israel in March or October of 2006

2. Japanese
 - a. Learn new (Japanese) skills. Study Japanese language, history, and culture.
 - B. Tour to Japan in April, 2006 (Cherry blossom time)

3. Computer
 - a. Perfect my computer skills: Nero, Home Studio, Photo Shop, even Quark and other.
 - b. Short-term: Relieve Nero, FTC, and Home Studio frustrations.

4. Guitar: “Arpeggio and scale running-wild year.”
 - a. Perfect guitar running-wild skills.
 - b. Stay on the running wild path; aim for running-wild in public.

5. Writing: The Story of Micro-Running (???)

6. Songs: "Deepen" my old songs.

It seems I have absolutely no interest in learning anything new, any new songs or new styles. I am "stuck" with the old. And I have much of it, such a wealth of old songs. Indeed, since I love what I do, love what I've done, have traced out all the miracle schedule fields I already love (and there are certainly enough of them), and, since I am interested in nothing else, why not aim to "perfect" what I've got. Perfecting and deepening seems to be the general direction I am going in, anyway. Why not make it my particular song direction, too.

How to handle frustrating and "hopeless" negative thoughts:

The best way may be to withdraw from them; then move on to something else.

Monday, November 29, 2004

Jump-Starting my Mental Engine

I am annoyed, down, and frustrated. But I am not afraid, terrified. . . .And that may be the problem.

I am annoyed, down, and frustrated by computer problems, age, guitar playing problems, death, relationships, up-coming events, whatever. But I am not afraid or "better," terrified by them. . . .That may be the problem.

Without the motivation of fear, nay terror, what will I do?

Last year I was motivated by the fear, nay terror, of Florida Folk Dance Camp. I had to learn Nero, make CD's, write up the dances, etc. The whole appearance was a first; all the skills I had to develop to perform there were a first. It took me months to prepare; three months of computer lessons, one month to put all my folk dance records and tapes on file, made folder by nation of folk dances, create a collection of folk dances CD's etc. It was a gigantic project motivated, in part, by fear, nay the terror of public humiliation if I did not succeed.

So I succeeded.

The year before I studied web design. I was in a similar rush to learn to create my own web site, use the internet, and through these skills, mostly increase my business tour sales. That project also took over three months, and colored my year. It too, was motivated by the same fear, laden with doses of terror, that I would not succeed. Frankly, the whole computer idea, working with computers, frightened, and frustrated me. There were also significant dabs of terror when the whole thing seemed to fall apart. Also I was so dependent on my teachers.

This year I put together most of the Florida Folk Dance Camp in a week. Now I look ahead, and truly, I seem to only have a few hours more work until I am finished! Rather than fear, terror, and frustration, I am experiencing an ease bordering on boredom! This is an amazing accomplishment. But like every accomplishment, every victory, it is met with the down question of: "What now? Where will I go? What can I do now to motivate myself?" And perhaps beneath that question is the strange one: "Where can I find some fear, nay terror, which will jump-start my mental engine and drive it into action?"

These days I've got frustrations. But I have no bottom-line find any fear or terror. Since I gave up the stock market and decided to make money (and pay off my debt) only through my own earnings, even the fear of no financial security has dropped away. The terror is gone. Only annoyance sprinkled with frustration is left. Fear and terror are no longer driving me.

Thus the old lynch-pin energy producers have fallen away; in fact, this morning they feel just about gone.

Fear and terror often create great forward visions, long-term goals. Frustrations and annoyances seem to only create minor visions, short-term goals.

A good part of me "misses" my fear and terror.

A good part of me feel diminished by living among minor annoyances and frustrations.

One great fear and terror was that of public humiliation. Somehow, through growing self-confidence, that has diminished.

The “Now what?” question keeps emerging. It, along with a concomitant energy-producing fear and terror, has not yet been found.

Yes, I hate to be afraid. I hate to be terrorized. And yet, without these hateful things, these hated feelings, I fall into a dustbin of sluggishness, of listlessness. How strange is the human mind.

Should I seek out fear? Should I seek out something, a “higher goal,” an unreachable star, a vision beyond my eyes, whose quest will terrify and terrorize me? Maybe.

One worships God with awe and wonder.

As my awe (fear and terror) dribble away, so does my wonder.

The miracle of jumping existence is dribbling into a dull, flat, daily reality.

Even a political win doesn't help. Oh sure, it's nice. But now I ask: Without the fight for victory up ahead, where will my thrills come from?

A political win is like a personal win. Same results, same personal “Now what?” questions.

I need to take a change, take a risk.

Playing fast guitar is such a risk. It's the first (and only one) I can not think of. True, there is no fear or terror behind it. But maybe I can create some!

It might also go with an abundance of push-ups. The fifties.

The fear and terror of death through “doing too much.”

Does “doing too much,” doing too many push-ups, the fifties, create enough fear and terror? Fear and terror of injury, fear and terror of death?

The path of fear, terror, possibly injury, and death: Is this a path I might

reconsider?

Should I create my own fear and terror? Is that the next step for me?
Create it (awe) in my miracle schedule.

I spent years trying to conquer fear and terror. Now that I have “conquered” it, I see that I need it. I’ve destroyed the source of my own motivation.

What to do? Resurrect it again. But perhaps in “new” form. What would be new? I would be in charge; I will be the one creating it. My fear and terror will come from within, rather than from without.

Here is an important, nay, a vital psychological truth: I need my battle against fear and terror. Without it I cannot grow.

“Falling Asleep”

I’ve always wondered what that “falling asleep” feeling is that I have when I play guitar, or that comes before performances.

It is me “sitting on my fear and terror,” pushing it down, denying its importance and power, dreading its coming and appearance. The common term is “pre-performance anxiety.” But it is much more than that. It is the dread of a cosmic power running through you, running over you, taking control and destroying your ego and everything that was once theoretically important to you.

My mind creates fear and terror. It always has.

Rather than distancing myself from it, I try to jump right in.

I used to be afraid to live with fear and terror.

Now I am afraid to live without it.

Fear and terror is certainly an antidote to depression and emptiness.

Morning Coffee

Could my personal contact with fear and terror, search for and acceptance of it, ever replace morning coffee?

The jolt of morning coffee.

I wonder if the twists and turns of my twisted relationship with fear and terror is what stopped me from playing Alhambra for so many years.

Can I turn my frustrations into “minor fears and terrors?”

Should I?

Do I (consciously and subconsciously) do that anyway?

Why not do it? It would be a good motivator.

Frustrations as Minor Motivators

Maybe my frustrations are minor fears and terrors, only I have denied their power and importance.

In any case, why not look at them that way. Turn them into “minor motivators.”

Thus my problems with Nero, Home Studio, FTP3, and with contacting Nuby, Les, Nikki are turned into “minor motivators” of motivation.

Tuesday, November 30, 2004

Writing and Reinvigoration

It was reading a page in Anais Nin that reminded me of my center.

The loss of direction, purpose, and meaning I have been experiencing for the past few weeks, even months, has to do, or started with my loss of faith in writing.

Evidently, writing and the writing process is, was, and still remains at my core.

When I return to writing with full vim, vigor, belief, and commitment, my downward drift will end. It hasn't happened yet. But at least I am beginning to see the root of the problem.

It is, evidently, part of the reassessment and post-transition thing.

(What a sign: My back just started to hurt as I wrote this.)

The journal writing, diary, New-Leaf style is my style. For now at least, there is no other. Evidently, I'll have to dive back in with full abundance.

A blistering return and commitment. Running wild on the writing lawn can, always has, and most likely will cure, reinvigorate, and re-enthusiate me.

Forget publication, forget length, forget the overwhelming pile of writing pages I will create, forget the "What will I do with all these pages?" question.

I have to let loose again; I have to open the writing barn door and let the fiery, wild horses out.

Healing the Body

The deep inner writing spark, a piece of the fire burning within my being, will, through the creativity of the writing act, burst out and burn away "outer" body aches.

I have, until now, during this post-transition period, been divorced from my writing center, and thus "out of touch."

So ends a New Leaf