

Expression

Saturday, August 28, 2004

Playing with Expression

Guitar Touch and Tone

Touch is part of expression.

So is tone.

Playing St. Louis Tickle, I am using a soft, relaxed, over-the-sound-hole touch. A new, beautiful, sweet, even tone results. In the process, a new form of guitar self-expression is developing.

This "new touch" expresses tranquility and beauty. Is it the beginning of a new, creative guitar road to self-expression?

Tuesday, August 31, 2004

Guitar "A" Finger Revisited:

Infinite Scratchy versus Rounded Tone

It seems, up until today, I have preferred the "A" finger's infinite scratchy to the rounded tone of rounded "A."

But I am at the border of change; I am about to enter the soft and sweet land of the rounded.

It's all part of the new touch.

B'Simcha Accomplishment List

1. Doing anything b'simcha, focusing and concentrating on b'simcha, is an accomplishment in itself!

Focusing and concentrating on my accomplishment, pouring b'simcha into it, is an accomplishment in itself!

Seeing the awesome work of God being done through my accomplishment, seeing the mitzvah effect both on myself and, eventually, in others, is a great insight and accomplishment in itself.

Thus can I begin to see my computer accomplishment of:

1. Using Address Organizer to print my full mailing list.
2. Printing most of my labels.

Does “most of” count? Yes. It has to, if I am to follow the b’simcha approach.

Does an incomplete French Canadian tour itinerary count? Yes. It has to, if I am to follow the b’simcha approach.

Sunday, September 5, 2004

Music and Language

In-Depth Exploration Begins

The subtle and deep connections between language and my music. The enclitic (and proclitic) effects within the notes of St. Louis Tickle. Any apocopes? What about elisions, hurts, or left outs, pauses, or waits within the Tickle?

These subtleties also exist in calliyoga, running, writing, and, no doubt all other aspects of the miracle schedule. I am beginning my in-depth exploration of these formerly “old” forms.

B’simcha and Zoom!

The Alhambra b’simcha. (Yes, I missed most of the notes; but what a great time I had!)

And what is more important? Playing all the notes right, or b’simcha? At this point in my life, after so many years of practice, there is no question it is b’simcha. I deserve it! So, fuck it all, I’m taking it!

Alhambra zoom! God, is that fun!

Leyenda zoom. . . just as much fun!

So is Jota zoom!

Is there a relationship between b'simcha playing, exhilaration, and zoom?

Absolutely!

The b'simcha approach is certainly a brand new one. And what fun it is! Look at b'simcha Bulerias zoom piccados.

Tuesday, September 7, 2004

Backaches, Travel, and Terror

If my body is to be a barometer of my mind, then why does my back hurt this morning?

We arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia last night. Nice Radisson suite we're staying in. Luxurious and big. Did rather full yoga last night to recover from the flight. A good thing.

Yet this morning my back hurts. Could it be from the yoga? Somehow, I doubt it. I'd rather think it is because: (a) I didn't bring my guitar and can't play this morning, (b) We're in a new place, a new environment, and I still don't have my bearings. I'm somewhat lost and disoriented and so my back hurts.

I like this psychological explanation much better than the usual arthritis one. It puts me more mental control; it also show how creative is my mind. . . that it should invent these protections for me, putting pain in my body to divert attention from my mind which actually hurts more, and is powerfully threatened by disorientation and the cosmic lost feeling.

Yes, although the pain in my back and body is "limited," the pain in my mind is eternal, infinite, indeed cosmic. It threatens total destruction of body, mind, and spirit. Certainly, such a threat is infinitely worse than a mere back pain. How dare I consider it, even look at it! Well, my creative mind refuses too, and gives me a minimal,

handleable back ache instead.

Is it really true? Could such disorientation really be such a threat to me, forcing me to cower, tremble, and run down my spine into my lower back? Can my psyche really be so threatened by such “minor” dislocations, by merely “traveling” somewhere else? Is leaving home really such a terror?

Evidently it is. But I don’t dare look at it. Imagine that, here I am in the travel business, and travel itself scares the hell out of me. (Maybe that’s why I’m in it: to understand and even conquer my fear.)

The excitement, adventure, and thrill of travel is “obvious.” Everyone talks about it, praises the exploration of new places, lauds the daring and adventure of it. There is also the lure of a hidden and possible paradise in some distant and yet undiscovered place.

But I’ve been to many countries and still haven’t found paradise. Oh yes, I’ve found adventure, problems, joys, sufferings, sorrows, beauties, etc. But peace of mind? Not exactly.

Am I looking for peace of mind?

Not exactly.

But I am looking for joy and b’simcha. No question that back aches, terror seizures of leaving home, the anxiety of travel, certainly diminish any hopes of such lofty emotions.

Is there anything I can do about all this?

Is there any way to incorporate the b’simcha attitude into travel? Or must I stay home and play guitar in order to do it?

Maybe I will never lose this uncomfortable disorientation or conquer this fear. Should I give up travel? I’ve reached a b’simcha point in guitar playing; maybe it is time for me to play my guitar. . . all day long!

Wednesday, September 8, 2004

Paeon to Pain

If in the history of the French language, stress led to the reduction to shwa of Latin post-tonic vowels, then what is stress doing to my body? Is it reducing my "post-tonic vowels," in their form of loose ideas, wandering thoughts, rough imaginings, to a stronger, more stable architecture, a more focused and concentrated power of mind?

Is the stress of a touring life as expressed in the jolts, bumps, pointed, jumpy, and jumping pains in my body, forcing me to focus more clearly? Are they pointing me in a more unitary, solid, focused, and powerful direction?

Certainly, this would be a positive view of the function of pain. Pain focuses the mind. . . and quite clearly.

Is the cosmic purpose of these pains to increase the power of my focus, and, in the process, concentrate my mental powers on my true purpose(s) in life?

Indeed, this could be viewed as a pain b'simcha approach. The pain of cutting off vague unfulfilling directions helps to increase focus in one direction.

Does pain ultimately increase focus on a greater good than the pain itself? Or is it simply a pain in the ass?

Does it help one to focus, and eventually see it as a vehicle to mental and spiritual development?

Thursday, September 9, 2004

A Question of Faith

I've said everything I can say about

This morning I say: Live with it and move on.

To a week's study of French, the Acadians, and Nova Scotia.

Moving on never hurts. Yet the exploration, study, and understanding of my mind is not only fascinating, but necessary, if I am to survive and function in this world.

And the study of my body, as “expression” of my mind, is also fascinating and necessary.

Why apologize because I always seem to write about the same subjects? Body pains and concomitant mental anguish. They never seem to leave. Well, they do when I am focusing on something else.

Part of body cure is to find something else to focus on. But how can I focus on something else when body hurts and taunts me so? Maybe the best approach is to focus on my body and watch that focus metamorphose into a bridge to somewhere else. Watch the pain; see the focus dissolve as I breath into it, then disappear as released mind slowly drifts away to something else.

Each day it comes, I must relearn and reaffirm pain’s connection to my mind. Daily the same questions reemerge: Do I really believe in the power of mind? Can miraculous mind actually “create” pain, and then, in a vibratory flash of strange revelation, cure it? This has so often happened in the past that by now I should “believe” it. But every day I face the new: a new level of pain, and mental adventure. Every morning I look at myself and ask once again the same question: Is it true? It was true yesterday, but is it true today? Does yesterday’s truth really apply today?

Can I really have faith?

That is the ultimate question: Can I have faith? Do I truly believe, not only in myself, but that a higher power is guiding my mind, and its servant, my body, through daily tortures in order to know, and, ultimately, unite me with the Lord of Creation?

Can I Accept my Limitations?

If I have faith, I would have to truly believe that these pains are “tourist” pains. They have to do with giving up my structure, my purpose, my “homey” focus. I am left to dangle in the Nova Scotia world, hanging over (or at the edge of) an abyss with no support, scaffolding, or structure. I am at “loose ends.” Death, and worse, await me as I “hang limply.” Basically, with the noose of “freedom” around my neck, I hang in the

free-flowing, Nova Scotia wind, terrorized by no structure, meaning, function, or higher purpose. Period.

It is hard to believe that such a “small thing” could bother me so. But, indeed it does. And it’s deeper than that: More than bother me, it terrifies me. (And I used to think I was so brave. How brave could I be when a “little thing” like no structure, meaning, function, or cosmic purpose bothers me so? Why can’t I stay cool, be loose, “enjoy my freedom,” , and go with the flow?

Well, evidently, I can’t.

I have to admit, I still don’t know myself. Certainly, I don’t “accept” myself.

Can I accept such “limitations” in my psyche?

Perhaps I am a workaholic? Working (all the time) focuses and relaxes me. Hard to admit. Especially, for one who so values personal freedom.

What am I choosing with my personal freedom? As John Paul Sartre said: “Freedom is the ability to chose your own form of slavery.” I like that. Perhaps I believe it. I am, indeed, choosing my own form of slavery. In fact, I can’t live without it! (Even as I write this I feel my lower back relaxing, getting better, improving! How about my shoulders? Perhaps they are getting better too. I feel the pains draining out of my body.)

But perhaps although I like the word “choosing,” I dislike the word “slavery.” I like to feel I am free; I do not like to think of myself as a slave. Perhaps I simply need a better word for “slave,” something to fit my artistic character, passion, and desire, and heroic fulfillment. Is the word “discipline” better? Yet, discipline is a bit stiff and boring.

I don’t know what the word is. Perhaps there is no word. Enslaved, tied to, committed to an art form, an artistic discipline. . . . I don’t know. . . yet.

Saturday, September 11, 2004

Temper Tantrum

To travel, you have to be flexible. But who's flexible? I want to have things my own way.

Perhaps I am having a temper tantrum. . . in my back, shoulders, knees, legs, and body. But mostly in my back.

What am I mad at? The very fact that I am here. And is the latter statement a fact or a question?

Part of me is definitely enjoying this tour. Notice I say tour, not vacation. Well, for me, that may be progress. I've already decided that so-called "vacations" are not good for me. I need work, structure, direction; I need something to focus on in order to stay sane and healthy. Falling into the vacuum of vacation, into the abyss of nothingness, only annoys, nay, terrifies me. Forget it.

So, see this trip to Nova Scotia as a tour, for me, may well be progress.

That means there is something in it for me, as well as my "other." This attitude itself is a radical departure and admission.

If I like it, then I will have to take complete responsibility for my pains; I'll have to admit I'm "creating them" for my own reasons. I can no longer blame this trip on my "other," and on trying to please her. Oh, of course, that's part of it. . . but only part. By recognizing that there is definitely something in this trip for me, opens me up to an entirely new way of thinking. Although I am overburdened, even overwhelmed by tours and touring, nevertheless, pushing myself (even through pleasing another), may be good for me.

It is the "pushing myself" concept.

Indeed, I am pushing myself to come to Nova Scotia. But I am also resisting while I push. Thus I am somewhat stuck in the center with my brakes on. Is this push-pull, forward-resist causing a type of mental paralysis which is being expressed in my frozen muscles, stiff and painful back, sharp periodic stabbing pains in the knees, and shoulders, and who knows where else?

In other words, am I having a temper tantrum because I can't go forward or

backwards; I'm somewhat stuck in the mud of attitudinal indecision?

Well, no question I am having a temper tantrum. I am just not sure yet of its cause.

Although consciously I have always "agreed" to go, perhaps unconsciously I have always blamed the "other" for forcing me to go. . . in order to please her.

If I admit I am benefitting from and even enjoy this tour, then I might even have to give up my (delicious) anger. It might even change the fundamental structure of this relationship. I have grown so, in opposition. Can I afford to give it up? What will happen to me? Is this the real and fundamental threat to my former attitude, world view, and even existence?

I would have to exchange anger for love and appreciation. Could I even exist in such a vacuum? Where would the bite, the spice, the pepper, paprikas, and even the salt come from?

And am I even right in this (very fundamental) analysis?

I'd have to give up my back pain. . . for love?

Give up my back pain? Never!

Tour Knee Kit: What about a tourniquet?

It holds your knee in place, protecting it from special dangers; it is a special bag, sack, or luggage used for traveling through this world.

A tour-knee kit.

The concept of love is certainly more relaxing than anger. Would that be better for my knee?

Sunday, September 12, 2004

The poetry of calliyoga:

Arm rotations: Developing wings, starting to fly.

Side pushes: pushing away the evil, negative forces.

Wrist rotations?

Neck rotations: Neck as gateway. Unscrewing the lid. Loosening. . . and opening the trunk. Letting positive, celestial vibrations pass through the head to enter and fill the entire body.

Lateral bends: Kidneys as waterway. Loose and loosening the lower back, watery entrance to the bottom.

Right leg side extension: Opening the sexy bottom power.

Left leg side extension: More of the same.

Heel taps: Minor thigh work. Posture focus.

Heel lifts: The calves awaken. Posture focus.

Achilles heel stretch?

Right leg forward extension: ham string macerators. Lower back focus and function. Swimming river down the ham string leg.

Left leg forward extension?

Both: very technical. Emotions to the ham string are cut off. What is the emotion locked in a ham string? What is its feeling? What is a ham string? What are the religious, spiritual, metaphysical, and celestial aspects of a ham string. . . and of the plural, ham strings?

Right leg semi-squat dips and bounces: Quadriceps, hello. Quadriceps: power and strength personified! Wide open and sunny.

Left leg semi-squat dips and bounces: Power and strength personified on the dark, slippery, sinister side. The underworld opens its hoary and ancient gates.

(Knees: Where do knees fit in?)

Salute to the Sun: I've invented and developed micro-running, and it works.

How about inventing and developing micro-yoga?

An End to "Vacation" . . . Thank God!

Tour Leader of Life

I've decided to be a tour leader on my "vacation." That means I've given up on "vacations." It means I shall never "take a vacation."

And why should I ever take a "vacation?" What will I take a "vacation" from? I've organized my life so I can "be on vacation" every day. Vacation, in this sense, means do whatever I like; it means following my passion, passions, and dreams on a daily basis. Thus I never want to take a "vacation" in the traditional sense of the word. It would mean taking a vacation from what I love doing. Paradoxically, such a "vacation" would mean for me means doing what I do not like, not following my passions, not following the path of my dreams, fulfilling the beautiful daily requirements of my miracle schedule.

Why would I even consider taking a "vacation" from the vacation I am already on? Ridiculous.

Yet old concepts of "vacation" die hard.

Nevertheless, my old one died on this Nova Scotia trip.

I have entered another Scotia, a Nova Terra Firma, Nova Via. I am now a tour leader of life.

This is a very good thing.

How does one maintain b'simcha under the public gaze of a lunatic, an incensed patron of the arts, an enraged traveler, an unhappy tourist, an angry customer, or a blaming wife?

First, check out if you have personally done anything wrong. Is there anything you can fix, improve on, or change for the better? Although you may not have directly caused or be responsible for the happiness or unhappiness of others, maybe there is nevertheless, something you can do personally to improve the situation.

Once you have checked this out, and see there is absolutely nothing (more) you

can do, first protect your physical self from damage by and from the angry other; then pull back to the b'simcha remembrance, maintenance, focus and concentration point.

Saturday, September 18, 2004

Artist Unites All

Creating wealth through the stock market and borrowing route was such a wrong way, such a drastically and totally wrong road, for me.

How could I have chosen such a mistake? How could I have gotten so far from my true direction? How could I have gotten so lost, side tracked, so warped, twisted, and wrong and stayed on this destructive, off-focused, blind-sided path for so many years? Was I paying off a karmic debt from another life?

I just looked at all my talents, said no confidence, and, instead of staying on the right road, chose the left.

Amazing.

Indeed, it was to learn a lesson.

I have learned the lesson; the illness is slowly dissolving.

By nature, I am an artist. But, during the past twenty-five years I have also wanted to become a businessman and a CEO. Actually, deep down I may never have "wanted" to. But I was tired of constantly being afraid of having no money. I wanted a better way of dealing with the outside, material world. . . so that I could eventually go back to being my true self: an artist.

Well, the financial route was twisted, long, and destructive. Mostly, it destroyed this concept of myself. Thank God for that! As I stand in the aftermath of this storm, I look around at the ruins upon which I shall build my new life. To artist I have added entrepreneur. As a Gemini, this dual definition of self fits. The artist/entrepreneurial path is the right one for me.

Margining and borrowing money to learn and play the stock market was simply

an absolutely wrong path. Evidently, I had to take it to find this out. Again, as Emmanuel said, now that I have learned my lesson, the illness will go away.

Can one be a passionate businessman? Can artist and entrepreneur be combined? Can both flourish under the rubric of Passion? I definitely also have organizational and leadership skills. Where do they come in? Rajasic, tamasic, or sattvic?

“Tamasic qualities are selfish and inert. Sattvic qualities are harmonious, balanced, and tranquil-minded. Rajasic is dynam

Organizational and leadership talents are definitely not tamasic, not selfish and inert. They are partly rajasic. But they may be sattvic. Organization and leadership (inspiring others to follow your the dreams and visions behind your organizing principle, your “organization,” certainly create or put one on the trail of harmony, balance, and ultimately, tranquility of mind.

Therefore, my tour business, my entrepreneurial bent, could have a sattvic quality. And, being a Gemini whose key word is “both,” (or even “many”), combining rajasic and sattvic would feel right and reasonable.

I am not, cannot be, will never be, a “businessman.” For me, there can be no such rational, abstract thing. I can no longer call mine a “tour business, folk dance business, weekend business, booking business, guitar concert business, writing business.”

For me, so-called “business” is a reflection of raja, passion, and the artistic soul. My b’simcha will come from focusing on and remembering this truth.

The Fifty-Year Perspective and Practice

George Bush said, “The history of my administration will be written and understood in fifty years.”

This is also true of my New Leaves, and my others books. Therefore, they should be published with this long-term perspective in mind. They are being written to handle the now, but being published for the future, for future generations, for my children, and my children’s children.

I am so focused in the present that it is very difficult to see the importance and long-term effects of what I am doing.

Developing a long-term perspective, fifty-years (as least) would be a very good practice.

Thursday, September 23, 2004

Inner, Steamy Radiance

By Tuesday things seemed to fall so easily into place. My tours, self, and year all felt "together." By late afternoon Tuesday, I felt I needed to celebrate. How? By killing or at least suppressing my joy. I spent about two hours at it. By the end, in early evening, I felt somewhat sick. Sneezing, slight chills, and a the beginnings of a cold hit me.

True, this could have been helped or fostered by my long, successful run on Sunday. A two-day "recovery" aftermath. Also fed by the over-excitement of tour, folk dance teaching, and guitar playing ease. Why, even writing and publication fell into place.

In any case, the whole combo has thrown me back, back "where I feel comfortable," back "where I belong." And where is that familiar place I belong. . . or at least used to belong? Why in the old neighborhood, of course?

But I no longer want to be there. Therefore, I'll have to get used to this new place I am now in: a place of comfort, freedom, high-level ease, satisfaction, quiet joy, and innersteam radiance.

It seems that, in Leyenda, I've somewhat passed the stage of "incredible joy of playing," the "what excitement to move my fingers so fast (and forget about the missed notes and mistakes), and "the melody is 'totally' in the bass," and moved into a calmer acceptance of this metamorphosis phenomenon.

Friday, September 24, 2004

New York Times versus the Wall Street Journal and New York Post: On describing reality as it is: Using the word terrorist versus all the disgusting verbal dishonesties and disguises such as “militant,” “fighters,” “kidnappers,” “insurgents,” etc.

It makes me furious. So narrow-minded, pig-headed, politically correct, and cowardly. But what can I do about it? Basically, nothing. If people want, desire, plea to be fools, so be it. Perhaps my only questions should be: 1. Why does it bother me? 2. Why do I waste any time at all thinking about them?

These are questions I have control over; I do control my own mind. . . mostly. But as to how they think, how they remain so totally stupid, I have no control over. They are free to be the idiots that they are.

But again, why do I waste my mental energies on them?

I get so furious and frustrated that they won't see it the right way. . . my way! But they don't, and they won't. I can't change their views one iota. Truly, it makes me want to scream. And I do. Still, nothing happens. My fury and frustration remain.

Perhaps all I can do is write about it.

Writing about it relieves some frustration, vents some anger, and is, evidently, my only. . . and perhaps best form of self-empowerment.

Sputter and fume. Maybe writing about politics is the way to go. A creative and righteous approach to stupidity, injustice, and anger.

I am not that interested in expressing my political views publically, facing actual human beings (who disagree with me). That experience is just too frustrating. Why should I hit my head against their thick walls? I'd rather use humor. It's more fun, and, besides, it might even work.

However, I do want unknot my frustrations. The best way may simply be to write about them in private, using my own words in my own journal, at my own pace, in

my own time, and with no human being standing in front of me, verbalizing inane stupidities.

I'm climbing into the physiology of my cells, muscles, corpuscles, even molecules. In a sense, it has nothing to do with the pieces I am playing. But no doubt, in its deepest, universal sense, it has everything to do with Music.

Thursday, September 30, 2004

The Trauma of Excellence

Most amazing: I am experiencing a thenar and hypothenar resistance. It hasn't happened for twenty-five years. (Such a change and resistance began my guitar changes and mid-life crisis.) What is this now all about?

What do my thumb. . .and thenar muscles symbolize and mean?

Do they speak of resistance to my upcoming Strauss anniversary job this Sunday? Something else? Nothing at all? Is it a new form of return to the old neighborhood?

Does Batya's death in particular, or death in general, have anything to do with it?

How about renewed financial fears? Will, and can, such fears become my cures? How so? By plunging whole hog into sales.

It does have something to do with this Sunday's Strauss booking. Part of me resists: No, no, no, I don't want to go, to present myself in public, to play guitar, to worry about all the technical equipment, to put myself up again for public humiliation!

All my fliers are just about ready. I am ready to sell again. . . on all levels. No, no, no, I don't want to go! Please let the summer vacation stay! Let me stay in my wonderful studios hole. Let me hide out from the world. No, no, I don't want to worry about finances again! Please let me study French, and stay in my room, and hide.

Is thenar my new resistance? Does the deepest psychology strike? A spasm of helplessness covers my being.

Yes, it is a form of sudden and primordial stage fright, a terror before the abyss of public humiliation, of doing the job.

Evidently, such primitive fears never end. I just have to deal with them on new levels.

Could it also be related to the hidden terror of doing well? What would Ma say? Is the Barzelay funeral a sudden reminder of her death? Is she being subtly resurrected in Batya?

What would Ma say if I played the guitar well? If my thumbs worked, and I was sensational? Smash, smash!

All my fliers are together. I am ready. I could never be more ready. Is this ultimately, a fear of excellence? A fear of entering the world that way. Could be. It would certainly "fit" my psychological profile.

Luckily I have my financial fears to "keep me in place." Is that why the sudden dental bill so threw me? I needed a throw, a throw-back to remind myself of my low place in the old neighborhood. To play the guitar well. . . with full thumbs. . . . What a trauma. The trauma of excellence revisited.

Thumbs, thenar, trauma, excellence, they are all related. I stand in the whirlwind of this constellation. There is no question that in my mind, I have achieved excellence. The trauma of achievement, of where to go, rises like a mountain with its paralyzing, ancient power.

But even this one cannot fool me. I see it, I know it, I understand it for what it is. It is the ever-standing obstacle before my excellence, the cloud of rain that dampens and covers my light.

Am I ready to handle it? Only my thumbs may answer that.

I have been running all my life. Running away , on the run, running away from myself, my talents, my excellence, goodness, skills, virtues, and more. I've run as much

as I can. I've run as far as I can, as far as I want to go.

I am sick of running.

I'm taking my stand, here and now. . . for excellence!

Friday, October 1, 2004

How?

Am I missing my creative self, my writing self, my artistic self? Is that the sadness I feel (ever so slightly) this morning?

Am I mourning its demise? Has it gone away at all, or is it in hiding?

I am certainly very much in the world organizing, promoting, and pushing my tours. But my back (and other parts of my body) continues hurting in strange ways. Is it signaling something to me, some hidden sadness, anger, or suppression? Is it my playful, creative, freedom-loving, imaginative, artistic soul?

Where did this fucker go?

Am I too much in the world, too practical, functional, organized, organizational, and outward directed? Are these the subtle and continual directions from my back?

Am I worried, frightened, suffering from performance anxiety regarding the Strauss anniversary this Sunday? Am I thus suppressing my inner core so I will succeed? And, if I suppress this inner core, and do a good job, can I call this pre-performance suppression "success"?

Wouldn't I succeed more if I grabbed both my artistic soul and its outward direction and expression, do a good job this Sunday and seize my soul? Of course.

But my back is saying something: Somehow, somewhere, sometime, I must return to my artistic soul. It has somehow been quietly suppressed for the past month or two. In fact, it may have started in the beginning of August with my tours to Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary. Touristically speaking, I was reborn on those tours. This rebirth lasted two months. . . until yesterday, in fact. Yesterday I completed all my tour organization for 2005. I am through with stage one, free to move on to stage two: the

campaign of sales.

But truthfully, through these two months my back (and some other parts) has been hurting. Usually, I have no such long-term problems with my back. I “knew” something new was happening in my mind and body, but I wasn’t sure what. Perhaps now, since I have finished my stage one work, I am ready to know.

I must return to my artistic soul. I must somehow incorporate it, use it, or, at least, stay in touch with it, during this Sales Campaign.

My next question is: How?

How, with my new body and new mind, can I become an artist again?

Saturday, October 2, 2004

I’ve gone as far as I can go with journal publishing writing. This may also be true, in a sense, for journal writing. Although, as I imagine it, I will always need the free and freeing form of journal writing to clear and fecundate my mind.

However, something is over. When I read Paul Kerlee’s letter, and it said my books are very personal journals, and that they are so personal they may not have that much interest or meaning for readers, I felt somewhat relieved. Although no one know what will interest readers, I personally feel I’ve come to some kind of journal writing ending. I’ve written as much in that journal writing form that I need. Also there is the feeling of Thank God, I don’t have to publish any more of them.

I’ll probably keep writing my journal, and writing it in that free form and freeing journal style. But there is the feeling I’ve come to a sort of ending; I’ve gone as far as I can or need to go.

Since this is true in the other parts of my life, why not journal writing as well?

Sunday, October 3, 2004

The Campaign

An experiment: Put aside guitar bookings, house concerts, etc. for a year. Let

guitar, concerts, bookings, singing, etc. become a “hobby.” They will remain just as psychologically and physically important, like writing, yoga, and running. But they will not be the center of my business focus. They haven’t been for years, anyway.

This year’s main project, focus, challenge, and learning will be: How to run a sales campaign, how to promote and sell all my tours.

There is a certain sadness in this realization: I am, in a sense, giving up my inner world’s of imagination and “creativity” on order to pursue function and connection in the outer world. It feels like I am my fertile old world of imagination and in-room” quirky but sustaining power, turning it in, to pursue outer connection with others. This will be successfully “expressed” by checks and registrations in the mail. I don’t even like to use the word “success” here. On one level, all this doesn’t even have to “work,” doesn’t have to “succeed.” Rather, it feels like a new direction, one which I must take whether I succeed or fail. In fact, in walking on this new path, success or failure is somehow “besides the point.”

I am not being very clear. But that is partly because the place I now stand in is somewhat surrounded by fog. I can see the sun above, but it is somewhat obscured by haze.

What, indeed, am I talking about?

Something is happening, but I don’t quite know what it is. (That is why this journal writing is, and no doubt will always be, so personally important to me. Through it, I discover and explain myself to myself.)

Last year, I felt that, after twenty-five years of labor, I had finally fulfilled all my dreams. A success, indeed. But also, what a downer. I had to think about: What now? It threw me into a transitional year.

Then, on my tour to Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary, I was “reborn.” New tour realizations, ideas, and directions flowed in. I came back reinvigorated and inspired.

Upon returning, I spent all of September completing my tour itineraries, and basically, setting up my schedule and brain, and pointing it in a forward direction.

Thursday I finished that project. All my fliers are now printed. All information on my web site is up to date. All my dance classes have started, and I'm doing my first booking today. Thus I am now, totally ready to begin my post-transitional year. I am totally ready to begin my campaign.

My heart and soul are going into this campaign. All my side efforts, my "hobbies" if you will, will be dedicated to this campaign.

Aha, that may be my new (post-transitional) focus and direction. The refocus and rededicate my "old-time" talents, to take my guitar, yoga, running, writing, computer skills (notice this addition!), and rededicate them, put all of them in the service of my campaign.

Wow! And what? A rededication. But I wonder what that means.

Can the campaign fit in my miracle schedule? I would like it to. If it did, meaning and sense would flow more fully into my life.

Does it? If yes, where and how?

Monday, October 4, 2004

Goodness

I played guitar and taught/led folk dancing at the Joanna and Peter Strauss Anniversary yesterday. It was excellent, sensational. I was superb.

Here's the post-performance letter Joanna sent me:

"Dear Jim,

Tired as we are, I wanted to email you first to say how thrilled we were with your contribution to our very exciting afternoon. You were so adept and wonderful – and reawakened my somewhat dormant love of folk dance. So I'm keeping my fingers crossed that Bailey Farms appealed to you, especially the potential dance hall – and/or that the temple choir director might get the temple revved up again to folk dance (as in days of yore).

As I mentioned at the close of the evening, you received many compliments – and we're delighted that I managed to turn this fantasy of mine into a reality.

Thank you so much.

Warmly,

Joanna and Peter too”

Why do I have to suffer so much in order to be superb? Why must I go through so many hours, nay days, of pre-performance anxiety?

Perhaps such “anxiety” is my way, my personal technique, of getting in touch with and calling up my energy. Although during bookings I usually teach folk dancing for only about half an hour, I put a tremendous amount of focus and concentration into getting all the people to stand up, get in a circle, and start dancing. Mentally, I create a powerful ray of energy that I consciously (and unconsciously) project into each person present in the room. I focus totally on all of them at once. I create a group unity in my mind. Then when I ask them to dance, I am simultaneously projecting my mind, talents, and energy straight into their hearts; through this subtle form of energy projection I am “forcing” them to get up and dance.

The need to create this performing energy may be the reason I feel so much pre-performance anxiety. My anxiety is my engine.

Word of Mouth

It is much more interesting looking at an individual as “hidden leader” type than a mere, isolated and alone “individual.” The concept of hidden leader opens up and reveals their (obviously hidden) potential. Also it spreads the “word of mouth” idea.

Getting mouths to move; the mouth being closely related to brain, and one of the best, quickest pathways to the heart.

“Word of mouth” is the best advertising. My goal is to get the flow going, the

flowing words from the mouth. From my mouth to their mouths.

That's why it is so important that I call them, talk to them, be there in their presence to create personal energy, mostly expressed through the mouth. Get the mouths to move, all the mouths of my customers and clients, dancers and travelers, business acquaintances and friends, all of them.

By seeing individuals as "hidden leaders" I not only recognize and promote their potential but can also use them for my own purposes accordingly. They I can both help them help themselves (by realizing and expanding their potential) and help me (by using their potential, power, friends, and word of mouth) to sales of my wonderful products and services, a win-win situation.

"Hire" all my clients and customers as sales people. Find the center of their enthusiasm; plug into it; use their (hidden) potential to increase my (and "their") sales. It's an "us-us" situation.

Explaining my Prices

Instead of being mad at people who complain about my tour or other prices being too "high," I would do better to "understand" it from their point of view. After all, if I was the buyer and paying, I would like to know why the reason for the price, why it is so "high;" I'd like to know "what I am paying for."

How to "explain" my price to people?: The answer is to "teach them," tell them about the quality of the tour, service, or article.

Yes, I want to explain my prices. It gives me a chance to talk about the tour, the intensity of its learning experience, the high quality of its leaders, personalized services, itinerary, and more.

This is also good in explaining my prices for bookings, weekends (well, they are cheap. . .or better, excellent value!)

Well, there is a good word: Excellent value.

My tours (and bookings) are an excellent value. Look what you get for the price! Explain it.

Let me tell you what you get in this tour.

Let me tell you what you get when you hire me to lead folk dancing, play guitar, or both, for your event.

Don't get mad. Explain.

See their opposition as a (hidden) sign of interest.

Love their resistance. Take it as an opportunity to explain.

Instead of defending my prices, I will go on the offensive. Dive right into the price itself. Explain it, even in detail. Show why and how their purchase of my tour (bookings, guitar lessons, or whatever) is such an excellent value.

Talk about money and prices strikes directly at the heart.

This whole concept of prices and their explanation it is actually quite exciting. In fact, I can't wait to find a client, a potential customer, and start explaining. Let me at 'em! The tiger is hungry for red meat!

Friday, October 8, 2004

Yesterday morning I called all my E-mail people, made a list of folk dancer E-mail address (the ones I could find). It took about two hours of straight calling. In the evening, I group E-mail my schedule and Norwegian itinerary to the Florida Folk Dancers and the Folk Dance Network. A big day of E-mailing. Plus I'm almost finished with my ITN ad.

All in all, I've entered more fully into the technological age. Result of all yesterday's work: A sense of satisfaction. It feel good, real good! I like all this "in the world" sales and gospel working.

Is there excitement in this gone-public sales work? Yes. But the main feeling is one of inner peace and "technological" satisfaction.

I can't get used to seeing and believing how stupid and anti-democratic people on the left have now become. So many are my friends and colleagues. But their vision has so ossified, become so narrow, biased, and anti-democratic. Deep in my habitual heart, I just cannot believe what I see before my eyes. Bigoted, intolerant, and anti-democratic? The wonderful and civil-rights believing Left? Basically, I can't believe it. It goes against all my upbringing and former judgements. But it is nevertheless, true.

Beneath this, I am facing the question of believing that I have a political belief, of having confidence in my own vision of history.

I believe in individualism, the liberty of the entrepreneur, the freedom of the artist. These personal beliefs, which I have always had and am now developing even further, have slowly been translated into political beliefs, beliefs in political liberty, pursuit of individual excellence, and ultimately, democracy.

While my old world of the left drifts into ossification, anger, intolerance (sometimes even bordering on fascism), I become stronger in my outward, gone-public, political beliefs of democratic individualism, liberty, and freedom.

These are general, political, and social words that express the inner core of my beliefs, the essence of my artistic soul.

The artistic vision through my in-room world of fantasy and dream-idea experience; the political vision I am slowly developing is my outward, gone-public expression of this in-room vision.

Believers that Saddam Hussein could be contained by sanctions, that he would never get, have, use WMD, that he would not pass them on to terrorists, that he was not a threat to the civilized world, and that he should not have been forcibly removed, are either stupid, naive, blind, or all three.

Building an organization and doing a house concert tour are ideas that come to

me almost simultaneously. They are almost twins, in the same family, and thus as developments, are somehow related. But I don't know how yet.

Of course, concerts are a way of spreading the word, and finding new and more people to build an organization. But although true, these are old thoughts, old ways of thinking.

Let the whole thing marinate. See where it leads.

Rolling Along Sales: I Love It!

I am entering a brand new place: The land of The Great Playpen where sales, rolling along, and scintillating, out-there, gone public, excitement reigns.

Everything is falling together in one great organizational whole. It feels even more exciting than the individual spokes of the JGI wheel, the individual tours, weekends, folk dance classes, bookings, book sales, and more. A great sizzling, wind-blown, sales, out-there, gone public whole.

It is One Volcano erupting with One Lava Flow rolling down the mountains and flooding the valleys.

It feels like there is nothing else to do but this, nowhere else to go, nowhere else to be but here.

I don't know what to do, how to view or handle this "new feeling." Everything feels in order, in place; I am in a scintillating, sizzling, exiting place. I am there. Or am I here? Here, there, where ever here or there is, I am in it.

Is this place really so "new?" I think so.

The Great Playpen of outdoors meets the immature, artistic, in-room Mind. And they embrace!

It's so much fun I can hardly stand it!

I am entering a new land with new vistas. When will come the whack of sadness that I am giving up my old vision?

Friday, October 15, 2004

Rubato Guitar. . .Leads to a Rubato Life

I just looked up the word “rubato.” It comes from the Italian “robbed.” Thus I am robbing pieces of tempo and expression. Rubato has an outlaw quality, a bit of the rebel, too. Doing things “my way.” Robbing the past to feed the present. I like it.

It takes many years to fade, but the truth is, the deep, long-term purpose of my tours, to learn how to improvise in folk dancing, has been accomplished.

I am now choreographing, writing down, and presenting my dances.

By hearing my old World of Guitar and Lincoln Adair records, I am ready to continue the artistic trail, to pick up where I left off thirty years ago.

The last twenty-five to thirty years of guitar practice. . .and playing, have been more about getting the “nuances.”

Evidently, thirty years ago my tremolo and arpeggios were easily “adequate.” (Only deep in my heart, I didn’t believe it; I wanted to improve them. And I did. But only on a nuance level. Well, that level may have been enough. . .because it also gave me the important ingredient of confidence. Twenty-five to thirty years to get confidence. Well, perhaps time is never the question. The battle takes as long as it needs to take.

So ends a New Leaf.