

## Retirement: Life of an Artist

Thursday, February 24, 2022

### Integration

I'm still in shock, but descending from my highs, Or is it ascending from my lows?

Is there even a difference?

In any case, I've made lots of February decisions have been made. Time to integrate and absorb them. That's what March is all about. (Although it might happen in a few days. Note: I also have a two weeks Rhodda Center folk dance teaching break.)

Boiling in the cauldron of the abyss is where I belong.

The abyss is my home.

I'm supposed to be making mistakes, miscalculations, and errors just as I'm supposed to be winning battles and succeeding. That's what life in the cauldron of the abyss is all about.

Friday, February 25, 2022

### Artistic Interpretation

#### Guitar: The Abyss

Slow down, enter the notes. Jumping/diving into the abyss leads to artistic interpretation.

Milan Pavares:

1. "Warm-ups." Diving into the abyss right away is now taken for granted.

Sor Etude Number 12:

Into the abyss. Slower, sloppy, artistic, gorgeous. An artistic interpretation. My first! Jumping/diving into the abyss leads to artistic interpretation.

It is my abyss, so it is my interpretation.

This is where I always wanted to be. Sor Etude Number 12 is (was) my first step.

1. First interpretation: Slow, mellow, gorgeous.
2. Pre-thoughts: Fast as hell. Sloppy and dynamic.  
Fast, loose, relaxed, sloppy, interesting
3. Faster, loose, relaxed (especially in the left hand), interesting. Beyond the abyss. A blossoming new “rapido” interpretation.

### Alhambra

- 1, Loose, sloppy, relaxed, soft but rapido, interesting. Relaxed in the abyss. Sloppy but beyond sloppy. Through sloppy we go beyond sloppy.  
The abyss accepts sloppy.  
Sloppy is its own technique. (Hmm, I like this. I wonder what it means.)

Saturday, February 26, 2022

### Fried Brain

#### Take the Plunge

Seems I'm forgetting, blotting out the old life.  
My brain is shot.  
I'm suffering from fried brain.  
Or am I being elevated by it?  
Fried brain belongs in the abyss. It's an integral part of the fall into nothingness, and the elevating flight that follows.  
Note today's guitar idea: Slow doesn't work except as a warm-up for fast.  
Its Fire and dynamism live in the abyss.  
Perhaps this listless, empty, dead feeling I'm having is really resistance to stepping off the cliff. To jumping in. Resisting the excitement of diving in, of grabbing the fruits of glory, ecstasy, dynamism, and fire in the abyss.  
Fried brain creates a tasty plunge into the abyss.  
So what is my advice to myself?

Be brave. I hate being a coward.

Take the plunge.

March is my month.

March is all about plunging practice.

Sunday, February 27, 2022

### Questions of Return

Is spending my time traveling boring or worthwhile? But travel always has “boring” parts. It can’t be done any other way. Dealing with the boredom is part of the job challenge.

Is fear of death my biggest fear? Probably. I could die anytime. Will “pushing it” by working (too) hard make any difference? Or will diving into the challenge, working “too” hard, enhance, even lengthen my life?

### Complete Return

I’m talking about a “complete return.”

But with a new attitude.

I was doing everything right pre-Covid. Only my attitude was twisted. During these two Covid years, I’ve cleaned out many negative attitudes. Now I’m in a proper and good place, positive and daring.

### Exciting

Drop the words “nervous,” “fear,” and even “anxious” (as in performance anxiety.)

Replace them with “exciting.”

Return with exciting.

“Exciting” is the word for the month of March.

And with it, march onward.

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

Maybe my re-entry, on the surface, not much, even nothing, will change. All my Covid activities will remain the same.

Only their “depth” will change. This post-Covid life will become my new life. Only “deeper.”

### Attitude: Excited

More free time.

Artists never retire.

Am I an artist? In classical guitar?

Now the door is open. YES.

Life as an artist begins with a Gavotte!

### Month of March

This is the first day in the month of March. And this morning I have discovered what March is all about.

It's about marching into art and artistry, marching into life as an artist! And spreading it everywhere!

I always wanted to be an artist. This was the highest calling, the highest compliment and fulfillment, the next-to-godliness place. Secretly, I always admired and wanted to be like my uncle, the artist Jim Lechay. I even look like him.

Well, maybe this is God's plan and purpose for me: To live my life as an artist, and the bring the beauty of art and the artistic vision to others, and through it, fulfill my tikkun olam purpose.

My path has been to remove the boulders in the road. Finally, after two years of monastic Covid life, the classical guitar boulder has been removed, and the world of exciting (classical) guitar has opened up.

I now have choreographic artistic freedom, and (classical) guitar freedom. Time

to “dance” an exciting “Gavotte” on the guitar.

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Grateful, Happy, and Free

Why do I want to work?

Why not bless my freedom and free time?

In fact, it frees me to spend more of my free time as an artist.

Not a bad place to be.

Maybe the main question, and the problem that has been plaguing me is: What to do with my new freedom?

And what about physical aches and pains? Are they related to this stunned, lost, and confused question?

Could be.

Am I crazy not to be happy and grateful?

I have been “re-tired” by Covid.

It is a different place, pace, and even self-image. But so what? Get used to walking on this new path.

I read Sarno last night to see if I’m angry. Result: I’m not. No rage at all.

I’m just stunned, confused, and a bit lost. This new state of freedom has thrown me.

I cut my own chains, or rather, the Covid situation cut them for me.

So losing Goldens Bridge and Darien folk dance classes, and my JGI tour leading, or rather “giving them up,” is a plus. I just have to “get used to it.”

What about guitar?

Do I even want to give a concert? Do I dare give up, break my concert chains?

Maybe.

The shock wave is slowly subsiding.

I have been cut adrift on an ocean of free time.

A temporary curse but long-term blessing.

How to handle it?

How to return as a free man? That is my March quest and question.

Can I give up this mental chain which used to anchor me in a secure straight-jacketed pig pen of motivating anxiety?

Can I live with such freedom?

Give up the idea of making guitar videos. A secret form of concert.

With this thought note the rising of sneezing. Could I be sneezing out the chains? Yes. The snot of slavery was gathering in my nose. Colds and slavery go together. I sneezed my way to freedom.

Friday, March 4, 2022

My present task is to find meaning in self-entertainment beyond misery.

I'd like a direct connection to the world.

But presently, only indirect connection is for me.

It is found by going within.

Take a direct route into my heart. Open it to the higher forces.

### Self-Interest Runs the World

Terry emailed me to congratulate me on my Targovskoto dance choreography. Good dance, she wrote.

I want to call and thank her.

But beyond obligation, can I find another reason to call her?

Is there one?

What about love, connection? Or is it only (mostly) for the self-benefit of inner exploration and self-improvement?

Sadly, the only reason that resonates is, "self-benefit of inner exploration and self-improvement?"

How disappointing.

Am I really so low, mean, and self-involved? Is my ego really so weak that I must constantly reach out for more confidence and self-affirmation?

I think it is.

How egoistical!

But that is the way it works. Sure, love and connection with others are important.

But self-interest runs the world.

Should I feel diminished and hate myself for being so narrow and small-minded?

Or just accept it as the way of the world?

As I look within, that's the way I am,

What else can I do but accept it?

And become a bit wiser for the acceptance.

Sunday, March 6, 2022

### Musical Adventure

It's been a terrible two weeks. A period of loss, sadness, mourning, hitting bottom, jumbled brain, and emptiness. But it all seems to be dribbling away as I drift back to "normal" and think about reinventing myself,

What happened?

It started with my visit to Dr. Stone two Fridays ago. She talked about stress and how it is bad for the heart. When I left I thought about leading tours and then had the final realization that my travel business career and parts of my folk dance career were over. The mourning, sadness, and depression lasted almost two weeks.

Today, somehow I feel better.

The storm has passed. And strangely, beyond some very minor adjustments, nothing has changed! And miracle schedule is still in place, only with a bit more liberty.

Language studies are more important.

Concerts are over. My dream of some day giving a concert has died. Good riddance. Freed from that jail. Perhaps by giving up this “poisonous, illusory desire,” I will now be free to embrace a new musical adventure on the guitar.

Maybe this is what the March re-entrance is all about.

First loss, then gain.

With the crush of loss, you slip and float in a terrifying, free-falling vacuum of freedom. And you don’t feel right until you land, feet on the ground, in a new territory.

How about re-entering the “Alhambra” palace? But now without carrying my heavy “give a concert” load, the blanket, the sky is the limit. No speed restrictions. Play as fast or slow as I want.

Is the palace a jail or freedom launch?

To not avoid this juice, let it eat you up. And when you’re in its belly, find its juices of creation and drink them up. Later, when she spits you out, you can run like crazy across the lawn, creating cities and castles as you shout with victory.

Monday, March 7, 2022

### The Abyss of Freedom

The abyss of rebirth is an amazing place.

Scary, but full of wonders.

First, you jump, and feel the terror of falling. Down, down, down, you go, falling, falling into the darkness until you hit bottom. Then, just when you can fall no further, an amazing thing happens: There in the stillness, transformation begins. Slowly, as you get used to you new state (of mind), invisible wings appear (usually around the shoulders, in the head region.)

And to your surprise, you begin to float.

Faster and faster you float.

Then suddenly, you begin to fly!



Up, up, up you fly until, slowly, soon, and suddenly, you have flown out of the abyss!

Light fills and surrounds your body as you fly upward.

And you watch the abyss disappear as you head for the sun.

### Return

Return with a Voice.

Voice is the first sign, signal, and symbol of return.

Guitar:

Sor: Etude Number 12 as a voice. Milan Pavaues, too.

Alhambra

1. Voice is in the bass.

2. I'm sick and scared. Why? I'm giving up the treble as meaningful. A "lifetime" quest down the drain. The treble is not the voice. I've been on a camouflaged goose chase. Do I regret forty-five years of chasing? No. There could have been no other way. But I am amazed and stand in awe of the process. It has been such a long fall into the abyss of freedom. But there are precedents. Moses and the Israelites spend forty years in the desert. Plus it took the Soviet Union seventy years to fall.

So change and transformation often take much longer than you think. All you can do is start the process, get on the road, and see what happens, where it leads. In any case, it's a long fall into the pit of freedom.

Leyenda: Same

Romance D'Amor:

Treble (a finger) free stroke. (A "lifetime" in the wilderness.

Lagrima and Adelita: All free stroke

Misionera: Scales – free stroke

Flamencan guitar pieces:

Free stroke. Another revolution. A "lifetime" of rest strokes reversed. Is that

what freedom is all about? Fifty years to arrive at “Freedom Stroke”? Maybe.

The curtain falls. A rest stroke is an impeded stroke. Who invented such a chain-and-shackle thing?

It is a tremendous move to drop, lose, give up such a long time rest-stroke playing habit.

But is also feels like “No big deal at all.”

Once the curtain falls, it seems so obvious.

But for the curtain to fall, it may take years, a lifetime, or even never at all. A curtain covering equal a lifetime of illusion. Luckily, there is rebirth.

### Getting to Know

Getting to know my legs again.

Getting to know my new body and mind.

Getting to know my new self.

### A New Routine

What to do about the empty, sinking morning fatigue I feel after writing?

Sleep? This means giving in to the “sleepy” feeling. But truth is, I’m feeling empty and drained, but not sleepy. So if not sleepy, perhaps there is another way.

How about forcing myself to exercise?

Although I dislike “forcing” myself,” I may be on to something. Do a pleasant exercise. Something that starts of feeling easy, relaxing and good. I know once into it, I will “wake up.” But somehow, I have to start.

If it’s pleasant and easy, it will be pleasanter and easier to start.

How about a long relaxing forward bend? And holding it a minute or so? It’s easy, fun, pleasant, and feels good immediately.

In fact, once into the forward bend, I can easily expand it to the “salute to the

sun,” and then easily add the rest of my yoga routine. I like it.

Then I would move to singing exercises/warm-ups, and even into singing some actual folk songs.

Then I would go an hour walk/run.

Thus, post a/m. study, guitar practice, and writing (Journal, mostly): A New Routine.

1. Light fwd bend, leading to Salute.
2. Singing. Voice/vocal
3. Walk/Run

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

### Rejoice in Being Normal

The war in Ukraine.

What can I do about it?

Nothing.

Well, that’s not really true. I can do something.

What?

Stay normal. That’s the revolution.

Keep following my miracle schedule. But now in defiance of war, misery, and evil. By creating “Joy and Rejoice” situations, by creating “Cheer Up and Rejoice” worlds.

What could be more revolutionary, anti-war, sock-misery-in- the-teeth than that? Kick evil down the stairs and into the basement. And I have the artistic tools to do it.

The artistic life is the real revolution.

Fight all of it by being normal! That’s the task of today’s modern revolutionary.

### Cancel Culture and More

When you ban something, you make it more attractive by increasing its energy.

A strong "No!" generates a strong "Yes!" And vice versa.

Opposites attract.

Seeds of opposition often grow in the darkness of secret places. But grow they do!

Soon they become grow strong, fight, and eventually win.

And the cycle begins again.

How to use this knowledge?

Guitar:

With "Alhambra" melody thoroughly established in the bass, I can start almost immediately with "Alhambra," hardly any warm-up. In fact, I could even warm up with it!

How's this for a "warm-up" "Alhambra," 3x, "Leyenda." 2x.

Flamenco: The Free Stroke revolution. Piccado passages, scales, in free stroke. Better than the Russian revolution. For myself and the world, too.

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

### Questions of Return

Will returning to work ruin my good time, destroy the peace and beauty of my two-year Covid retreat?

Do I want to leave the monastery, distance myself from the power of its inner vision?

I have the choice.

I could retire, disappear from the world, perhaps have a small life with family, a few friends, a quite local existence, do my own thing in relative obscurity. It sure is different from the past. But have I "done" the past? Is it time to "return" or rather "enter" something new? What's the rush? Do I even need a rush? What about the new

serenity, beauty, and grand focus of a low-tech life?

Must I return to hustle and bustle? Is that courageous and wise, or cowardly and stupid? Forward looking, or merely revisiting the known by returning to a “been there, done that” past?

Thursday, March 10, 2022

### On Becoming a Fiction

This morning, something new: I’m feeling a new kind of fever with chills. Actually, I know I’m sick with “writing fiction resistance!” I must make a place for daily fiction writing. A new priority and commitment.

(Amazing how writing and depression go together. Big D is my personal signal it’s time to write. Once I start, depression dissolves.)

Part of the March re-entry and return.

The post-Covid writing fiction chapter begins.

With it, guitar playing fades into “it doesn’t matter as much.”

Here’s what happened with Alhambra:

1. Deeper thumb, relaxed and loose. “Alhambra doesn’t matter – as much.” (I like it. Nay, I love it!)

2. I need a few days getting used to “It doesn’t matter as much.” Also thumb deeper. Also playing guitar as a fiction, as a new character.

3. Get used to playing guitar as a writing-fiction-guitar-player. Mr. Thumb. Alhambra meets Mr. Thumb.

I’ll become a Real Fiction guitar player with a new name. Choreography, too. A fiction choreographer.

My Life as a Fiction.

I’m becoming a fiction. And that’s the best place to be!

Friday, March 11, 2022

Re-Enter Does Not Mean Return

Maybe I don't want to return. Maybe I like where I am. Maybe I like my new Covid life.

Let's look again:

What do I not like: No tour leading, no far away folk dance classes (Darien and Golden's Bridge.) Not bad.

What do I like? My free time. No financial or performance pressure. Truth is, what's not to like?

Why am I (was I) wanting to return to a life of pressure and pain that I was trying to escape from?

Do I really want to return to a life of wanting fame, financial security, developing a following in folk dancing, tours, even guitar and writing with all the pressures it brings?

The answer is: NO.

Am I not in a good place now?

The answer is YES.

So the result is: The month of March is not a return (to the past) month, but rather a march to acceptance of my new post-Covid state, my new attitude as I re-enter (but not return) to what I call the outside life.

Can I accept this march into Okay Land?

Yes, my purpose now is different. The only purpose now is that there is no purpose. I like it.

The pleasure is mine. Of course, others can always step in to enjoy it with me. Or not. Either way is okay because it is Okay Land.

Can such a purposeless purpose (PP) sustain me? Well, since this is the reality there is no other choice.

So in truth, nothing much has changed. Only a slight nuance, a shift to the right. But of course, this "slight shift" is a giant leap!

How to apply this new PP.

Guitar: I don't have to give a concert anymore, and I never will. Free and floating. (Am I soaring?)

Friday, March 18, 2022

### Guitar

Start today by playing for my new audience.

"Gavotte in D:" I'm dancing with new knees, sharing my soft, slow, focused, beautiful notes with my new audience. My new audience accepts and loves everything I do. As I play "Alhambra," I have a loveable thumb, and my audiences loves it, too. A loveable, happy, joyful thumb bouncing around with unmitigated pleasure.

Happy thumb leads to happy fingers.

Saturday, March 19, 2022

Twisted my right knee Wednesday night. Wow, bad. Brought Bernice to hip surgery Thursday. Bad right knee until Saturday a.m. Woke up with terrible right knee. Here's what I wrote:

It's March, the month of so-called re-entry.

Maybe my knees are telling me something.

Maybe they are telling me I don't want to re-enter anything.

Maybe I want to retire, and do nothing.

No responsibilities—not even local folk dance teaching.

Only enjoy my money, trading, and guitar playing (but of course, no concerts.)

Note: Suddenly, at least for a few steps, my right knee relaxed and got better!

Maybe, rather than re-entry, the meaning of March is total exit! This is really radical, different, and "feels" right. And note the confirmation: How good my right knee feels! The right knee, the right path, the right Sarnoian answer.

Yes, indeed, I was mad, angry, even enraged at the return of old neighborhood responsibilities, and my endless conflict between giving them up and return to them. Evidently, the answer has arrived: I don't want them! Any of them! Even local folk dancing teaching. All. Give them all up. And I have enough money to do it!

March is the exit month.

The only question is: How to do it?

### Retirement Guitar

First signs. Gavotte in D and more.

Sink into the slow (SS).

(Rising from my seat. Focus on the abs.

Retirement knees: Walking SS, folk dancing SS

Note: No "Alhambra" ;problems ever. Gone with SS.

Retirement Alhambra.

End of right knee problems, too. First retirement walk around my living room.

Slow, steady, and no right knee or leg pain!

Right knee and leg is my retirement leg.