

A Student's Experimentation with Music and Meditation

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Executive Summary

Musicians are losing the love for their instruments due to mental strain and self-deprivation. Students who come to music school with bright eyes often leave with those eyes filled with tears and regret. It is easy to forget the reason that we went to music school in the first place... because we love what we do. That love, however, fades as self-doubt and insecurities creep in. Music suddenly becomes about gain and achievement when previously it was about love and fun. It is my hope that my teachings ignite the passion and love that once was the driver in their relationship to their craft.

My papers are a student's perspective on experimentation with meditation and its relationship to musical studies. I have been in a musical/educational slump before and have gotten out of it using the techniques that I write about. It is my hope that me relaying my experiences with fellow students allows them to seek a similar path towards a new self-discovery. The main take away from these papers is to feel unconditional love for your instrument, for music and for every note that you create. This differentiates myself from my biggest ally, Kenny Werner, and Effortless Mastery. We are both focused on bringing out the best in student's musical abilities using meditative practices. His teachings focus on accessing the zone or "the space" as he refers to it, where my teachings involve loving kindness meditative practices to make each note filled with love and joy.

An opportunity that we may have is to partner with Kenny in the release of these papers. We would have his built in, very specific audience. These also outline some threats that are present. There aren't many people in this space and Effortless Mastery has some very die-hard followers. Although my teachings compliment Kenny's we would still be deemed competitors. That is the equivalent of a mom-and-pop shop taking on Walmart. Another threat to my success in this realm is the specificity of my audience. Musicians are a specific market enough but to rely on musicians that are both in musical slumps and are open to meditative practices seems like a stretch. With this being said, I hope that the audience sees that my teachings are not supplementary to Effortless Mastery and the incorporation of both techniques will lead to the best possible result.

Regarding a marketing plan, I would love to get my papers published in both meditation and music journals. If I do this, I will hopefully be able to efficiently find my market overlap. I can also contact the students in the Effortless Mastery Department and the music therapy department at Berklee. This project currently has minimal need for a budget, but the current cost is my time. As the project progresses, website costs (domain, host, design, SEO) will ensue and with that will come marketing costs. I would like to keep those minimal by doing most of my marketing through related university departments.

The main goal with this project is to give music students the tools to fall in love with their instrument again. Being a music student is hard on mental health due to the vulnerability that playing an instrument entails. I want each student to reconnect with their passion for love and music.

Problem

Students of music tend to have a love/hate relationship with their craft. Of course, they love playing their instrument, but that love is accompanied by self-doubt and fear of mediocrity. This can make approaching their instrument detrimental to their mental health. Playing an instrument is meant to be an act of love, yet many students discard their musical passion due to their own insecurities regarding their playing. People forget the reason why they started playing their instrument in the first place... because it's fun and they love it. That love can turn to hate due to their new "reality" that they are not good enough and its "not happening for them". These feelings derive from comparing their abilities to others. Music is a very unimportant thing. The only person making this comparison is you.

Solution

My goal is to instill the feeling of love in every musician. There is a lack of this in the musical community, and through my essays, I want each musician to feel their heart and soul every time they pick up their instrument. My essays are a student's perspective on obtaining joy and happiness through the understanding of the brain. I then relate it to being a better musician and person. All I am doing is documenting my findings from personal experimentation. It is my hope that these readings ignite the fire for this kind of personal exploration.

I am greatly influenced by the teachings of Kenny Werner and effortless mastery. I highly suggest that the readers of my essays also experiment with Kenny's teachings. Where my essays differ from effortless mastery is the focus on love. Effortless Mastery heavily involves being a passenger to your own playing and letting the hands and the instrument play itself. My teachings are less involved with detachment and more involved with unconditional love. The result of both solutions is a happier musician that is enthralled by their playing, their instrument and music in general. Going even further, these teachings result in a happier person with a heightened sense of awareness and gratitude. A big aspect of my papers is being gracious. It is amazing that we can take a piece of wood or metal and create music with it. We turn an inanimate object into a living, breathing being. The music that we create is just that instrument speaking. We facilitate its communication. Isn't that so special?

Roadmap

The time frame of this project is unknown, as I write these essays when my heart tells me to. I write these papers an average of once per week but there are certainly weeks where I write more or less. One thing that I can put a time frame on however is the release of these papers. I plan to release these in my own personal blog. I would like to start putting them out once I have two months' worth of finished papers. I have this set goal because I am afraid of being rushed to write and release these. I want these papers to flow naturally from my soul and my heart. If I am working towards deadlines, I fear that these papers will lose their potency. What I aim to do is to release these papers along with a youtube video/guided meditation. I would love to have these go through the effortless mastery or music therapy departments at Berklee but if that is not an option, I'm happy to release these all myself. I would need to make a website that is specific to this and these teachings and encourage students with similar goals to participate in the creation

of these lessons. It may eventually become a nice, online database to connect musicians to meditative practices.

MVP

Attached are some of the papers that I have written. I would love to know your thoughts on these. Please feel free to try the exercises with your guitar.

If you can, read these in this order

1. Loving Every Note You Play
2. Vibratory Listening
3. Training your time (this one still needs a little work)