

How To Use The CD

The exercises on the CD are basically meditations/visualizations. Their purpose is to help you experience your “inner space.” This is a state discussed in great detail throughout the book. The meditations are also featured as chapters in this book. When you reach those chapters, you will be instructed to listen to the corresponding exercise on the CD. Part of their effect is to relax and focus you after you have absorbed a great deal of information, and to give you a sense of the consciousness being described. If you listen to the meditations consecutively, they may sound repetitious as they contain much overlapping information. If used when indicated, however, they can enhance the experience of this book greatly.

I recommend that you carefully read the meditations presented in the chapters, as well as listening to them on the CD. In some cases, there are a few ideas in the chapters that are not mentioned on the CD.

After you have experienced the exercises the first time in their intended places, feel free to use any or all of them as an ongoing practice for contacting, working with and creating from that “inner space.”

Some of the material in this book is specifically directed towards musicians and may seem highly technical, especially some of the examples in the chapter, “Step Four.” Please feel free to pass over those passages. The bulk of the text should relate to anyone who aims to attain mastery in any area of their lives.

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Effortless Mastery

TRUTH: INNOVATION IS JAZZ!

Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Bix Biederbecke,
Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, Jelly Roll Morton,
Scott Joplin, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis,
Bud Powell, Bill Evans, Ornette Coleman,
Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane.

Can we agree that this is a fair representation
of the tradition of jazz?

What do these people all have in common?

THEY WERE ALL INNOVATORS!

INNOVATION IS THE TRADITION

Preface



The realm of the gifted has always seemed to be an exclusive club. The common belief is that, “Some of us have it, some of us don’t.” Implicit in that statement is the assumption that “most of us don’t.” The way music (and, I suspect other subjects as well) is traditionally taught works for those who “have it.” Only very gifted or advanced students absorb the language of music in the way it is usually taught. Perhaps two percent of all music students ever attain anything. Many others struggle with the various elements of playing or improvising and as a result do not become performers.

Most people fall by the wayside. We don’t seem to have given much thought to this discrepancy, simply accepting the old adage, “some of us have it and some of us don’t.” In cultures less intruded upon by “civilization,” everyone is a musician. It has much to do with how music is introduced into our lives. This book will look at that subject and offer hope as well as practices to those who think they “don’t have it.” These practices will also increase the effectiveness of those who believe they do.

My belief is that, if you can talk, you can play. There are many reasons why the so-called less gifted don’t get it. There are also methods of obtaining “it,” which this book will discuss.

Many people have what I call musiphobia: fear of playing music. To a person afflicted with musiphobia, touching an instrument is like touching a hot stove. This is irrational, since one cannot get burned touching an instrument-yet it is a common problem. Though there are absolutely no negative consequences, most of us are afraid. It is not our fault. We have been programmed to *fear playing*. All too often, our relationship to music is doomed to failure.

A person might give up playing for reasons of insufficient talent, when upon closer inspection it becomes clear that the problem was the mode of study, or the lack thereof.

Many people are crippled by an inability to focus and by a sense of being overwhelmed. These problems are often mistaken for laziness or lethargy. There is a grand paradox in why we can't focus. This subject will be explored and many other paradoxes as well.

The exercises will help people on different levels in different ways. For example, there are good players who, for some reason, have little impact when they play. Everything works fine. They are "swinging" and all that, but still, something is not landing in the hearts of their audience. They are trapped in their minds. There is no nectar, because they are merely plotting and planning an approach along acceptable, "valid" lines of jazz style. The same thing commonly occurs to classical performers. They don't know what "channeling creativity" is because they, too, are dominated by their conscious minds. One must practice surrendering control to a larger, or higher force. It's scary at first, but eventually liberating. In Sanskrit the word is *moksha*, which means liberation. *Moksha* is attainable through the surrender of the small self to the larger "Self." I will introduce exercises for achieving that goal in music. After one taste of *moksha* through the medium of music, one will never want to return to a life of "thinking music." As one moves beyond the acceptable to the inevitable, creativity flows. Personal power will increase manifold.

One truth for all players to contemplate is this: *learning new kinds of sophisticated jazz theory is not necessarily the key to freedom*. Once new theory is mastered, it is recited with the same dreary predictability as the old. If you are inhibited playing with the toys you have now, you will not play differently with new toys. Also, many jazz players feel that there is an experience in improvisation that they are not having, or not having fully enough. Classical musicians also report a "dryness" in their renderings of the great composers. It's like the priest who secretly has no love for God. The customs are observed, but there is no

true feeling. If the lamp is not lit, music can be as dreary as anything else. Along with the desire for a deeper experience comes an intense drive to be a better player. These aspects often work against each other. True musical depth is not about better playing, but about more “organic” playing.

It’s very hard to let go in the combat of performance, but the exercises here will help you expand your “intuitive self.” Over time, this intuition will emerge naturally without sabotaging the technical part of your performance. Assimilation into the whole is very much about “forgetting” one’s self.

People who meditate or do tai chi will recognize many of the principles in this text. Even to them, it may be a revelation to know that one can live in the meditative state while playing an instrument. The mind is the chief culprit in most playing problems, and so any discipline that aims to control the mind is complementary to the process described here. Music can shoot through the musician like lightning through the sky if that music is unobstructed by thoughts. Therefore, the elimination of thoughts is a very relevant issue.

To dysfunctional learners, of which there are many in the jazz educational system, these exercises will cut through loads of books and exercises. It will help them get in touch with the next step in their development, putting aside all the theories, politics and fashions and instead focusing on their lives and the personal meaning that music has for them. In many cases, the decision to *study* music has robbed them of the ability to *play* music. They have lost respect for music that comes from within because they have been programmed to feel “unworthy.” Some parts of this book will help these individuals get back to loving and honoring themselves, *with or without music!* Even many great professionals suffer from low self esteem and other negative illusions.

For those who practice things that never surface in their playing, (and there are many such musicians), I offer reasons for why this happens, as well as a way out of this dilemma. This book also contemplates the relationship of belief systems to

effectiveness and how we “practice for mediocrity.”

In addition this book delves into the nature of artistry, and quite extensively into the nature of mastery. I will discuss how to effortlessly play what you already know and reach a depth you didn't think you were capable of.

There are certainly artists who can enjoy music in a positive way, artists who always know how to become inspired and how to execute effortlessly. But the percentage of people who do this is small. Much of this book is for those who are not succeeding in their efforts to fulfill their hopes and dreams musically, and for musicians who feel tense and constricted while playing. Some of the ideas contained here are radical. They challenge institutions to change and individuals to move from the comfort zone of limitation and blossom into their higher selves. If you've been playing for thirty years and hardly ever enjoyed it, if you've constantly pointed to other players and thought that they possessed something you didn't, or if you've practiced for years and never really improved, read on.

Chapter 1

Introduction



There is an ocean. It is an ocean of consciousness, an ocean of bliss. Each one of us is a drop in that ocean. In that sense, we are all one — or as a famous American television commercial states, “We’re all connected.” Illusion would have us think that we are all separate entities, separate drops. But if that were true, we would all evaporate rather quickly.

As we expand our limited selves into this infinite consciousness, we tap into a network of infinite possibilities, infinite creativity — great, great power. Carried by the waves of this ocean, we swirl past all limitations and maximize our God-given potential. Everything good that can possibly happen to us, from within and without, does. Our abilities expand beyond all reasonable limits, and we become a magnetic force for abundant light and all that that implies.

We are all part of a universal game. Returning to our essence while living in the world is the object of the game. The earth is the game board, and we are the pieces on the board. We move around and around until we remember who we really are, and then we can be taken off the board. At that point, we are no longer the game-piece, but the player; we’ve won the game.

As musicians/healers, it is our destiny to conduct an inward search, and to document it with our music so that others may benefit. As they listen to the music coming through us, they too are inspired to look within. Light is being transmitted and received from soul to soul. Gradually, the planet moves from darkness to light. We as musicians must surrender to the ocean of our inner selves. We must descend deep into that ocean while the sludge of the ego floats on the surface. We let go of our egos and permit the music to come through us and do its work. We act as the instruments for that work.