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INTRODUCTION

You are holding in your hands a most unusual book. A true modern-day samurai, a master practitioner of the art of the sword, has adapted the centuries-old principles of attaining excellence in the martial arts to show you how to become a master in the field of music. This book is a roadmap into the mastery process—it will outline the process, step-by-step, toward the dual goal of self-mastery and mastery of the art of musicianship and performance.

Drawing on the work of the legendary Japanese martial artist Miyamoto Musashi, you will learn, among many other things, the most effective way to develop the discipline needed to be a great musician, the way to approach a musical performance, the importance of tradition in developing your art, and, most importantly, the overarching ATTITUDE of mastery that will empower you to reach your highest musical potential.

In this day and age, it is most rare to find an individual that has devoted his life to this process of dual mastery—over oneself and one's art. Hanshi Steve Kaufman is the real deal! He lives what he teaches and continues to dedicate his life to refining the highest principles of discipline and performance within himself and to share his extensive wisdom with countless aspiring students worldwide.

The Musician's Book of Five Rings

If you dream of being a great musician, the principles outlined in this book can light your path so that you, a realized master of your art, can burst forth into the world as a blazing artistic fire!

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PREFACE

Miyamoto Musashi considered the greatest swordsman Japan has ever produced is revered as the “sword saint” because of his historical importance and legendary exploits. The original intention of his masterpiece, *The Book of Five Rings*, was to offer firm advice for warriors involved with mortal combat: the motivation to win and survive. However, when looked at relative to personal endeavor, the principles of his philosophy are universally important for the empowerment and personal mastery of an individual, regardless of any discipline.

As author of the world's best-known interpretation of Musashi's *Book of Five Rings* and having practiced martial arts for many years, and as a performing musician, a saxophonist (still active in both disciplines), I have taken it upon myself to explain in fervent detail the knowledge required to succeed in the endeavors of budding artists, students, and professional musicians.

The principles of swordsmanship and execution of perfection of one's chosen craft are the same, with no variation except, that in combat, a warrior takes lives, but the exquisite performance of music can abduct a soul and elevate a listener to heights of splendid joy when performed by a musician, with oneness of endeavor and a developed sense of self.

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The sword master and the master musician incorporate a like commitment to perfection in the arena of life. It is the purposeful application of the qualities and the “spirit of the thing itself” that is the difference between life and death when wielding a sword or playing perfect notes and creating life through music.

In this book, you will learn the wisdom needed to control your own universe. The lessons I teach are in the voice of Miyamoto Musashi, as he would speak directly to you. He is stern at times and gruff, seemingly without mercy, yet you will find great compassion in his words as I interpret them for you, musician to musician. You will find many repetitions to his words, and there is good purpose for this approach, as you will come to understand. Think in terms of theme and variation.

My intention is to guide you toward becoming the greatest musician that ever lived. How you interpret these words is your own personal matter. Certainly, constant practice is a requirement for ascension in any form of expression, and that is a given. The profound and timeless revelations of Musashi have lasted for more than 350 years and can empower you to catapult to the greatness you seek. I constantly stress practice in all forms of growth and development throughout the book as it applies to the realization of your dreams and goals as a profound and exceptionally creative musician.

Stephen F. Kaufman,
New York, 2018
www.hanshi.com

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THE MASTER GREETES YOU

My name is Miyamoto Musashi. I have beaten over sixty battle-tested warriors in personal combat and duels. As I approached my sixtieth year, I took a step back, and, reflecting upon my life, and, in a flash of insight and wisdom, came to understand my great success. Having been virtuous and especially gifted was something that never fazed me as to my abilities, in as much as the probable reason for it to have manifested in my life. Regardless of the thoughts of others, the good or bad aspects of their study and training, even possibly simple good luck, may or may not have had anything to do with it. What I believe was the main reason for my personal growth and ascension was simply that I willed it, demanded it for myself, and constantly studied and practiced from dawn to dusk, even into the night. I had only one thing in my mind, and that was to become the consummate practitioner of my art.

In this little book I am going to teach you the why and wherefore of *all* profound accomplishment. At times, you will

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think that I am simply repeating myself, over and again, and it is good that you recognize that. It is for the express purpose of enforcing my teachings upon you until they are part of your psyche and become irrefutable. By constant repetition, you will learn the reality of my strategy, and I will not leave it to you to grasp my meanings in a superficial manner.

I give you *The Book of Five Rings* in five sections called Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, and No-thing. The fundamental basis of my teaching is in the book of Earth, which lays the foundation and groundwork for the entire, practical philosophy of strategy. Water explains the natural flow of things; Fire, the passion for accomplishment; Wind, the ambiguities of meaningless presumption and, finally, the way of No-thing-ness as the true nature of being.

The Book of Earth represents the foundation and the groundwork of any art or craft and introduces you to a complete familiarization with the fundamentals as well as why it is essential to understand the mechanisms of other arts and disciplines. It is difficult to understand the universe by only acknowledging the sun and the moon; there are countless aspects, including stars, comets, and planets along with countless other galaxies and universe. Endeavor to know everything you can about any particular environment in which you include yourself. Though this may seem daunting at first, the reality is that once you are aware of other aspects in *your* universe, other universes will reveal the same truths, though with a different perspective. To know about these things will assist you in becoming more proficient in your own understanding and empower you to

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become excellent in your self-presentation as well as giving you additional tools to perform on higher levels of consciousness and musicianship. Contemplation of these matters is essential if you are to ascend to the magnificence of your desires and dreams.

The Book of Water explains how all things flow with a natural rhythm in appropriate space and time. Water fills all shapes regardless of other impositions as to its functionality. All things are eventually worn away by water—*all* things—and so you should think in terms of being able to wear away any impediments to your life and artistic development by not considering any form of impossibility or submitting to unreasonable fears that you may or may not self-impose. With correct determination, you will conquer any difficulty that presents itself, regardless of the form it represents. It is your consciousness that determines how you will ascend to mastery, and no amount of coercion from any source, positive or negative, will empower you to do this without your ardent desire to do it for yourself and for the art you practice. Reality is mostly intuitive, and the more you apply yourself to the acceptance of your own greatness, your greatness will empower itself in you, as you, and through you in all aspects of your life experiences.

The Book of Fire is about passion: your intentions and the manner in which you provide your soul with exultation and joy. Total commitment to your work will give you a thrill of accomplishment that impels you to further your expressions of self through your music and the music through yourself. When you practice, it must be with the

TWO THE BOOK OF WATER THE NATURAL FLOW OF THINGS

In the *Book of Water*, I explain my entire strategy in depth. Things flow according to a pattern that allows all things, as part of it, to flourish as one. To force a result will eventually cause stress and will impede the beauty and joy of its expression. When water flows, it flows without restriction, and when it does encounter resistance, it determines a method for overcoming any obstacles in its path.

A seasoned warrior knows the required rhythm and timing for adequate performance of a deed and, in matters of life and death, it is essential that practice and constant study precede actual experience. There is, and will always be circumstances where one cannot act according to prescribed ideas about how things should occur. That is when the reality of having practiced comes into action and any particular condition be successfully dealt with to maintain excellence of performance. Having prepared yourself for, as many eventualities as you can think of will empower you to always forge ahead with intelligent and correct emotional response, not via a mode of panic and insecurity, but one of surety and confidence.

It is important to understand what you are reading in this book and to do so with understanding and retention. It does not matter that you can talk about my ideas to others,

but rather that you can absorb these teachings into your heart and thereby overcome any limitation, self-imposed or not. It does not matter what others think of your performance as long as you know, without arrogance, conceit, or false pride, that you are putting everything into your work and not holding anything in abeyance in an attempt to seek favor from others. When you acknowledge yourself as the only reason for the universe to exist and for the universe to express itself in you, as you, and through you, you will express your music with true devotion to the highest ideal you can conceive of, and it will respond in kind. You must recognize yourself as the one and only greatest performer in the universe. It is only then that you can readily express this through the audience. This may seem a harsh approach to reality, but when you think about it, you will see that to do otherwise is to merely play at what you are doing. If you are going to play, play. Don't play!

Spiritual and Physical Bearing in Performance

A warrior must always maintain calmness of mind and poise of carriage. In this manner, personal bearing under any condition will always be dominant, especially when confronted with a matter that concerns success or failure. With a warrior in combat, it is life or death. With a musician in performance, it is ascension to an astonishing level or, at best, a mediocre performance. You may impress those who do not understand the matter at hand, but, for the erudite audience, mediocrity is always apparent and obvious and can lead to rejection of any further efforts on the part of the musician. This can allow derision to prevail and is the death

knell for the artist who seeks to conquer all worlds, without considerable devotion to the muse.

Correct Stance in Preparation for Performance

In a ready position or a relaxed mode, a warrior is always ready for immediate action, should it be required. Likewise, a musician must not permit their self to slouch or to maintain a posture of improbability that limits communication with the instrument used for expression of a composer's offering. When approaching a difficult section or when learning a new piece, you should play as slowly as necessary until the arduous section is under the fingers via approbation into the heart. Physical stance and correctness of poise must be in concert with your endeavor. You have been taught to accomplish this by playing the particular phrase over and again, each time adding a bar before and a bar after until the entire piece is played at speed and without error in execution. As a warrior must have complete control of the sword, a musician must have complete control of the instrument. Only then will you express a performance with the highest level of certitude. The musician must handle the instrument in a manner that permits *its* soul to express through the hands and fingers and breath as it is the same for the person wielding a sword. Intent must always be sincere.

Contemplation of the Audience

It is wise to consider the audience that has gathered to hear your offering, the expression of which maintains the audience's level of expectation. A musician must always play from the heart, regardless of genre or intent. The audience