

## AREA 2.

A sound is made musical when it is infused with the musicians vitality, emotion, spirit. Can you 'manufacture' an emotional state or mood? When you play a certain chord, in a certain key, at a certain tempo with a certain tone you may very well be able to prompt a particular mood (let's say sadness) when required. It is important to the power of the music that this 'state' be felt, connected with. Of course The music only points to or implies sadness, it is not sad itself even if you as the player feel sad. The actor on stage needs to represent sadness, makes all the gestures and gives the indications that this is the state being felt. How deep the actor identifies or feels this state will vary and may convince us or not, but the actor's purpose is to convince us of the reality of feelings, to trigger a response in us, the audience. Even though we all know it is a *play* we accept it as symbolic (yet *'true to life'*) and are impressed by the degree of *reality* that it may present. The actor's skill is in working the emotion and 'riding its wave'. It's the same for the musician.

6/ Are you aware of your intentions and motives in making a sound? Whether you are or not, these forces exist on conscious and subconscious levels and are primary influences in the music making process. Your history as a musician from the first motivation to play an instrument, all the choices you've made, the desires and dreams that you've collected, and ultimately your personality, education, family life etc., all come together to impact on the music you finally make. Is it possible to influence or redirect your intentions and motivations in music?

7/ Habitual routines can provide a sense of security for the player but can also block the spontaneous flow of fresh ideas, leading to stagnation and rigidity. Taking deliberate 'risks' by exploring something that opposes the pathways and values you are attached to, can spark your intuition into action. May be you're tired of scalar sounding lines, playing three notes on each string. How about imposing a rule where you allow yourself to play only one note on each string in a solo? You may not adhere to this for long but it may provide a spark to think differently.

You are always playing a particular chord voicing for a certain chord and want to change it to a more interesting voicing you've discovered. Try practicing the original chord in association with the new one, repeating over and over. You will then likely associate both chords together and be in the position to make an instant choice on which to use.

If you really want to open things up, try altering the tuning of your strings. This may be systematic, such as tuning to an open chord, or random, where you adjust the tuning heads without concern for the pitch result. You may end up with a third string lower in pitch than a fourth or fifth string - that can be a serious challenge!

8/ To play and perform well for your *self* is half the picture and undoubtedly challenging and crucial to a complete musical experience. But the ability to inspire and be inspired by your associates, and to work within the prevailing conditions of the environment and context, is essential for an accomplished performance. This is where speed of response, sensitivity to nuance and *'serving the composition'* are the performers foremost concerns. It is not so easy to be *'in touch'* in this way and we often 'overplay', 'underplay' or are only able to partially *hear* what is happening around us. There are numerous possible reasons for these impediments to us performing at our peak; lack of preparation, lack of confidence, emotional anxiety, inappropriate attitude, over focus on technique and so on. I do feel that *positive aural space* is a useful ploy here. *Positive aural space* means you don't need to rush, within reason, there will be a 'right' moment to act. It is a creative space from which a sound of any imaginable quality can emerge. A fertile space, full of possibility. This space is not a fearful void, filled with the anxiety to make a sound quickly to show there is something happening, but a pause as in a conversation that has a potency or a resting quality. It can be a fleeting moment or extended duration. It can be equated to a *listening* quality, if you're always talking in a conversation it's harder to hear what the other is saying. Promoting the sense of listening is part of the players role in serving the music.