

AREA 3.

5/ An obvious but sometimes overlooked point of view is that of making music from the perspective of the whole as opposed to just your 'part'. Your 'part' may be logical and complete in itself, full of dexterity and display of skill, yet contribute little to the overall impact of the composition. On the other hand, your playing may not resemble a part at all, be simplistic, be illogical, ad hoc, contrary, discontinuous, but contribute powerfully and dramatically to the structure, distinction and feeling of a complete composition. Two facets of being a musician are brought into focus here. One is the virtuoso whom the music serves. The other is the servant who is in the service of the music. Commonly we vacillate between these conditions.

6/ There is certainly value in re-examining the 'unintended sounds' that are a discarded by-product of learning your instrument. These aspects, edited out in pursuit of virtuosity, with more open ears and open mind, can assume the status of intended sounds and share an equality with conventional vocabulary, as valuable creative tools. We are told to keep extraneous string noise to a minimum as it is distracting for the listener. However, especially in improvised music, the extra sounds produced as you change hand position, these 'peripheral' noises contribute significantly to the sense or sound of something being made. From a players point of view, it reminds you that this is a tactile experience, and from the listeners view, it's more evidence that something is being constructed, of humanity at work.

7/ Record your experiments/performances/jams and in playback try to just listen without criticism! Suspend your judgment, if this is possible. Hear the sound only, without concern for how that sound is produced, hear the whole. Be a *musician* instead of a guitarist. Then be an *artist* instead of a musician!

8/ Taking a contrary or opposing attitude to the accepted, conventional or fashionable values can spark the imagination. Any sound in any combination is freely available to be employed in any way you see fit, in order to create music. There are no absolute rules, only relative ones. You inherit a musical language based upon the past and repetition. As you sift through this information, your understanding, your choices, what you accept and reject, *how far, how deep you're willing to go*, will all ultimately contribute to the development of a dialect of your own. Your individual 'voice'.

9/ What is the purpose of music?

Your psychological, emotional and physical states of being (your self) interact with a sound (non-self) to create the experience of hearing. Here is a sensory pleasure to be experienced. This sensory experience can then be filtered through the mind, codified, transformed into symbols, as it is in language. These symbols may be highly specific or generalized. The symbols may be employed to communicate in the *language* of emotion or the *language* of the spirit. Traditionally, music has played a significant part in the ritual, the ceremony, celebration. Music is the means by which we conjure up energies that somehow feel bigger than us, and by consequence, create a sense of transportation beyond ourselves and the sense of ensnarement in this place and time (such as African voodoo trance states, a potent mix of rhythm, dance and cultural belief system). Because of its physical nature (the vibration of air molecules, which in turn interact with our eardrums and skin), music is the perfect medium to powerfully articulate meaning where words cannot. Its syntax is articulate without being too articulate, leaving room for interpretation and mystery, promoting what could loosely be described as spirit. One element (human energy) impacting upon, interacting with another element (inert elemental phenomena) to produce a third element (unique experience).

Music then becomes the perfect vehicle to describe the human experience. Communicating humanity to humanity. Music is a place where the articulate and the inarticulate mix, it is intellectual and physical but it is nothing until we bring our humanity to bear. Then something else can be produced - an alchemic reaction, an aura, a resonance that has no words.