

How Musicians Uplift People's Spirits

by Dennis Winge

Everyone knows that live or recorded music uplifts people's spirits, but how? By entertaining, musicians put the audience members in touch with a deeper state of being that we all share universally. How does music do this?

When music completely absorbs our attention, it takes us out of our normal thought patterns, for one thing. Then it takes us on an emotional journey that we resonate with, because these we recognize in the music certain emotions that we are familiar with, but that we haven't felt in exactly this way or in this combination before. Thus, the experience is familiar, yet new in every moment.

Going deeper we see that behind the notes, the volume, the sights, and the scene generated by live music, there is a connection to universal truth that we identify with on a primordial level. Thus, it's no longer an "I" listening to "you"; rather it's the "we" getting dissolved into the "one". The "one" refers to the collective unconscious that we are exposed to by way of the music.

In short, live the music exposes us to this "oneness" by: a) Taking us out of our usual sense of separation; b) Transporting us into a deeper world of the unconscious in which we recognize and can relate to emotions instinctively; c) Connecting us with the primordial instinct from which these common emotions spring and which pervades all of life and thus eliminates separateness.

It is the job of the musician to go deep into these universal emotions. The irony is that the deeper one goes, the closer one gets to universality, the more individual his or her level of expression becomes. In other words, when a composer accesses a deeper place from which he is getting inspiration, the result will simultaneously be a composition that many people resonate with, and a work of art that no one else on the planet could have expressed in quite that way. Such is the amazing quality of art.

Yet this is not dualistic. There is no dichotomy between individual expression of the artist and the universality of the emotion experienced by the audience. This universality is an ever-diverse, never-ending, inexhaustible supply of the unique variety and variation. This is just like the fact that there never has been and never will be a snowflake quite the same as any other, even though snow has happened for thousands of years and will continue to happen. There is no effort on the part of nature to produce this endless variety. There is no mental calculation that has to be performed or a complicated algorithm that has to be run, modified, debugged, and other maintained. It just happens naturally.

When musicians do not go deep into their own unconscious by looking beyond rational thought for inspiration, they cannot access the superconscious which can then inform the unconscious, which in turn informs the conscious mind. Then the musician is being

relatively shallow, and generally just imitating, even if it is only imitation of the vision the musician would ideally want to sound like.

Music created in this scenario is generally much more devoid of deeper truth or of life itself. The music is not as well received and is forgotten about much quicker. Neither the artist nor the audience can put a finger on exactly what is lacking, but everyone knows it subconsciously.

This is not to say that an artist cannot or should not use his rational mind. The mind is perhaps the biggest tool in the toolbox, more important than the paint brush for the painter, or the keyboard or pen for the writer. Art cannot take place without thinking. But great works of art are not conceived of only by rational thought. There must be a deeper place of inspiration, and the deeper the place, the greater the sense of inspiration, and the more likely the work will be felt on a universal level.

The musician, therefore, must find his or her own ways to connect with deeper sources of inspiration. Any suggestions by the author here will likely come across as prescriptive. Even more dangerously, the suggestions could never be an extensive list, and their presence may tempt the reader into not thinking further into it and not explore their own personal sources of inspiration. There are perhaps as infinite a number of sources of inspiration as there are individual expressions of it.

If you are an artist, you must go deep into them, but not as a means to an end to create something "great". Just go deep into your sources of inspiration, and the art will automatically carry a reflection of it without effort. "Effort" in this case is defined by thought and action that is devoid of inspiration. The deeper your connection with the source of inspiration, the more the thought and action are carried by it effortlessly. Then, you too will create an infinite variety of musical snowflakes.