FIRES IN THE GLACIER
A PETITION FOR CHANGE

Presented by

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Good afternoon. Because this is the final official interchange I will have with the students and faculty of the Grieg Academy, allow me to begin by offering my profound gratitude for your kindness and support during this intense week. As I have said all week, it is not my place to offer answers, but rather to raise questions about the nature of performance and the depth of relationships that might be possible between composer and player and conductor and audience.

I want to begin today where I began 30 years ago in working with conductors. The most difficult and complex activity in life is the act of communication. We spend our entire lives striving to become better communicators in our personal lives and in our work. Yet, somehow, we never seem to get it quite right. We tell the truth and it is perceived as lies. We tell lies and they are perceived as truth. We seem always to say the right things to the wrong people and our lives often pass in moments of missed contact, like errant characters from some play by Anton Chekhov. We are a mass of oppositions. We cannot say what we feel and we feel what we cannot say. And then, to make matters worse, we go into the arts. And there, we attempt to communicate our deepest and innermost feelings to the strangers that are our audiences. What we can barely accomplish in the most personal relationships of our life, we attempt to do with co-workers and peers, students and audiences.

It would be well, in varying times of our lives, to take a giant step backward and to look objectively at ourselves and at what we are communicating, by design or by accident, to those around us.

To clarify the process of communication, we must examine first the issues that occur below the act of language.

The objective of the mime is to create a level of communication that transcends all language and cultural barriers. Marcel Marceau once said to me that in his best pieces, laughter would rise and fall at the same moments, regardless of where in the world he was performing. The possibility that this level of communication exists is overwhelming.

One of the first questions one might ask a mime is: If communication is your primary objective, why would the first move you make as an artist be to take language out of the equation?

The answer is simple. Silence reveals ourselves in our bodies. Marceau has stated: Do not the most moving moments of our lives find us all without words? In silence, truth rises to the surface. We fear silence, even the pause (perhaps even the musical rest). In the opening gambits of relationship, we chatter on like little magpies, afraid to allow even the smallest silence to occur. It is interesting, that as our relationships deepen and become more intimate, we allow more and more silence. Vast quantities of information are given and received in the silences that exist between us. It is often the mark of a mature relationship that silence is allowed.

We must also know that truth is revealed in gesture. Our own oppositions, which we might try to hide from each other, are revealed time and time again in our physical

responses. For instance, I once had a colleague who said in a faculty meeting that we must work together (gesture). We had a guest politician who preached to the assembled audience about how we had to lift minorities and to give them equal opportunities (gesture). Our partners stumble into the apartment, fall into a chair, and exclaim, "I have to get to work immediately!" (gesture)

There is immense power in the nonverbal. We make judgments about each other, even before language has occurred. We begin and end relationships based on the signals that we receive nonverbally. We trust and mistrust. We like and dislike. I am not speaking about the precious symbols of popular culture, our "body language." Rather, I am speaking about the lyric and more profound and subtle levels that occur between us, like the music of gesture.

It would also be well for us to remind ourselves that to move the emotional, we must affect the physical. There must be a kinesthetic empathy in order for emotion to be released. We are often more wildly and emotionally involved by sports events or charismatic preachers, than we are in the more intimate communications with those we love. It is because we are freer as we watch those events to have physical response to what is a very strong physical stimulus and therefore, we become more wildly and emotionally involved.

We should also know and remind ourselves that language is at the end of the response pattern (hit, ow!). We inhale, physically, the stimulus that has occurred, and we exhale it in our response, which is the word. The word means little by itself for it is a vessel and it will carry whatever we choose to put into it.

I wonder, as I speak of this, if you are making some connection between the playing of music and the communication by language of idea, emotion and thought.

When you cease to use the body for communication, then you may cease to study the arts of the body. Communication cannot only take place during the important moments. It must be a constant, if trust and connection of any profound nature is to occur.

And lastly, our solemn duty is to exist fully in the present moment. Anticipation, expectation, and reflection are the sworn enemies of that responsibility (I will explain that later). It has always been a source of confusion for me that musicians, particularly conductors, are so prone to talk. It seems an anomaly to me, that in the act of communicating our most inner sense of melody, we speak, instead of playing or conducting.

Language, we know, confuses - and perhaps that is the source of our love of music, for it is nonverbal. As a non-musician, my imagination tells me that you came to music first because it did not require speech. You came to music because there was an activated way to express your innermost feelings and your deepest sensations, your most profound responses, to the world around you.

My encouragement to you is that adjacent art forms have much of what it is I feel you need to explore in your own form. And certainly you could find others or more exercises that might unlock the response patterns that we would look for in your ability to communicate through instrument and gesture.

THE TRANSITION

After years and years of working with conductors on the issue of gesture and movement and nonverbal communication, I became aware that I had stopped short of the real issue that was facing individuals in music. Since my initial focus had been on conductors, it was in conductors that I first noticed what was missing.

What was missing was the human being.

The imperfect, ecstatic, mewing, searching, confused, glorious human being. We were missing the whole person, and instead were only being shown what they considered to be the "perfect" rendition of themselves. They presented to us only their "conductor's persona" instead of the whole, wonderful, flawed, complete person. In symposium after symposium, I began to notice that as conducting students walked towards the podium, their persona changed into what they thought we wanted to see. And so, all their fears and insecurities and delights and possibilities were put aside and replaced by a plastic image of what they thought a conductor should look like. And there began their communication with the ensemble…

What was further interesting was that, in the physical work we would do in the symposium workshops, great emotions would erupt forward from them without warning, surprising even themselves with the depth of their feelings…but when they began to conduct, all that was put away, put away by fear, by tension, and by the terror of perhaps actually being seen. No one was present in the moment; they were all someplace else.

Earlier, I mentioned the concept of "anticipation, expectation, and reflection." What happens to us, in life and in our work, is that while we are involved, we are anticipating a moment that is coming…usually a difficult transition, or a complex emotional interchange. And while conductors were conducting the present measure, their focus was all on the moment to come. And, in that anticipation was also an expectation of what that moment would be like. Then, that moment would arrive…and as they continued on to conduct the current measure, they would reflect on the past measure and how that transition worked or how the entrance was or how they had done.

Much as we do in life, when we over-prepare for a moment of communication with someone we love, and we have an anticipation of what the response will be and an expectation of what we want and then we reflect on how it was…we are not in the present moment. The piece of music being played or conducted in the current measure is being given no focus whatsoever, and all our focus goes to what we consider to be the "important" moments that are to come... or that have come.

I began to realize that I had only given the foundation for the arrival at some emotional honesty but had not provided the stimulus to make that final leap.

It is my challenge to you that you must begin to consider the areas of disconnect (emotional disconnect) that are built into the traditional training systems for musicians.

Allow me to give you an example from another form…dance. Dancers spend a lifetime working in front of mirrors, diligently and constantly correcting all positions and physical attitudes. I became aware that, often as dancers are performing, the image crossing their eyes, as they worked in front of their audiences, was actually of themselves in the mirror. So strongly had they placed that image in their minds that it was there constantly and unconsciously. Instead of the images and stimulus that might be driving the dramatic response of the dancer, they were watching themselves watching themselves.

Great dancers have the inborn ability to reach outward to audiences, but others, of similar technique, are left in the dust because what they perform is sadly left up on the stage and not lofted into the hearts and souls of the audiences.

Finally given the opportunity to work with musicians and with composers, as well as with conductors, I have realized that the problem is universal in the forms.

What is at fault is the relationship between the players and their audiences. And we must begin to consider the areas of disconnect that are built into our traditional training.

For instance, it is my strong belief that the practice room is one of the great enemies which musicians must overcome. The hours and hours of work in tiny rooms create phenomenal technique and an atrophied performance sense. The sphere of the work is only as big as the tiny room in which the technique of the work has been practiced. There is nothing in the training of the musician to move the practice room drill into the explosive atmosphere of the performance space when the gift of the music must erupt outward into the souls, minds, hearts of the audience who are sitting expectantly there, in the dark.

Allow me to take this thought for a moment in relationship to music and to the teaching of music…to the teaching of any art.

We have forgotten something that we need to remember. We need to remember the innocence of our initial approaches to our art and we need to admit to issues that have arisen in our work as artists and in our teaching. The difficulty in teaching in the arts is that we spend a good deal of the time creating a structure of approach based upon studies that we have undertaken with numerous individuals, and which we then assimilate into a new structure we unfortunately refer to as a "creative process," which we then attempt to impart to the student. Along with all that learned knowledge -- and here is one of the dangers in teaching in the arts -- we also attempt to impart that which made us artists, that spark, that flame, that awareness, that intuition, that intuitiveness, that sensory level of understanding that was not linear and not process-

oriented that created the flame of our own work. Instead of producing our own work, we attempt to teach that element of ourselves to our students, and in doing so, we give something away that is quite precious and may be irreplaceable. Eventually, we just talk about the art. (Why do conductors TALK so much?) Words become our protection, our defense against the fear that we have lost some profound part of ourselves.

Unhappiness and frustration with our own creative output often mark the teacher in the arts. It is because we have forgotten an important and irrefutable fact. Though we learned from many people, an "art process," the actual process by which we created something in our art, was less definable than the way we teach it. We took tools from a thousand different places, tools of images and experience -- a word and a phrase here, a fingering there, a way of approach, a kind of breathing. We piled all that onto ourselves. But when we made our art, we were less aware of all that process-oriented learning, and more aware of touching that inner spark, what Yeats called, "the seat of the soul, where the outer and inner worlds meet". Creative process, I've come to believe, is oftentimes a phrase created by teachers who are trying to codify what is mystical and instantaneous into a linear and learnable model. Rudolf Steiner said, "All the languages of art have been developed to transform the instantaneous into the permanent." We have learned to talk about our art; but when our art was our art, it was without words. It was in action. It <u>was</u> momentary and instantaneous. The older I become and the more experienced as a teacher in the arts and the more confident -- "more confident" meaning that I cease to have nightmares that someone will discover tomorrow that I don't really know what I am doing and fire me! -- The more I realize that a linear approach to learning is something created by us as educators, but not experienced by us as artists.

Ask any *successful practicing* artists how they work or what they do or what they use and the answer is often unsatisfactory because the images they verbalize have no linear process that we can learn from. Great artists often make great teachers, but they do so because they demand great art, not because they have codified anything into a linear process of approach. When, in my own field for instance, you ask well-known actors how they work, you are liable to get the answer...."well, I um try to find a hook"...ah, we think, a hook...what the hell does that mean? Or another actor will say, "I try to not get in the way". Hmmm, try not to get in the way.....

What happens to us is that with the opportunity where we now can speak about that which was really unspeakable, we speak...we are teachers, so we explain... -- take music, for instance -- you didn't go into it to find language or words; it is an abstraction, it is an emotion, it is a feeling -- you probably went into it because you can express things in music you could not express in words, because music is nonverbal.

We came to music as the Aboriginal in Australia came to music to find their songline, a mystical maze of invisible roads across which they traveled to conduct the normal affairs of their lives, and this path is the song that they must learn to sing. Rolf Sandvik, former Concert Master of the Bergen Philharmonic, said yesterday that musicians must learn to tell **their** story. We came to music to sing, not to talk. We are already in danger in our classrooms in the arts in that we talk too much, because we think we have the answer in words and because we have a need to be safe. Where we fall completely apart

and rely totally upon words is when we begin to deal with audiences and communities -- not students of the arts, or artists, but just people. To them, because we feel we can, we begin to discuss and to talk about the wonder of teaching and experiencing music and of their children learning to make music and why music is an important issue and element and should be in everyone's life, blah-blah-blah-blah.....

We must learn to change head-life into heart-life.

There is an internal landscape, a geography of the soul; we search for its outline all our lives. For the Greeks, they found joy in their bodies; the cosmos was in the body. Since the fifteenth century, we have lost the experience of the permeation of the physical body by the soul. In ancient times, the artistic was considered absolutely vital to civilization; now, it is a luxury. We need to return to the importance of the physical, the creative, and the moment. We need to feel through rather than think through.

The American Indians have no word for "art". In traditional Native American thinking, there is no separation between what is beautiful and what is functional. Art, beauty, and spirituality are so firmly intertwined in the routine of living; and yet, to the people in our audiences, we talk. We have forgotten something that we already knew.

It is a point of vision, a way of seeing. It is the manner in which the artist perceives the world. The very best example in description of this is from a marvelous book by James Michener that few have read, called *The Fires of Spring*; it is autobiographical. And in it, a young writer asks an older writer what it means to be an artist and how to see the world, and the old writer says, "When you can see a moment in time with the astonishment of innocent youth and in the same breath see that beat of time with the wisdom and distance of age, then you have seen the world as an artist must see it." We know that, but to be only that in front of our students is to be vulnerable and so we protect ourselves. To be that to the relative strangers of our audiences is unthinkable. To offer that experience to our audiences seems impossible.

Michener's quote, by the way, is the explanation for the face of the Mime. Astonished eyebrows give the energy of innocent first looks, and an ever flowing tear provides the sadness of the last view.... all in the same eye, in the same moment.

These are not solutions now; these are only sparks to inflame your own imaginations into better ideas and more complete answers. But what would happen if we took a look at the performance space. What would happen in music, for instance, if we would take a look at the structure of how we present music and reacquaint ourselves with the responsibility of the relationship between the audience for music and *music*? Could we involve our audiences, our community, in a more active way, if we broke down the passive stance of the audience sitting in the auditorium, with the music happening up on the stage? What if we put the music in varying spaces and let the conductor roam about the musicians in order to contact them and enforce a different kind of communication. What if we sat the audience in among the musicians, so they might experience the fullness of what it means to be a part of, a particle of, the creation of sound and melody? What could we do with the spaces we had, without spending money, to create atmospheres that supported the

emotional response we wanted our audiences to experience. Anything to engage the audience back into the active and emotional elements of our work.

We need to be honest with ourselves if we are going to walk into this kind of dangerous territory and meet head-on those individuals who now we hold at distance with words and actions. I wonder if we could admit, for instance, that oftentimes in music, audience response is almost automatic and that standing ovations are offered more for musical events as a part of the audience participation than as an actual response to the quality of the evening. Perhaps we could start with discussions among ourselves about what our relationship is to the audience. In the theatre, we cannot operate without an audience. Two actors going into a room by themselves to do a scene is an ultimately unsatisfying experience until it is placed before an audience. But I believe it is true that, for some musicians, going into a room alone and playing is as fulfilling or more fulfilling than even the act of performance. What is the audience to you in the performance of music? Is it there, can it affect you, can a good audience make you better, can a bad audience make you worse? Do you have that quality of contact? Is the audience a part of the players' focus? Is the audience a part of the evening? Or are they simply there in passivity.
Questions to be discussed and answered, and all of which impact upon our relationship to our audiences: We *must* invite them in.... We must have them as a part of our world, not simply in observation of our mystic creations.

To do this, we must also find new ways to learn and new ways to teach. A linear world in the arts is like the Native American lessons in deer hunting. In Native American words, "To make deer-hunting medicine, first you learn to see the bush that's in front of you, then the bush behind that bush, and then finally the deer behind the bush behind the bush that's in front of you, then the spirit of that deer. Now you can call the deer, his spirit, and he'll walk up to you. The people with the strongest medicine learn to fly out their spirits and they find the deer that way." I wonder if that is not the point of view of the artist. That the linear approach to revealment is a path for some people, but that most often, the artist flies out and finds the deer in another way. We must learn to give it all away. We must learn to take away all the secretness of what we do and make it open for all people.

Our art is for our people: For our students, for our audiences, for everyone.

It takes a little effort and an awful lot of courage to move beyond a linear way of thinking...to move beyond the hidden protection of language and words to risk complete failure in the attempt to bring people to a living and breathing experiential understanding of what it is that we represent as artists...to share with strangers, what it is that burns in our souls.
And so what is to be done? I will try to tell you what I think needs to be altered in the relationships between players and audiences. I do not expect agreement with much of what I am about to say, but I will preface it by saying this to you: Some time ago, I said to Professor Sandvik, that I thought that Norway was where change might take place. My impression, not my knowledge, but my impression, is that Norway, with its long and vital history as a country of change and responsibility, was the natural place from which

these alterations in music performance could radiate. In all honesty, I do not believe that America is the place for these changes to begin. These changes, if they are to be made, need to come from a place of historical weight. Such as Norway. I should also add that my greatest influences in my own world of theatre have been Henrik Ibsen, Edvard Munch and August Strindberg.

In the face of such awesome artistry and history, I feel very presumptuous in making any comment. But, I sense the change is inevitable. And so, I will take this opportunity to make the following suggestions to you. At least these are the questions to be raised and answered in future discussions.

My observations and suggestions, anchored in my background in theatre and mime, are based on a desire to assist all artists in connecting with their audiences.

We must find ways to energize the physical performance of our musicians. I have noted in the performance of *Vivaldi* by the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, that they chose to stand and not sit, and therefore, activated the physical response of the players to the images that drive their playing and in their responses to each other. I found it a bold and effective discovery. But, there is more to do, besides merely standing, if the objective is to energize the audience and their response to the concert experience. I still see audiences sitting passively, and though their applause at the end of concerts may be thunderous, I want to see them transported by the music at the moment of the music.

The truth of the matter is that you cannot move an audience emotionally if you cannot move them physically. I do not mean actually touching them, but rather I mean that we must give them so complete a physical stimulus that they have an empathetic physical response…they feel something in their stomachs and in their spines…they are literally moved, as we are moved, by great physical exhibitions in sports and dance…and by the terrible and ecstatic moments of our own lives. To reach an audience at this level, we must, as the Chamber Orchestra has done, allow and encourage the physical response of the player. For in that response is the conduit (the channel) to emotion and feeling for the performer, and from there, to the audience.

Many players have an automatic, physical response to playing that is not a response to internal stimulus or imagery or memory or feeling, but as a habit of playing. They must learn to wait until the inner voice, image, idea, memory, drive the physical response, out of which erupts the music.

We have already spoken about the practice room as the enemy of this enlarged sphere of concern of the player that might include the audience. But, we must also re-think ways of engaging the audience in performance.

I remember, as a young man, sitting in the dark and smoky jazz clubs of the 1950s in Chicago, and listening to the great jazz musicians, like Jerry Mulligan and Dave Brubek and the Modern Jazz Quartet and all the rest. I remember the energy that flowed outward from the musicians to the audience and, with each player's solo, the gentle and encouraging and enthusiastic applause that would follow the solo and encourage the

musicians onward. I remember seeing the look between the musicians on the stage as they connected with each other and acknowledged each other's playing, as solos would hit particular highs on that particular night. I could see that my enthusiastic applause encouraged the musician to go farther and climb higher and I remember that, sitting there in the dark, I felt a part of the great circle between player and player and player and audience.

I have often wondered…forgive my naiveté…why it is that I may not applaud at the end of a movement in a selection of classical music? If the second movement of a four-movement piece is particularly exciting and the last two movements are particularly ordinary, I must still reserve my enthusiastic response until the end of a not-so-exciting fourth movement. Why is that rule there and why is that a form of the behavior?

Allowing an audience's response, movement by movement, if not solo by solo, would allow the engagement of the audience, and the influence of the audience's response upon the performer.

I have asked musicians over and over again why they want me as audience, in the concert hall. Their answer is always: "To hear me play!" And my answer to them is: "That is not enough!" If all you wanted me in the concert hall for is to hear you play, then I will thank you very much and stay at home. On my digital sound system, I will get a better experience of what the sound is of your playing.

What we must remember is that audiences go to concerts to see the music, not just to hear it. To see the making of music in the moment of music. But in that comment from musicians holds the revealment of the relationship between musician and audience member that must be re-addressed.

We are in the concert hall to take part. But somewhat consistently, we are asked to simply sit with our hands folded, passively, and refrain from any response until the concert is over.

At my last doctor's appointment, I was telling my physician about this trip to Norway. My doctor is also a sculptor and has a great interest in all things artistic. As I explained my work to him, I realized that the videos of the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra might acquaint him with the elements that I was encouraging in concert performance. So I sent the web pages, and his reply was as follows:

> "Thanks. Fantastic performance… the intensity and passion of the music is matched by the artists' appearance. It made me realize that sometimes, when I go to classical music concerts, I will close my eyes and let it guide my imagination. However, that seems kind of sad when you see that a classical performance can (visually) have all the passion of jazz or rock, and one wouldn't think about closing their eyes. My best, Doctor Bob Magrisso"

He said all that, with no specifics from me, without me saying that I was attempting to assist musicians in creating a stronger physical presence!
But one last barrier must be taken down before what we all dream can occur.

The music stand must vanish.

(Excuse me. I realize that "music stand" is an American term. There is no "music" on the stand, only the notes. My understanding is that, in Norwegian, the stand is called the "note stand." This is a much clearer term to describe the stand. In America they ask, did you bring your music? What they mean is, did you bring your notes!)

Begin with the question: Who decided that it was acceptable for musicians to not memorize their notes? What is lost in contact between players, with the audience, with a conductor, indeed with the very composition being played and with the soul of the composer who wrote the composition, when the music is not memorized? Imagine attending a performance of *Hedda Gabler* by Ibsen and finding that all the actors were carrying scripts and attempting to reach us, and to talk to each other, while continually looking down at the page. We would be outraged and demand our money back, for the experience would not be the transport of our lives into living in the present moment with the lives upon the stage. We would, passively, simply watch, for we could never truly believe what was being presented.

There are so many "reasons" why what I ask is impossible. There is the brevity of rehearsal time, the number of compositions that must be presented over a season, the enormous workload for the musicians to commit all those notes to memory, the danger and risk in concert...and on and on. But I would ask these questions: Why is the <u>number</u> of compositions presented the determining factor and not the <u>quality</u> of the presentations? Where is it written that soloists memorize and ensemble members do not? Is it not true, that in any ensemble of obviously handpicked quality that most, if not all, members actually know the score by memory? If the world is not ready to remove the stands completely, then what about one piece in every concert given to new standards of performance offered to audiences without the music stand?

It takes great courage for the ensemble to allow the vulnerability I am requesting, but it will take even greater courage to remove the last vehicle for escape. While the music stand exists, the player will always have a place to turn to when the emotion threatens to become too enormous to control or when their fear of the audience becomes overwhelming. Without the music stand there will always be the risk of a "train wreck" when the player cannot sustain the playing without the crutch of escape into the score. But it is in that risk that great art always exists when the smallest stumble means complete downfall.

It is not that great playing cannot occur when the music and its stand are present. It is that the sphere of the music is reduced in size. It surrounds the players and their stands, but stubbornly refuses to reach out into the darkness where we, the audience, wait. If we, the audience, make the effort to reach up to the stage, then we can find our emotional connection to the music. But I do not believe in any art that leaves the choice up to the viewer and listener. We have the responsibility in our forms to reach outward into the darkness and to find the souls that sit out there hoping for transport into other worlds and emotions. There, in the darkness, of the theatre and concert hall, we are able

to experience emotion and catharsis that we cannot feel or express in our own lives. There, in the darkness, we can realize through these experiences that we are not alone in the world. The power of possibility in that level of communication from the stage is overpowering. The responsibility of the performer to engage the audience becomes profound.

The success or failure of the concert cannot be based on the final applause, but rather on the experience at the moment of playing and hearing and seeing and feeling.

But simply memorizing the music, and sending the music stands back into the practice halls from which they should never be allowed to leave, is not enough. We must challenge the manner in which we train and rehearse our musicians. We must find ways to assist composers, players and conductors in finding their own emotional responses to their work, and, more importantly, to find ways to assist them in offering those gifts outward to the audience.

I believe that those techniques and methods are most easily found in the training for the Theatre. It would be a simple process to offer some of those exercises to musicians, to support them in exploring these new performance principals. They are the same principals exhibited by great musicians but rarely taught. The age-old frustration in the performing arts is the question: Why, when my technique is equal or better than my rivals, why do I not move audiences to the same degree? The answer is present within these thoughts.

Finally, we must change one more element in performance in music. We must learn to "enter" and to "exit!"

In most instances, the entrance of a musical ensemble is an unchoreographed and informal chaotic moment. The musicians seem to wander onto the stage much as they might enter their own living rooms. They engage in several household chores of assembling, or cleaning their instruments, arranging the music and stands, as they ready themselves to play. They seem oddly unaware of the audience. Only the entrance of the conductor seems to evoke some attention to the existence of the "multitude" sitting in the dark. (Robert Edmund Jones refers to the audience as *la foule,* the savage beast, the wonderful, terrible, satanic, angelic animal, that still sleeps, untroubled, undisturbed, unawakened!) Finally, the concert begins. We are treated during the concert to barrage of images of players adjusting instruments and blowing the spit out of their horns. At the end, while the conductor flamboyantly acknowledges the crowd's approval, the rest of the ensemble stands. Their bows are an empty gesture of tradition rather than a real end to a performance. There is no real performance, only another rehearsal in "dress-up" clothes.

I imagine another alternative.

The concert stage is empty; chairs perhaps and maybe a podium if there is to be a conductor. The chairs are not institutional, but rather of a pleasing design. The design of the chairs is a subtle hint of the period or mood of the music to be played. The lighting

on the concert stage is dramatic with shafts of sharp light defining mood and supporting the architecture of the hall. There is color and texture in the light to further set the dramatic imagination ablaze.

There are no music stands.

The only instruments on stage are the ones too heavy to be carried on by the players. The presence of those instruments is accented by light, which plays upon their contours.

The audience enters the auditorium; perhaps some even sit in chairs that surround the players' space. The subdued and expectant mood of light and space encourages silence from the audience. The written programs are simple in design and carry poetry and quotes and even stories to be read in preparation of the music to be heard.

The house lights fade, leaving the audience in darkness looking at the lighted stage. That darkness is crucial if the audience's transport into other worlds is not to be interrupted by the architectures of the hall.

In a choreographed entrance, the players appear and move quickly and quietly to their seats or to their places. The tuning pitch is struck and each section and player rises to join in the tuning. On a silent signal they finish and stop. They turn in one movement towards the entrance and the conductor enters. The conductor bows to the audience, then turns and bows to the standing ensemble and they bow to the conductor. The ensemble sits, with instruments down, the conductor brings up the baton, the instruments come to ready, the light alters to truly support the mood of the music and provide illumination for the audience to see the players, and the downbeat is given.

The concert is a constant uninterrupted communication between composer, conductor, player and audience. As audience, we are witnesses and participants, to the fires of emotion that stream between the musicians and erupt into the air as the music reaches into our souls.

When the concert is over, the conductor gestures the ensemble, who come formally to their feet, instruments held as continued extensions of themselves. The conductor turns and all, conductor and ensemble, bow formally to the audience. When the bows are complete, the conductor leaves the stage and the ensemble, again in an ordered and choreographed move, exits the concert hall. Silence and light return, and the audience leaves.

If there were to be multiple pieces then players would return, after a short break, and the process would repeat in the mood of the next selection. All the process of instrument adjustment and cleaning would happen off stage.

On stage would be only the music.

This final adjustment is actually small, but difficult and against all tradition. And the reason we concoct all this additional effort and work?

We make this effort so that all we experience are living, breathing human beings offering their hearts. We make this effort to hold aloft the great vibrating circle of relationship that actively connects together the composer, the player, the conductor, and the audience.

I leave you with the words of Robert Edmund Jones...

" I think of a tale by Olaf Stapledon, *Last and First Men*. It begins in the manner of the science fiction romances one reads in *Astounding Stories*, but then it grows and grows and it ends in speculations almost too vast to comprehend. Mr Stapledon traces the progress of mankind through eons of triumph and despair. At last, untold billions of years hence, when the universe is darkening down to its final end; a great teacher sums up the meaning of human life. 'It was like a melody,' he says.

That is our story. We are here for a little while between mystery and mystery. We live for a little time on this earth that is so fair. Could we, here, protean as we are; could we sense for a brief moment the melody of our being? And having sensed it could we impart it to our fellow men? Follow this dream into the light. The road is long but the rewards at the end are greater than you know. Take with you as you go the words of Plato:

'For those who have once set foot upon the upward pilgrimage do not go down again to darkness and to journey beneath the earth, but they live in light, always.' "

Godspeed you all in your work.

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