

Music Without Boundaries

By Wayne McConnell

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I tend to say things through music that I find too difficult (for whatever reasons) to write down. I find it difficult to turn thoughts that I can fully quantify in my head into music. I've recently found that by writing them down it is much easier for me to use elements of thoughts in musical composition/expression.

I've recently discovered some amazing music by Hariprasad Chaurasia a Bansuri or bamboo flute player. I've been striving (when not writing music for adverts) to write music that offers some kind of beauty. In my younger years I've tended to steer closer to virtuosity. Virtuosity can be beautiful but so can one note if its the right one. At music college you are taught music theory and the fundamentals of what sounds correct. I've always listened to non-western music as well as lots of classical and jazz music. I've always seen them as separate. More recently I've been trying to adopt and utilise the idea of bring a non-western notion of beauty to what is essentially 'western art' music. Hariparasad plays with such refinement and clarity that every note he plays says something. His music is incredibly spiritual and sacred and yet his music sounds like the stories of everyday life and what we all go through. Much like blues is seen as an expressive form. Surely all music is expressive? Perhaps, but some music is much more expressive than others. I'm not going to argue what 'expressive' actually means - maybe at a later date.

For me it is expressive if it invokes any kind of emotion/thought/feeling. I think it's about tapping into a part of you that is uncomfortable to expose. I haven't really thought about this as a process of composition but now that I think about it; it can be very draining writing music - especially if the inspiration has come from a direct source. Are the best composers those people that can freely tap into that part that allows creative processes to be linked to emotion? What I think this means is that I have to find a way to expose the parts of myself that I feel the most uncomfortable about (hopefully you aren't thinking - yeah, don't get your legs out)...Internal thoughts that have long been buried but not forgotten, undiscovered thoughts about the past, present and future, insecurities, triumphs, failures, everything really. The thought behind this is that I think I need to write music that links myself directly to the music in a more profound way -i.e. other than the pure mechanics of it. This sounds simple but its not. Music is a form of expression but its also an art-form - how much do you work on the art and how much should you work on the expression of it, I don't think they are the same thing.

Music with and without boundaries...I think that is why Hariprasad and many others' music is beautiful - with few notes or lots of them.