Surfing the Visualization

I have always been fascinated by the power of mental practice and visualization to create peak excellence in performers and athletes. Studies have shown that the same areas of the brain are activated whether someone is performing an activity or intensely visualizing the same activity. In 1999 the movie, "The Matrix", took this one step further into the world of science fiction and proposed the idea that a skill could be uploaded directly into the brain.


"Whoa. I know Fractal Fingering..."

This turned the usual description of visualization on its head; rather than being a means to perfect a physical activity, the mental representation was the foundation of the physicality and only required the body to "catch up".

The process for Musicians is somewhat different from athletes in that the visualization is even more intensely multi-sensory. The mental imagery of the physical act of playing must also be accompanied by a vivid conception of an idealized sound and expression. Despite the fact that this is all in your mind, you may be surprised that you find unexpected gaps in the completeness of your visualization and even go so far as to miss a shift or play out of tune IN YOUR MIND. This disturbing realization ("not even in your DREAMS...") led me to flip my conception of the purpose and process of practice. Rather than the traditional approach of practice as "repetition induced autonomic response" (i.e. playing something over and over again until you can play it without thinking), I view it as the process of performing actions and experiments in the Real World in order to more accurately define the details of your internal representation of action in terms of visualized sights, sounds, kinesthetics, and proprioception.

With all of the available information on mental rehearsal and visualization it is rare that you come across an approach that is truly new and different. In Burton Kaplan's book, "Practicing for Artistic Success", he suggests an innovative approach to incorporating visualization back

into performance. Instead of using imagery as a mental "rehearsal" in advance of playing he suggests the idea of "surfing the visualization". This involves continuing to run your mental blueprint for the performance WHILE you are playing.

"Consciously maintain the image in your mind as you actually play the instrument; act as if the real playing is secondary to **imaging** your playing."
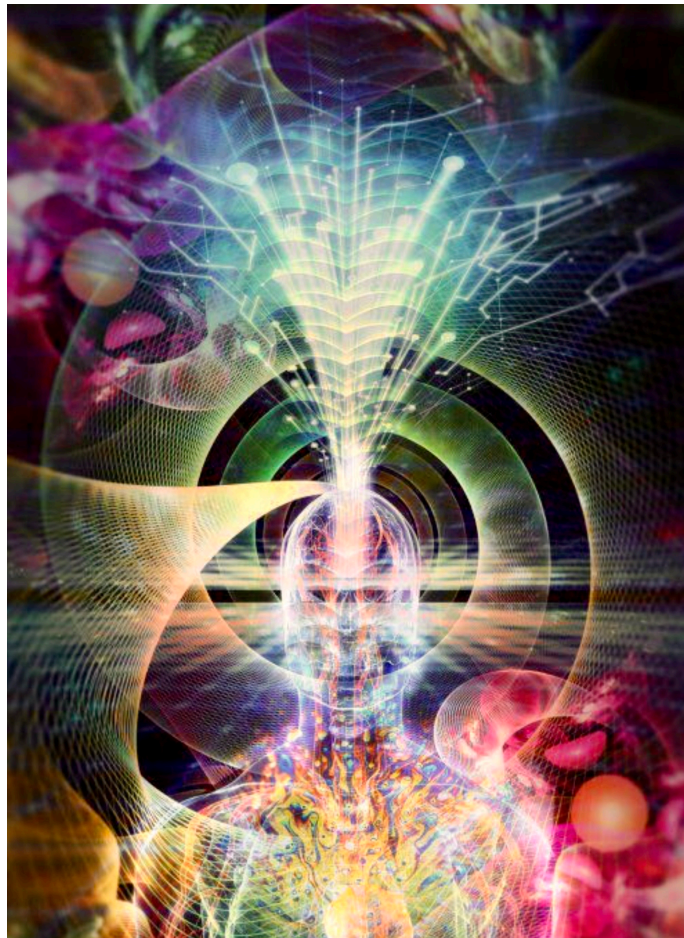
"Whoa" indeed.

SEPTEMBER WORKSHOPS COMING SOON!

Check the "Workshops" page at www.fractalbassist.com for more info in the coming weeks.

FRACTAL BASSIST Channel on YouTube (Coming Soon!)

This invite-only YouTube channel will be a continuation, development and place to share these ideas and principles. Although the entire Fractal Fingering course and samples are available online and at DiscoverDoubleBass.com, this channel will provide a forum for more in-depth content and to address questions on a more individual basis.

If you have any questions, comments, ideas you'd like explored, or inspiration you'd like to share please email: davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com.

With Love,

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