

WELCOME to Fractal Friday!

In the coming weeks (months, years?!) I look forward into growing this community into a place where ideas, Music, technique, inspiration, questions, and YES fingerings can be explored and discussed. It will also be a primary source for news of all things related to Live online course offerings.

Looking at ways to prepare our Minds and inspirations from other Arts and disciplines should be at the foundation for all future work to guide us on our path from Player to Musician to Artist.



Shodo (“the art of writing”) is the beautiful Japanese art of calligraphy. I am not an expert in its depths and nuances, but the idea and its four principles have inspired me and given my practice a fresh perspective. What follows are my interpretations of these concepts and how they apply to my music-making and bass playing. How do they move you? Let’s use these four principles to spark your own ideas so that we can start sharing...

1. Compose in Harmony and With Balance

I see this as a call to see everything in its relation to everything else and not necessarily an admonition to proportion elements in a “Classical” sense. “Harmony” and “Balance” imply relationship, so nothing can be harmonious or balanced on its own. It is a matter of context; a favorite example of mine deals with a frog. In a swamp or at the river the presence of a frog is neither shocking nor surprising. In your kitchen sink it’s an entirely different matter! It is situational whether or not you find the frog shocking. What meaning is derived from the context in which you experience it?

“Look, another frog in the swamp” or

“Holy crap, that frog just jumped right in front of me!” or

“Ack! A frog in the sink” or

“Wait until someone goes to wash the dishes! Heh heh heh”

You can see that it is not the frog itself, or necessarily an implicit meaning of a frog in any situation, but the meaning that you derive from the experience. One person’s harmony is another person’s cacophony.

2. Vary the Line

In the Visual Arts, the line refers to how light or heavy, how thick or thin it is drawn. For musicians it is aural drawing of the written. The playing is storytelling, and we need to take the listener on a journey. Something has to happen! The slavish devotion to the written note as the “be-all-end-all” is a mistaken devotion; printed music is the best non-aural means that we have of recording and communicating something that is inherently ephemeral, personal, and as much an internal experience as an external one. Interpreting is so much more!

3. Finish what you start

This concept works on a macro- and micro- levels. In Shodo, the idea is that a piece is completed in one sitting, without stopping or corrections. Initially this idea translates very easily to the context of a live performance; every moment is unique, and you only get one shot at it.

However, this concept also applies on a micro-level. A student pointed out that he felt this idea of finishing was also present in the context of individual notes, in that it is a call to stay mentally and physically engaged for the entire duration of a note (articulation, sustain, release) whether in performance or practice. This beautiful thought dovetails well into...

4. Extend KI (Chi in Chinese)

Your intent, soul, the sum total of your entire being needs to flow from within you through your bow and into the instrument. The sound is the crystallization of your inner life at the moment the note begins. Without commitment, emotion, conviction, and musical intent playing will be AT BEST boring, likely sloppy, and devoid of any communicative properties. I like to think of extending my awareness from my Center (just below the navel) all the way into my fingers (sentient bristles of a brush, if you will) and into the bow so that it is as if I am physically touching the note and the strings directly.

FREE INTRODUCTORY FRACTAL FINGERING COURSE

Friday August 7 10AM PST

A Zoom link will be sent to all subscribers. If you would like to receive more info and you are not a subscriber, sign up at www.fractalbassist.com.

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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