

My musical vita
by Rolf Verres

Taken from the booklet of the CD: 'Lichtungen - Eine Einladung zur Stille'

When I was young I learned to perform works by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, and Rachmaninov. But soon I felt the desire for greater personal freedom in my musical expression. As a member of the rhythm-and-blues band "The Gate Ghosts" I discovered the exhilaration to be got out of improvising both wild and gentle pop music for audiences to dance to. After a car accident I suddenly lost the use of my right hand and was unable to make music for a long time. I believe it was this experience that taught me the meaning of longing and the difference between true and false fulfillment.

Whenever my duties as professor of medical psychology at the University of Heidelberg allowed, I sought musical instruction with teachers from other cultures, for example West Africa or Australia. For me, no distance was too great if I had the opportunity of experiencing personalities like Keith Jarrett, Steve Reich, Vladimir Horowitz or Abdullah Ibrahim. In many encounters with my Turkish friend Oruc Güvenc I made the acquaintance of ancient oriental music therapy.

My own experience of the medical lore of the curanderos in Peru and the collaboration with ethnologists, music therapists, and hypnotherapists nurtured my interest in intercultural research on states of consciousness induced by healing rituals. In the framework of our own culture I find myself increasingly drawn to sacred music. This may have to do with the fact that for many years now I have devoted much of my activity to the psychotherapeutic care of patients with dangerous or terminal diseases. Here I have also discovered a new approach to the meaning of prayer. The works of the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt exert a strong fascination on me for the way in which, in our own day and age, they provide access to a mystic experience of the world.

In my attempts to combine art, music, and healing, generous support from Dietmar Hopp, software entrepreneur and patron of the arts of living, has enabled me to acquire the most fascinating concert grand in existence at the moment, the Fazioli 308. I traveled to Sacile near Venice to meet Paolo Fazioli and choose the instrument I have used for the present album and its predecessor "Fire, Earth, Water, Air." It was an astounding experience. Fazioli is an inspired artist, a man who, for all his personal modesty, can be put on a par with Antonio Stradivari. He is obsessed with the desire to improve on an instrument that is already perfection itself. Some of the timbres one can elicit from the Fazioli 308 are of a quality that I have quite simply never heard before.

When I make music I frequently have daydreams, but another major concern is memory, the attainment of a special, free-floating state of consciousness. Inner tranquility enhances the acuity of our perceptions, our psychic "presence." In this connection, silence has become more and more important to me. Then memory can mean sensing who I am and where I come from. For this I need the night, withdrawal from daily pressures, the dreams that give the unconscious the scope it needs, not to give myself up to illusions but to get in touch with internal realities. At present, the simplicity and clarity of slow melodies and sounds, also the ability to wait, mean more to me than pressing ahead.

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For Internet information about concerts, lectures, and seminars by Rolf Verres and his double CD "Fire, Earth, Water, Air" go to: www.medpsych.uni-hd.de

Source: <http://www.rolf-verres.de/musician.html>