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Dreams Are What Music Is Made of...

Jay Rodriguez

Abstract

A rumination on dreams and music, in dedication to my Mom, Dad, and all our ancestors past and present. And to all that have been called home during this dramatic exodus in the vastness of space.

I had a dream...

...In the dream I had to make a choice between being bound to a life in an underground cavernous maze for eternity or of being cast out into the vastness of space. First the earth would spin so fast it would hurl me deep into the morning sky until the horizon would disappear into purple, blue, and red hues until finally there would be darkness and glimmers of yellow, red, blue, green, and white light in the distance, as I took deep faithful breaths that would no longer be needed for this journey.

I chose the vastness of the unknown.

The cavernous maze seemed and felt safe in my heart. I knew this place well. I was accustomed to its inevitable completions. It was dark and once in a while the sun from above would peer through at points of departure begging me to let go and surrender to the sky above or perhaps the sea below...but I always feared going above because the gravitational pull would not be strong enough to keep me earthbound. Besides the longer I stayed below, the lighter and more buoyant I was becoming...

I guess it did not matter. I just needed to be free. I did not want to lose whatever was left of my humanity.

"It will all be okay," I told myself quietly. "So long as I keep my heart open and my relentless breaths peaceful, accepting, and calm; my thoughts silent, my intentions--faithful and compassionate..."

This was not about survival, nor about death, but about living eternally in conscious freedom.

Dreams are what music is made of. They make me sing. They bring me relief and console me. This is my happiness.

The truth about sound and the language of music is that it is ever evolving. It is relentlessly trying to escape into space into the unknown. For me personally the more I play, the more I seek this journey. These thoughts and this dream exemplify the deep struggle of believing deeply in oneself enough to let go without hesitation and without judgement into the harmony of the universe.

I remember performing on the evenings that both my mother and father were called home. I remember literally losing my breath as I played a solo. I remember playing a solo saxophone cadenza and actually not being able to maintain my breath. Strange to me as I never have had these issues as a mature player. As my mother took her last breath, I believe I felt her last attempt to stay on earth bound for her love of all of us was vast.

There are inevitable completions on earth at times as in functional chord structures. For example, in Bach chordal movement is what moves and perpetuates the melodic sequences of events to your ear. It is absolute perfection in this term.

But by the time you arrive to atonal music (Webern, Schoenberg, etc.), the chordal function ceases to exist. It is no longer needed.

This exists in and of itself within nature as well. We call it harmony and it is truly harmony. Harmony in music is like the soul of the music it lives and exists in an ethereal plain.

Chords are like the skeleton of the earthbound part of the music. Chords should never be confused with harmony. They are related but not the same. The poem and thoughts in writing are about the whole of music in my mind's eye. Harmony can strive and continue to exist without chords but not the other way around.

When I perform and sound a note, I can feel the freedom within and without. I believe I strive to convey that when I perform.

When this pandemic commenced, I began to dream deeply and beautifully within.

This was a dream I wrote down. It speaks to many dimensions and aspects of this miracle of music and human language of life. That is why this thought is about the music of life.

Music should be played and performed like it is your last song.

All of these things are hard to convey in prose for me so please allow me to strive and reach out in prose the way I may strive as an artist to move outwardly without fear (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. *Jay Rodriguez el camino*. Photography: Paul Evers. 2013.

About the author

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