

## **A Week at Guitar Craft with Robert Fripp**

Robert Fripp has been an influential figure in how I have approached living life and making music ever since I encountered the music of King Crimson, and read Eric Tamm's book *Robert Fripp: From King Crimson to Guitar Craft*. I had read about Tamm's experience of Guitar Craft and I was intrigued with Fripp's pedagogy. Put plainly, Fripp described Guitar Craft as a course designed to develop a relationship with the guitar, the music, and oneself.<sup>1</sup>

There are many elements that distinguish Guitar Craft pedagogy from other guitar methods. Guitar Craft uses the New Standard Tuning, which according to Fripp emerged in September of 1983 while sweating in a sauna.<sup>2</sup> The tuning ascends in perfect fifths starting low to high beginning with C, G, D, A, E, and finally a minor third to G. This new tuning allows guitarists to get away from conventional playing patterns. Also, a new timbre emerges from the guitar because of the different string tensions afforded by the new tuning. Fripp has since renamed the New Standard Tuning to Guitar Craft Standard Tuning.

Of course, Guitar Craft is more than just a new tuning and a new approach to guitar playing. For many Guitar Craft participants, the development of a personal presence and mindful attention is a necessary condition to music making. Participants develop these qualities through various activities and exercises including learning *Alexander Technique*, *Tai Chi Chuan*, and the *Morning Sitting*. My experiences of these activities and exercises are detailed in the journal entries that follow.

Fripp also keeps an ongoing online journal which details his various professional and personal activities. I read one entry<sup>3</sup> one morning which described Fripp's recommendation that Guitar Craft cease to exist on March 25, 2010, its twenty-fifth anniversary. A Beginner's Guitar Craft course was in the process of planning for May 2009 in the Pacific Northwest just a few miles outside of Seattle, Washington. I was just about to complete a year of theological studies and I thought to myself that attending Guitar Craft *before* it ceased to exist was an opportunity I could not pass up.

What follows is an honest account of the incredibly rich experience of a week of Guitar Craft with Robert Fripp.<sup>4</sup>

### **Wednesday, March 25, 2009 - 8.12 PM**

On this day, exactly one year before Guitar Craft "ceases to exist," I sent in my application letter to Guitar Craft coordinator Dev Ray. It read as follows:

to whom it may concern,

my name is chris trinidad. i am a musician, teacher, scholar, producer, and conductor. i have wanted to enroll in a guitar craft course since i read the eric tamm's account of his experience in his book entitled "robert fripp: from king crimson to guitar craft."

---

<sup>1</sup> Fripp, Robert. An Introduction to Guitar Craft. (<http://web.archive.org/web/20040805181801/http://www.guitarcraft.com/monographs/introduction.htm>)

<sup>2</sup> Tamm, Eric. <http://www.progressiveears.com/frippbook/ch10.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Fripp, Robert. <http://www.dgmlive.com/diaries.htm?entry=13491>

<sup>4</sup> Other perspectives on this same event can be found here: <http://prullmw.xanga.com/703302390/day-1-of-8-travel-to-gig-harbor-wa-complete/> and <http://www.dgmlive.com/diaries.htm?artist=&show=&member=3&entry=14755>

i have traveled along a varied path in life studying jazz formally capilano college in north vancouver, british columbia and working as a freelance bass player and drummer for a number of years.

i acquired a school teaching degree at the university of british columbia, and, for the last five years taught high school choral music to eager students. most recently, i relocated to northern california to study the relationship of music, the arts, and religion at the jesuit school of theology at berkeley.

i have long been an advocate of lifelong learning and i see attending a guitar craft course as a logical step forward along this journey. i am also intrigued by the relationship between alexander technique, tai chi, and body awareness to music and how that affects performance.

i believe that attending a guitar craft course may help to add some insight into this percolating interest of mine. i understand that 'paying one's own way is an important principle' in order to attend the course, and i am able to do this.

thank you for taking the time to read this application, and i hope to hear from you soon.

***Friday, March 27, 2009 - 11.40 AM***

Two days ago, I sent in my application for Guitar Craft. Today, the registrar Dev Ray sent the following to me:

*Guitar Craft House Rules  
Honour necessity; honour sufficiency.*

Nothing is compulsory; but some things are necessary.

No judgements are made: we accept you as you arrive.

There is no mistake save one, the failure to learn from a mistake.

Freedom from like and dislike is our first major freedom.

Some people here you will like, others not.

Some people will irritate you.

No blame! You will also be irritating them.

Please act towards others with goodwill and with courtesy;

Otherwise, be polite.

Honour the role, respect the person.

You are not asked to accept any direction that violates conscience.

Although we are asked to act from conscience, this assumes the virtue:

to act from conscience is a considerable freedom.

You are not asked to passively accept any idea presented to you.

Rather, you are encouraged to test ideas you find surprising, to establish the veracity of those ideas, or not, for yourself; and to adopt a position of healthy scepticism, while participating in a spirit of critical goodwill.

Be on the course, to the degree you are able to honourably bear;

For example, listen to music generated within the course;  
telephone and access the internet when necessary, or when useful;  
avoid listening to, and reading, any non-course material.

Recording during the course is discouraged.

Accept personal responsibility for your personal space;  
and that part of the public space which you inhabit.

Please stay outside the kitchen, unless you have work there.

If you smoke, please do so outside the buildings.

Please stay within the boundary of the facility for the duration of the course.  
If you require something from outside, please ask the House Manager.

Drug use is incompatible with participation in Guitar Craft.  
Although nothing is compulsory, this is necessary.

If Robert considers that any person's continuing participation is detrimental to either that  
person, or the course as a whole, Robert may ask that person to leave.

If any of this is unacceptable,  
you are free to leave with a full refund prior to the beginning of the course.

If you decide to stay, you are asked to stay for the duration.

... I guess I was accepted into the course.

### ***Friday, May 29, 2009 - 10.44 PM***

I hate leaving for a trip with unfinished business at home. A number of school assignments  
require completion, and I have a few items that I still need to pick up for the trip. And, I'm  
packing as I write this.

#### *Comfort and Sharing*

I just found out from one of the Guitar Craft coordinators that the facility at All Saints  
Retreat Center on Gig Harbor, WA does not have web access. Also, I'll be sharing a cabin  
with about 7 other people. These two things has made me feel a little anxious, but I did  
brave about 4 months worth of sharing a cramped 125 square foot cabin space with another  
person during my days as a cruise ship musician. The difference is that I knew the person  
that I was staying with. I have no idea who I'll be rooming with, and I can only hope that  
they are courteous and friendly. While I felt that the coordinators perhaps should have  
alerted us to this fact, I acknowledge that I am accountable for not asking about this in  
advance. All in all, a week without email, and a week sharing a space with several  
strangers shouldn't be too bad. After all, part of lifelong learning is about stretching  
boundaries and getting beyond comfort zones.

As part of the course, Curt Golden, one of the organizers asked us to refrain from playing  
guitar for the week prior to our arrival. Exceptions were made for any who had to fulfill  
professional obligations. Practicing guitar has not been a part of my routine since high  
school. Practicing bass guitar, on the other hand, I can not seem to find enough time for.

## *Aims*

Since I sent my application letter, I found that my primary aims for attending this Guitar Craft course shifted a little. Among the things that come to mind: having fun, keeping an open mind, and learning something new. Above all, I am looking forward to enjoying the experience, reflecting upon it after its conclusion, and the continual development of the cultivation of awareness and attention in my life. In short, I'm trying to develop the habit of being present to the moment. That seems all too difficult with all of the distractions of everyday living, and perhaps this course will be a short term antidote. Or, at the very least, it will all be very interesting.

## ***Saturday, May 30, 2009 - 9.05 PM Guitar Craft Standard Time***

My flight leaving San Francisco was delayed by half an hour and I buried myself in a book knowing that I may not have the opportunity to read "non-course material" while on the course.

The organizers of the course arranged for van shuttles for the course participants from Sea-Tac airport to our course site at All Saints Retreat Center on Raft Island. It was a fairly quiet 45 minute van ride to Raft Island. We arrived onsite at approximately 4.15 PM. The first item on the posted agenda in the main dining hall was "dinner at 7 PM." So, we had about 3 hours to wander about and get settled.

I met my bunk mates and I had nice conversation with a fellow participant who hailed from Denver, Colorado. He had some nice things to say about JG Bennett and he suggested that I check out a sampler starter of 5 books about Bennett to get myself immersed.

Dinner started promptly at 7 PM and featured boiled carrots, stir-fried broccoli, and tofu. It was a simple meal.

### *Saturday, May 30, 2009 Dinner*

Orange Pan-glazed Tempeh  
Broccoli Vinaigrette  
Steamed Carrots  
Coconut Chess Pie

### *Orange Pan-glazed Tempeh*

1 cup - orange juice - freshly squeezed  
1 tablespoon - freshly grated ginger  
2 teaspoons - tamari or soy sauce  
1 ½ tablespoons - mirin  
2 teaspoons - maple syrup  
½ teaspoon - ground coriander  
2 small - garlic cloves - crushed  
10 oz - tempeh or tofu  
2 tablespoons - olive oil  
½ - lime  
handful - cilantro

Put orange juice in a small bowl. Squeeze the grated ginger over the bowl to extract the juices, then discard the pulp. Add the tamari, mirin, and maple syrup, ground coriander, and garlic. Mix together and set aside.

Cut the tempeh (or tofu) into thin-ish, bite-sized pieces, and if working with tofu, pat dry with a paper towel.

Put the olive oil in a large frying pan over medium high-heat. When the oil is hot but not smoking, add the tempeh and fry for 5 minutes, or until golden underneath. Turn and cook the other side for another 5 minutes, or until golden. Pour the orange juice mixture into the pan and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the sauce has reduced to a lovely thick glaze. Turn the tempeh once more during this time and spoon the sauce over the tofu from time to time.

Serve the tempeh drizzled with any remaining sauce and a squeeze of lime, with the coriander scattered on top.

Serves 4.

*Broccoli Vinaigrette Recipe*

1.5 lb - broccoli  
1 tablespoon - olive oil  
2 tablespoons - lemon juice  
2 teaspoons - Dijon mustard

Place broccoli in a baking dish with a little water and bake in oven at 350 degrees until tender with a fork, about 8 to 10 minutes. In a small bowl whisk the oil, lemon juice and mustard. Pour the dressing over broccoli and serve.

*Steamed Carrots*

1 lb - carrots - sliced

Place the carrots in a steaming basket with 2 inches of water in the pot below.

Bring the water to a boil and steam over a high heat for approximately 6 to 8 minutes depending on the thickness of the carrots.

Toss with butter and herbs of choice. (Parsley when all else fails.)

*Coconut Chess Pie*

4 large - eggs  
2 teaspoons - all-purpose flour  
2 cups - granulated sugar  
1 stick (4 ounces) - butter - softened  
1 teaspoon - pure vanilla extract  
1 cup - milk  
one 7-ounce package (about 2 cups) - sweetened flaked coconut  
2 - pie shells - unbaked

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a large bowl, beat the eggs, then whisk in the flour and sugar. Whisk in the margarine, vanilla, and milk, then whisk the coconut.

Pour the filling into the unbaked shells and bake until golden and the filling is set, 40 to 45 minutes.

## *Inclusive Vegetarianism*

I had a feeling that most of the meals on this course would be vegetarian, another thing I failed to ask about beforehand. I would probably lose weight this week, which is not an altogether bad thing. Come to think of it, serving vegetarian food is an inclusive way of accommodating vegetarians. It makes sense: everyone can eat vegetarian food, but not all can or are willing to eat meat. Whether the vegetarian food accommodates everyone's palate is another question, however.

Everyone was cramped in the kitchen space and there was a noticeable uneasy silence. For some reason, I was okay with the silence that filled the room. Perhaps silence is a necessary condition in Guitar Craft.

After dinner, Robert Fripp announced that the course had not yet begin and that anyone was free to leave with a full refund and a free meal. We then went over the *House Rules* and various people spoke in turns about the way the different rules were in effect for this course: some are practical, some are necessary, and some are aphorisms.

There are interesting inter-personal dynamics developing. There is a marked difference in the way the Intermediate group interacts with the Beginner group. It is nothing rude or unbecoming, but there is a distance between the two groups.

## ***Saturday, May 30, 2009 - 10.48 PM***

### *Inaugural Meeting and Presentation of Aims*

The *Inaugural Meeting* took place a few minutes after 9.15 pm. Each of the participants took their turn in announcing their name, where they come from, what brought them to Guitar Craft, and their aim.

My introduction: My name is Chris Trinidad, I come from the San Francisco Bay Area by way of Vancouver, British Columbia. What brought me here was an opportunity to reconnect with the Pacific Northwest, and my aim and what I hope to achieve is to better understand why music attracts me.

### *Aims II*

So, it seems that in two months, my aims evolved. From lifelong learning and a better understanding of the relationship between the seemingly disparate disciplines of Alexander Technique, Tai Chi, and music performance to the more personal quest of "why music attracts me" seems to be a more representative reflection of where I am at.

### *Robert's Aim*

At the end of all of the introductions, Robert said that there was still something that had not been said. Whether it was the answer he was looking for or not, I piped up and asked:

"Robert, what brought you to Guitar Craft and what is your aim?" I couldn't believe I actually had the nerve to do that.

He announced the conclusion of 25 years of Guitar Craft and he wanted to be available for the next step. What brought him to Guitar Craft was that he was born for it, speaking toward vocation. He also wanted the opportunity to "try a few new things." While saying this, he moved his shoulders back and forth, danced slightly in his chair, and flashed a coy

smile.

The announcing of aims took about an hour with people coming from as far as Russia and as near as Seattle to participate. Some people were acknowledged as taking the course "at a distance" with a commitment to continue with the principles and an aim in some way shape or form. Some aims were music oriented and some were not at all. Their names and aims were spoken for by some of the present participants.

First thing tomorrow is a 6.45 am wake up call and a 7.15 am start. We will meet in the chapel to "do nothing" for about 30 minutes. According to one of the more experienced Crafties, 45 minutes was "too cruel." I detected another snide comment toward the uninitiated.

### ***Sunday, May 31, 2009 - 8.45 AM***

I had a rather restless night. In trying to adjust to new surroundings, new sounds, and new people, I trusted that this was all a part of the experience. There are snorers, lots of tossing and turning, creaky mattresses, and a shout in the night. Someone had a nightmare. I don't have any sense of how much or how little sleep I got. I have a feeling that my back is going to kill me at the end of the week, but we're not there yet.

#### *Morning Sitting and Doing Nothing*

This morning began as scheduled. We gathered in the chapel precisely at 7.15 AM sitting in complete silence. What a wonderful way to start the morning, particularly since it was accompanied by the morning dew and the morning light. And so, we sat, and ... did nothing. The principle behind doing nothing, as I understand it, is that in order to do *something* we must first be allowed to do *nothing*. After 30 minutes of *nothing*, we followed Robert's cue out the door and headed for the "breakfast trough."

For breakfast: oatmeal with apples, hard boiled eggs, slices of bread, orange juice, and I skipped the coffee. Following eating, Robert announced the day's schedule. We assemble at 10.00 am for our first beginners gathering in the chapel with guitars. We were told not to play, but we were highly encouraged to "tune."

### ***Sunday, May 31, 2009 - 9.25 AM***

This is my first experience with the New Standard Tuning. There's an awful lot of tension on the first two strings with this particular gauge of strings. It seems like this tuning is conducive to intervallic playing rather than scalar playing, but that is only an initial hunch since I have virtually no experience playing with this tuning set.

#### *Wandering Thought: Organizing in Teams*

Another thought: the staff helping with the course appear to be organized in teams. There is a team dedicated to Alexander Technique instruction, there are the Guitar Buddies teams who act as tutors while Robert is instructing, and there is the Kitchen Staff team who is responsible for our meals. I belonged to the Beginners Team, while the more experienced participants are members of the Intermediate Team. This organization feels very grass roots but also highly organized at the same time.

#### *Wandering Thought: What About Emergencies?*

Another wandering thought: what if an emergency were to arise? I don't have any sense

that anything wrong could come up, but what if something did? Would we know what to do? Would the team members know how to react?

### ***Sunday, May 31, 2009 - 2.06 PM***

We had our first session with Robert Fripp this morning. We were seated on chairs arranged in a circle. He walked in, took a look around, and began.

#### *Attention*

He called attention to the soles of our feet. Everyone straightened their bodies out. Then, he drew attention to the tops of our head, and to everything in between. And, finally, he called attention to our left hand, to the palm of the hand, the back of the hand, and to each joint.

After this centering exercise, he asked us to think of not that we haven't yet played. He paused. Then, we played the note and only that note whenever it suited us. Robert then asked us to think of another note. And, again, we played that note as many times as we wanted, but at least once.

#### *Circulations*

One by one, we played our note and thus began the *circulations*. At first, the timing was all over the place. We had no sense of group *tempo equilibrium* yet. We repeated the exercise once more from left to right. Some participants looked to the next person as a sort of cue, and others were more perceptive and used their ears as their cue.

Next, Robert asked us to play the note of the person to our right side. No one could do it. With a somewhat sarcastic tone, he drew our attention to the fact that we needed to listen and pay attention.

Returning to the previous exercise of picking a note and sending it along, Robert then asked us to smile to the person opposite to whom we were sending our note. In other words, smile to the right, and play to the left. We had some success with this exercise, and as the group gained more and more confidence, the tempo got faster and faster.

#### *Primary Exercise*

We then engaged in a chromatic exercise beginning with the first finger on the seventh fret of the "D string" and proceeded to play first finger, open string, second finger, open string, third finger, open string, fourth finger, open string. We then added the next string and repeated the exercise. Eventually, it would lead toward what Robert called the *primary exercise* of that same chromatic pattern on all six strings. It was an efficient warm-up that would allow the player to get all four fingers moving across all six strings by way of every single fret.

Robert then left us in the capable hands of the guitar buddies who then asked us to review our postures and the positioning of our guitars.

#### *Alexander Technique*

After our guitar buddy work, one of the Alexander Technique teachers named Brad worked with us.

Up from our chairs, Brad asked us to time ourselves while we held our breath. We each called out our time. Mine -- 42 seconds. He sat us back down only to call us back up.

He asked us to imagine that we were hot air balloons, filled and expanding. We got up. Then Brad exclaimed that the hot air balloon had burst and so it came down fast. We sat, without too much effort or strain. We got back up again from the same position. We talked about this experience. What did it feel like? To me, effortless.

Brad then asked us to lift one hand, to place that hand in the space in front of us and to allow our bodies to move in relation to where we placed our hand. We lifted our hands and dropped them effortlessly.

We partnered up and engaged in an exercise where our wrists touched but only as if we were holding up a piece of paper. We then moved back and forth similar to a conducting exercise I learned a few years ago of mirroring one another's hand motions. He then instructed us to attempt touch our partner's faces by using less motion than our partner while we moved slowly without actually making contact.

Throughout these exercises, Brad called our attention to the tensions in our bodies and to give that tension the space it requires. Rather than fighting tension with more tension, we simply acknowledge and give that tension its space.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Wandering Thought: Ethnicity and Gender*

Perhaps these exercises are allowing me to notice things I had not noticed before. I note that I am only one of two course participants who are of non-Caucasian descent. Most participants are also male. I am not sure if that means anything, but I will simply acknowledge this note and give it the space it requires.

#### *Sunday, May 31, 2009 Lunch*

Lentils Monastery Style  
Salad  
Bread

#### *Lentils Monastery Style*

1/4 cup - olive oil  
2 large onions - chopped  
1 carrot - chopped  
1/2 tsp - thyme  
1/2 tsp - marjoram  
3 cups - stock  
1 cup- Lentils - rinsed  
Salt - to taste  
1/4 cup - Parsley - chopped  
1 lb - Tomatoes, canned  
1/4 cup - Sherry, dry  
2/3 cup- Swiss Cheese - grated

---

<sup>5</sup> On a related but somewhat off-topic note, this exercise reminded me of a Star Trek: The Next Generation episode called Peak Performance (Season 2, Episode 21) where the android character Data plays a video game called *Strategema* against an opponent whose only goal was to play for victory. After having been previously defeated by his opponent, Data altered his premise for playing by aiming instead for a stalemate.

***Sunday, May 31, 2009 - 2.51 PM***

I had an impromptu session with the other beginners just after lunch. We were eager to practice what we had learned from Robert in the morning. We set the metronome. But what happened to the attention to detail that we spent time working on? Soon after we set the metronome pulse, it was promptly ignored and the whole group began to rush.

***Sunday, May 31, 2009 - 4.24 PM***

*So Much for Attention*

The beginners group had a session with the Guitar Buddies. One of them led us in the *attention centering* exercise before we reviewed the chromatic exercises.

*Three Observations: Tempo, Breathing, and Right Hand*

First, if we are working on paying attention to our body and its various parts, why are we not also paying attention to our tempi? There is a tendency within this beginner group to rush immensely and immediately. We are not paying sufficient attention to the length of each note.

Second, we are not paying much attention to our breathing. As a regular part of the naturally occurring rhythms in our human bodies, the act of breathing is literally essential to living. I think the result is that there is a kind of mechanical output in that we are approaching our playing as a beginners group.

Finally, we are also not paying much attention to that which helps to generate the guitar sound: the right hand. So far, all of our attention centering exercises consider the left hand but not the right. I have no idea if this is intentional or if this will come later. But, if we are not paying any attention to our tempo, our breathing, or the right hand, are we not setting ourselves up for bad habits later on?

***Sunday, May 31, 2009 - 8.32 PM***

*Learning More About Doing Nothing*

We had an afternoon session with Robert Fripp on learning about his method of *Doing Nothing*. To me, it seems like a useful guided meditation that aims to draw awareness to various parts of the body starting from head to toe. This session was for those (me included) who did not have an "established morning sitting practice."

*Tea Time*

Afterwards, tea with cookies at 4 pm. Tea time is a nice English pastime that allows for a little respite between meals. Incidentally, the meals seem to be just about enough. I am not sure if they are measuring calories, but the call for necessity and sufficiency is making its mark through the amount of food we are consuming. There is just enough food for everyone. No excess, and more or less healthy -- it's vegetarian!

*Tai Chi Chuan*

Then, a little time out until Tai Chi exercises with one of the Guitar Buddies who also happens to be experienced in this movement form. There's so much here on this course

that promotes body awareness and attention. I hope that I'll be able to retain some of this beyond the duration of this course.

*Sunday, May 31, 2009 Dinner*  
Aloo Gobi Mattar [Potato, Cauliflower, Pea Curry]  
Sweet Saffron Rice with Currants and Pistachios  
Mocha Swirl Poundcake

*Aloo Gobi Mattar [Potato, Cauliflower, Pea Curry]*

1 large cauliflower - cut into small florets  
2 large onions - chopped into 1/2-inch chunks  
3 medium baking potatoes - peeled and chopped into 1/2 - 3/4-inch chunks  
1 cup - frozen green peas  
1 cup - vegetable stock or chicken stock  
4 tablespoons - olive oil or ghee  
2 tablespoons - fresh ginger, peeled and finely minced  
5 garlic cloves - minced  
2 medium - hot green chili peppers minced with seeds included  
2 teaspoons - turmeric  
1 tablespoon - garam masala  
2 teaspoons - ground coriander  
1 teaspoon - salt  
1/2 teaspoon - white pepper  
1 teaspoon - fenugreek seeds  
1 teaspoon - ground cumin  
1 teaspoon - cumin seeds  
1/2 - lemon - juice  
1/3 cup - fresh cilantro, chopped

Heat oil in a large wok, karahi, or deep nonstick pan over high heat.  
Add onions and cumin seeds, and cook until onions are translucent.  
Add the minced garlic, chunks of ginger, and chili pepper.  
Sautee for 2 minutes, stirring frequently.  
Add all remaining spices, including salt. Stir well.

Immediately add potato to pan. Stir until coated in oil and spices.  
Turn heat down to medium and sautee potato for 3-5 minutes, stirring frequently.

Add chicken or vegetable stock, then put lid on pan, lower heat to medium-low,  
and simmer for around 15 minutes.

Add the cauliflower florets, grated ginger and lemon juice.  
Stir well. Replace lid, turn heat to low, and let simmer for about 10 minutes.

If the ingredients are sticking to the pan,  
you can add a bit more stock or 1/4 cup of water at this point.

Add frozen peas to pan, and stir ingredients.  
Cover and simmer for 10 more minutes.

Turn off heat. Add half of the fresh cilantro, and mix thoroughly.  
Replace the lid, then allow to rest for 10 minutes before adjusting salt to taste and serving

dish over rice. Garnish with remaining fresh cilantro.

Yields 6 servings.

*Sweet Saffron Rice with Currants and Pistachios*

1 cup - basmati rice  
2 cups - water  
1/3 tsp - saffron  
1 1/2 inch - cinnamon sticks  
6 - whole cloves  
1/4 tsp - salt  
1/2 cup - sugar  
1 tsp - cardamom seed - coarsely crushed  
2 tbsp - ghee or vegetable oil  
3 tbsp pistachios or almonds - slivered  
3 tbsp raisins or currants  
2 tbsp pistachios - blanched, sliced into thin curls for garnishing

Clean, wash, soak and drain basmati rice.

Bring the water to a boil in a heavy 1 1/2 quart/liter nonstick saucepan.

Place the saffron threads in a small bowl and add 2 1/2 tablespoons of the boiling water.

Allow the threads to soak for 10-15 minutes while cooking the rice.

Stir the rice into the boiling water and add the cinnamon stick, cloves and salt. When the water resumes boiling, reduce the heat to very low, cover with a tight-fitting lid and gently simmer without stirring for 20-25 minutes or until the rice is tender and fluffy and all of the water is absorbed. Remove from the heat and let the rice sit, covered, for 5 minutes to allow the fragile grains to firm up.

In the meantime, combine the saffron water, sugar and cardamom seeds in a small saucepan. Place over moderate heat and stir until the sweetener is dissolved. Lower the heat slightly and simmer for about 1 minute. Pour the syrup into the rice and quickly re-cover.

Heat the ghee or oil in a small pan over moderately low heat until it is hot but not smoking. Fry the nuts and raisins until the nuts turn golden brown and the raisins swell. Pour the nuts, raisins and ghee or oil into the piping-hot rice and gently fluff with a fork to mix.

Spoon onto a serving platter and sprinkle with the sliced pistachio nuts.

Yields 4 servings.

*Mocha Swirl Poundcake*

1 lb (4 sticks) - butter, softened  
6 eggs  
3 cups - sugar  
4 cups - flour  
1 tablespoon - baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon - salt  
1 cup - strong black coffee  
2 teaspoon - vanilla extract  
1 ounce (1 square) - unsweetened chocolate - melted

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.  
Prepare 10" bundt pan - grease and flour.  
Cream butter and sugar until light & fluffy.  
Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each.  
In separate bowl, sift together dry ingredients.

In third bowl, mix together coffee & and vanilla.  
Add dry and wet alternately to butter mixture, beginning and ending with dry.  
Do not over-mix. Transfer 1/3 of batter to small bowl and add chocolate. Mix thoroughly.

Spread regular batter into pan. Drop chocolate batter on top.  
Swirl dark and light batters together.  
Bake 50-60 minutes. Cool 10 minutes in pan, then turn out onto rack.  
Cool completely before slicing.

Yields 10 servings of 1 slice.

We had a pleasant surprise during dinner. The Tuning the Air team, or, the more experienced Guitar Craft people played a nice composition for us and surrounded us with sound. It was phenomenal and beautiful. Non-tonal, but many glimpses of color and beauty (*chromatic*, perhaps?) This was followed by a song performed in a truly honest and heartfelt way by another of the experienced members.

Following the performances, Robert gave us an opportunity to comment upon the various afternoon exercises. So, I commented upon something that has been irritating me all day: the constant rushing of our beginner's group.

#### *A Point of Seeing*

Perhaps it is not the group that is rushing, but rather, my inability or wish to move along and forward with the group. I am imposing my will, my time or tempo frame, and my own expectations upon the group.

A guest at dinner asked me to restate my observation. I did so. He responded by asking whether I always think it's me. I was not sure if he meant that my observation was narcissistic or whether the inability to keep consistent time was my problem and not the group's. Unsure, I went with the lukewarm, middle-of-the-road answer of "sometimes." But, it is true, I am somewhat self-conscious of my time playing particularly because I am a bass guitar player, and I'm often called to keep consistent time.

The gentleman who performed just after the Tuning the Air team commented that Curt Golden had given their Intermediate group an exercise in expanding multiples of duple rhythms, and the subdivision got so large that the group was no longer able to have a sense of the longer subdivision. So, this gentleman ended up supporting the music rather than try to impose the clock time.

Interesting. So, perhaps, in my case, rather than impose my understanding of the tempo, I should just lay out.

***Sunday, May 31, 2009 - 10.36 PM***

*House Full of Guitars*

We reconvened at 9.30 PM to ... a house full of guitars. It was all hands-on-deck, all course participants, all teams, coming together to jam, albeit in a more structured and systematic Guitar Craft way.

### *Inner Circle, Outer Circle*

Two sets of chairs arranged in circles were setup before we arrived. The more experienced participants sat in the *inner circle*, while the beginner group sat in the outer circle.

Again, it was apparent that there was a divide between the more experienced Guitar Craft participants and the novices. Two novices were late and they took the first two available seats except they happen to be in the *inner circle*. The latecomers felt that they did not belong there and proceeded to move elsewhere until they were stopped by Robert who then pointed back at to their original seats. Curt Golden then acknowledged that they "belonged there."

### *When Ready, Begin*

Three times this evening, Robert gave us the command "when ready, begin." Obediently, we followed. It was clear that the *inner circle* participants, by virtue of their experience, was more attuned to what was taking place and knew how to operate. They circulated the notes in tone, in tune, and in time, and the result was a pleasing harp-like sound.

The outer circle, by contrast, was marginally successful at this. Once again our tempi varied. At some point, Curt Golden initiated the *extended techniques* portion of the evening which kind of cued us to the idea that we were not simply limited to *mere* notes. For all of the intentional silence during the day, this *House of Guitars* idea certainly takes the cake in terms of craziness.

The cacophony was numbing, but a few things were clear to me.

### *Two Observations: One Guitarist and One Mind, and No Giving and No Receiving*

In a room full of guitarists, I am but one. If I am one, I stand less of a chance of making any significant musical contribution. If we are one in mind and heart, as a group then we have an opportunity to make effective musical contributions. It is hard to distinguish any individual players contribution to the event.

It was also clear to me that the *inner circle* did not seem to wish to interact with the outer circle. I did not get a sense of any *giving* in their music.

### *When Ready, Begin (again)*

The last time Robert cued us with the "when ready, begin" directive, he shut the lights. What then ensued was even more cacophony. At one point, I just stopped playing. There was nothing I could contribute that would seem to have any effect on what was going on.

### *Three Circulations*

As if to quell the intensity of the previous moments, Robert concluded this session with three separate circulation exercises. Firstly, the outer circle comprised of 47 participants circulated. Then, the *inner circle* of 19 circulated. They sounded light years ahead of us. The quality of their intention, their playing, their experience all brought to bear in a beauty

of sound. To end the evening, we played together on Robert's cue any note we wished three times.

Then, Robert walked out.

There was no instruction for tomorrow, but I believe we start at 7.15 once again with a whole lot of *Doing Nothing*.

### **Monday, June 1, 2009 - 9.24 AM**

#### *High Octane Food Energy*

I awoke with plenty of energy this morning. I slept a little better last night too. The food we have been consuming is pure energy food, like high octane gasoline. I wonder if my body appreciates the lack of meat protein.

#### *Not Really Doing Nothing*

Morning sitting and *doing nothing* again for 30 minutes. I sat right next to Robert. Most people can handle sitting on the floor in lotus position. I am not one of those people, and apparently neither is Robert. I had my eyes closed the whole time, and I alternated between actually doing nothing and silently chanting some prayers.

Gregorian chant helps me to remember how to pray. Imagine that. Once upon time, church paintings, murals, statuary, and music were used to educate the illiterate. Perhaps because I have not had access to any media, and because I have not read or listened to anything outside the course, I looked for a song in my heart. Chant was there ready to accompany me. We are at a Greek Orthodox retreat center, after all.

Tai Chi Chuan with Luciano in a few minutes. The morning air is crisp, the birds are singing, and the world seems still.

### **Monday, June 1, 2009 - 12.46 PM**

#### *On Gear*

It seems like to *do* Guitar Craft properly, and to get the Guitar Craft *sound*, one needs the Ovation guitar, the triangular picks, and the proper gauge strings. It seems like this gear suit the methods and approach that Guitar Craft is advocating, one that is mindful of the human body.

#### *Scattered and Haphazard Tempi Gone and Back*

After Tai Chi Chuan, the beginners group gathered with Robert in the chapel. Seated in the circle, we began with a circulation, which, surprisingly was more or less in time. The scattered and haphazard tempi that was present yesterday was absent this morning.

Perhaps realizing we were ready for a challenge, Robert divided our circle into two groups. With chairs rearranged, one group was charged with the responsibility of playing upbeats, and the other of playing downbeats. The intention, I believe, was for the circulating to alternate between the two circles. So much for high hopes. The beast of scattered and haphazard tempi reappeared.

So, we dropped the guitars and resorted to clapping. Once we had a modicum of success,

we re-introduced the guitars. With some struggle, we somewhat succeeded in circulating. The space in the rhythmic subdivision is established between the downbeat and the upbeat. If we can feel and pay attention to the spaces between the notes, then I think we can be more successful.

### *Odd Meters*

Back to guitars and Robert had another challenge for us. This time, we tried circulating in odd meters with one group in 5 and the other in 7. With these less familiar groupings, we first started by counting out loud: "1 - 2 - 3 - 1 - 2" for the group in 5, and "1 - 2 - 3 - 1 - 2 - 1 - 2" for the group in 7. By doing this, we set the subdivision and identified the common pulse. Robert was training us to divide our attention, but as a beginner's group, we aren't anywhere near being able to understand or hear 5/8 and 7/8 meters simultaneously. The common subdivision of eighth notes helped to keep our tempo steady.

Still, there seems to be little sense of honoring the *whole* note. What a wonder it would be if we were able to enjoy its completeness: the whole attack, decay, sustain, and release of the note.

### *Release and Return: The Right Hand*

And, finally, the guitar buddies elaborated on the use of the right hand! As if shaking someone's hand, a straight line from the elbow to the wrist should be present. The four fingers should be curled inward at the second joint, or as biology would call it the *proximal interphalangeal joints*, but not as far as to form a fist. The thumb's first joint (or, again as biology would call it the *distal interphalangeal joint*) is locked.

The Guitar Craft stroke is then an efficient *release* for a downstroke, and a *return* for an upstroke. After practicing this gesture on one string, we alternated strings continuing the up and down stroke alternation no matter which string we were on.

This approach was different than the one advocated by my first year Jazz Studies guitar and bass ensemble teacher Fred Ardiel. According to Fred, to achieve a consistent sound especially when playing swing or bebop, the downstroke should be used as much as possible with upstrokes only occurring on offbeats.

This approach is rewiring my brain. I do not play guitar consistently enough, and so it will take some time to learn in this new way. But first, to lunch!

*Monday, June 1, 2009 Lunch*

Curried Apple Couscous  
Cheddar and Chutney Tea Sandwiches  
Salad

*Curried Apple Couscous*  
4 tablespoons - unsalted butter  
1 tablespoon - curry powder  
1 medium apple - cored and chopped  
3 green onions, washed, trimmed - and thinly sliced  
1 cup - whole wheat couscous  
1 3/4 cup - water  
1 teaspoon - sea salt

1/2 cup - pine nuts, toasted  
Small handful of mint, chopped

In a large saucepan over medium-high heat add 3 tablespoons of the butter, the curry powder, and a couple generous pinches of salt, and cook for a minute or until the spices are fragrant.

Stir in the chopped apples and cook for about 3 minutes, enough time for the apples to soften up a bit and absorb some of the curry. Scoop the apples from the pan and set aside in a separate bowl.

In the same pan, again over medium-high heat, add the remaining tablespoon of butter. Stir in the green onions, let them soften up a bit and then add the water and salt. Bring to a boil, stir in the couscous, cover and remove from heat. Steam for 5 to 10 minutes and then use a fork to fluff up the couscous.

Stir in the apples, pine nuts, and chopped mint.  
Season with more salt and curry powder to taste.

Serves 6.

#### *Cheddar and Chutney Tea Sandwiches*

8 tablespoons - mango chutney  
16 slices (2-1/2-by-2-1/2-inch) - dark pumpernickel cocktail bread  
4 ounces - aged sharp cheddar - thinly sliced

Spread a thin layer of chutney on one side of each bread slice.  
You will use 1 tablespoon per sandwich or 1 1/2 teaspoons [1/2 tablespoon] per slice of bread.

Top 8 slices with a layer of cheese (about 1/2 ounce per slice)  
and close sandwiches with remaining 8 slices of bread.

Let sit about 30 minutes before serving to allow flavors to meld.  
Serve sandwiches whole, or if you like, slice each sandwich in half on the diagonal.

Serves 8.

### **Monday, June 1, 2009 - 2.04 PM**

#### *Words of Necessity and Practicality*

Robert asked for comments over lunch. His cue is the request for *Words of Necessity and Practicality*. Following each meal together, we get a sense of how everyone is doing and feeling through an invitation for comment about the day's work thus far.

#### *Questions? Questions!*

When questions are being asked, however, he qualifies the participant's request by asking us to consider whether the *rightness* of the questions are being honoured. That is to say, is the question (in question) *actually* the *right* question intended for the *right* person and is it the *right* time to ask that question? Furthermore, what is the source of the question? Wait, is *that* a question?

### *Crazy Energy*

Some of the participants iterated that last night's *House of Guitars* had a lot of energy, and perhaps too much so. Another participant commented that if it were not a safe environment, then it could have easily turned into a mob.

### *What is Good Time?*

Another participant asked the question: "What is good time?" Curt Golden responded with: "it grooves." When it grooves, his butt shakes. So, the time is embodied. Robert remarked that cerebral players tend to have bad time.

### *On the Use of the Metronome*

Regarding the use of the metronome, some players may disagree with me when using it to develop good time. The metronome should be made a partner rather than a judge in the quest for improved time. Like any good partner, it faithfully and honestly points out when we are not in equilibrium. And, like a good partner, it melds together with the player when "it grooves."

### **Monday, June 1, 2009 - 4.37 PM**

After tea time, I bought the official triangular Guitar Craft pick and the official Guitar Craft strings. Now, all I need is more Guitar Craft experience, and Guitar Craft knowledge.

### *Alexander Technique*

This afternoon, the beginners group had an Alexander Technique session with Sandra Bain Cushman, who in my mind is an excellent teacher. She imparted a lot of useful information, and a whole new world opened up for me.

The first idea is allowing the eyes to lead the body's movement. There is an ease which develops in the neck muscles when the eyes look in the direction to where the body would follow. The second idea is getting a sense of where our body's connections are. Swinging the legs while seated allows us to get a sense that our legs are connected to the pelvis! Swinging the arms while walking around enables us to know that our arms are connected to the back! I have bundles of (untuned) muscles in these areas that are fighting my new adopted positions.

### *Posture?*

She also reminded us that posture might be a bad, dirty, and loaded word. Posture conjures a sense of lock, which we are trying to avoid. Instead, we must aim for fluidity in motion. She suggested that we perhaps use *free form* or *natural stance* instead.

### **Monday, June 1, 2009 - 5.42 PM**

After a short break, we had another Alexander Technique session with Sandra.

### *Release and Return: Breathing*

Let the body be free! The concept of the release and return is evident in the way our body's breathing mechanism has evolved. We exhale to inhale. This creates vacuum which our body involuntarily fills. We release the breath, and the breath returns to us. If everything

is working correctly, this mechanism will function naturally. If we are hunched over, however, this will not work as properly.

*Practice Walking: Space for Tension and Leading with the Eyes*

I have a new task set before me. I must practice walking! It sounds odd since I have been doing this my whole life, but I for as long as I can remember, I have walked in this world with a hunch. While practicing walking, I must remember to give tension the space it requires, as Brad, one of the other Alexander Technique teachers reminded us before, and I must lead with the eyes, as Sandra taught us this morning. New muscles are firing and are being thrust into action.

After we concluded our Alexander Technique session, we had some free time onhand. There are a lot of small practice groups emerging. There are a lot of players around here always itching impatiently to play. Perhaps that is another indication of this will to rush. There is also the will to improve and to put into action what we have been taught thus far. Some of the players are wishing to place creative variations on some of the material. But, perhaps we will not improve collectively if we do not attend to the basic principles of what we are being taught.

**Monday, June 1, 2009 - 9.01 PM**

*Personal Meeting I: To Rotate or Not to Rotate?*

I had a private lesson with one of the guitar buddies Martin Schwutke. We focussed on pick technique. He told me not to worry too much about the parallel relationship of the pick to the strings, or the precise method that the pick strikes the strings, but rather to concentrate on my rotating arm motion. (To recap, I seem to rotate my arm back and forth as I alternate upstrokes and downstrokes or as I cross strings.)

He demonstrated for me the adverse effects of my constantly swiveling arm: when the tempo picks up, I will have a hard time playing effectively or consistently. The swiveling arm is wasted motion. I need to work on constant downstrokes and just vertical wrist motion. The forearm moved from the elbow joint when crossing strings.

Martin then showed me the advantage of the proper wrist and forearm motions. He played through all six strings from bottom to top and it sounded like six distinct notes being played on a single string. In other words, there was a consistency in the sound. The technique makes a lot of sense in terms of efficiency, and most importantly, in terms of sound.

*Martin's Exercise Solution*

He gave me an exercise to practice. The first downstroke is played on the bottom string, followed an upstroke and downstroke on the higher string, and then a consecutive upstroke, downstroke, and upstroke combination back on the bottom string. The whole exercise is in 3/4 rather than 6/8. To wit: 1 + 2 + 3 + = d u d u d u.

Then, to dinner.

*Monday, June 1, 2009 Dinner*

Simmered Black Beans  
Brown Rice  
Fresh Pear Tart

### *Simmered Black Beans*

The key to a great pot of black beans is using enough onion, garlic, and salt for seasoning, and then cooking the beans for a long time at a slow simmer. In Mexico, a sprig of epazote or a few dried avocado leaves are usually added to the pot. Those ingredients aren't as easy to find as cilantro, which is what I routinely use to season the beans.

1 pound - black beans - washed and picked over for stones  
2 quarts - water  
1 tablespoon - canola oil or extra virgin olive oil  
1 medium - onion, chopped  
4 large - garlic cloves, minced  
1/4 cup - chopped cilantro - plus additional for garnish if desired  
salt - preferably kosher salt, to taste

Soak the beans in the water for at least six hours.

If they will be soaking for a long time in warm weather, put them in the refrigerator.

Heat the oil over medium heat in a large, heavy soup pot or Dutch oven, and add the onion. Cook, stirring, until it begins to soften, about three minutes. Add half the garlic. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, about one minute. Add the beans and soaking water. The beans should be covered by at least an inch of water. Add more water as necessary, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, and skim off any foam that rises. Cover and simmer one hour.

Add the salt, remaining garlic, and cilantro. If you can get hold of a sprig of fresh epazote, add it here. Continue to simmer another hour, until the beans are quite soft and the broth is thick and fragrant. Taste. Is there enough salt? Does it need more garlic? Add, if necessary. Let sit overnight in the refrigerator for the best flavor.

Serves 6.

### *Brown Rice*

1 teaspoon - cumin seeds  
1 tablespoon - oil  
1 cup - brown rice  
2 cups - water

Saute cumin seeds in oil for 1 minute. Then add rice and saute for 1 minute more. Add water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and cook until done.

### *Fresh Pear Tart*

1 pie shell - unbaked  
3 pears - medium

Custard:

6 tablespoons - flour, white unbleached  
1/2 teaspoon - nutmeg, fresh grated  
12 ounces - butter  
2/3 cup - sugar  
3 eggs  
1 teaspoon - almond extract

Sift together the flour and nutmeg. Melt the butter. Remove it from the heat and add the sugar. Whisk in the flour-nutmeg mixture. Stir in the eggs, one at a time, then add the extract. At this point the custard should be thick and smooth.

Cut the pears into eighths lengthwise. Core the slices and arrange them in the pie shell.  
Cover with the custard.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes until the custard is firm and golden.

8 Servings of 1 Slice.

### **Monday, June 1, 2009 - 11.22 PM**

#### *A House Full of Guitars II*

The divisions between the intermediates and the beginners are starting to crumble a little. This *house of guitars* was setup to combine both groups. Robert appeared very relaxed this evening, and was very accommodating to us beginners. It was as if a lot of fun was about to be had.

We were given the cue to *when ready, begin* to start a circulation. After a couple of rounds, we split into five groups (still within the larger circle) and were each assigned a chord and a beat on which we played that chord. We circulated this chord as part of our group. After some success with this, we reversed directions. We gradually increased the tempo and this time it felt rather controlled. Perhaps the experience of the intermediates and the acclimatizing of the beginners is coming together to produce a more collective control over tempo. We ended the evening with more circulations. A whole lot of fun was had indeed.

### **Tuesday, June 2, 2009 - 9.01 AM**

#### *The Morning Sitting of Doing Nothing*

Some insights and connections occurred to me during the morning sitting of *doing nothing*. As Buddhists might say, I am afflicted with monkey mind. My mind wanders and free associates with the thoughts and ideas I am currently invested in. This morning, I was invested in the insight of the release and the return.

#### *Release and Return: Giving Before Receiving*

Taking a breath seems self-evident. You just ... do it. But, what if we gave a breath before taking one? It seems counter intuitive at first thought. The body's breathing mechanism is setup for the free return of the breath caused by the vacuum that is present when we release the breath. Exhalation, or, release, before inhalation, or, return. Or, phrased differently: exhalation is giving, and inhalation is receiving. Perhaps another put yet another way: the negative release created by exhalation turns into positive return of inhalation.

When we strike a string with a pick, the easiest solution would be to let gravity take its course and allow the wrist to drop, thus striking the string in its path. It is another form of release. The upstroke is a return. The same principle applies when playing drums. When a drumstick makes contact with a drum on a downstroke, there is an automatic rebound. Again, it is a form of giving in order that we may receive.

During the morning sitting of *doing nothing*, these insights converged. Perhaps this philosophy of giving before receiving could have wider implications for how we ought to operate as musicians, artists, and human beings in the world. If gaining insights like these with eyes closed and body still is *doing nothing*, I'll take it.

### ***Tuesday, June 2, 2009 - 12.38 PM***

I just completed an Alexander Technique session with Frank Sheldon.

#### *I Am Walking, Yes Indeed*

Frank asked us to walk in and out of the chapel a number of times while each time recreating exactly how we came in. It was a fascinating exercise, and with each successive try I found myself becoming much more hyper aware of my surroundings and my body movements.

We then engaged in a number of walking activities in the chapel. He asked us to increase the amount of space around us as much as possible. And, again, I became more aware of my surroundings. It is as if these verbal cues from Frank were simple reminders of what may have been completely obvious at one time but became obscured over time as we became more and more experienced walkers.

#### *When I Was A Child, I Walked ... Not Crawled*

Apparently, as a child, I skipped the crawling stage and went right to walking. Of course, I cannot remember what it was like to walk for the first time, but I imagined that a whole new world of possibilities emerged with my new found mobility. I guess that as we become more and more preoccupied with other things as we get older, the act of walking had become so deeply embedded in our subconscious.

I wondered, too, what it might be like if I lost the ability to walk. One day, the act of walking may become painful and hard, and at some point I may lose this ability altogether. I certainly count my blessings in the present for this gift of walking.

#### *Making Shapes and Having Fun*

Frank gave us more verbal cues, and asked us to make various shapes -- circles, triangles, snakes, and stars -- without allowing us to utter any words. This exercise was a whole lot of fun as evidenced by the exchange of smiles.

#### *Developing Trust*

I volunteered for an exercise. Frank placed a chair close to the doorway. He asked me to close my eyes, and to walk toward the chair. Upon arriving, I was to sit. This was an exercise in developing trust. From the center of the chapel, I moved slowly trying to use my senses. I had no idea how many paces I had before reaching the chair or the doorway. With my eyes closed, I sensed an immense light. I was walking towards the light. For a moment I rethought my position. I knew, however, that the other Alexander Technique teachers were there to catch me should I have fallen. Developing trust. I eventually find my place and sit. Trust.

#### *Beginner's Group Session with Robert II*

After Alexander Technique, we transitioned to a session with Robert. We began with

circulations, which were much more improved in terms of flow, but our common pulse is not yet evident. My sense is that perhaps this is because individually we are thinking too much about what random note to play rather than preparing the note ahead of time. Robert asked for suggestions on how we might improve this. I suggest that the development of a common pulse comes from feeling, relationship, and affirmation.

#### *Pedagogy: Bloom's Taxonomy Applied to Learning Rhythms*

Feeling: the pulse is felt internally as a physical sensation; Relationship: an intellectual understanding of the distance between two notes which suggests the subdivision; Affirmation: where feeling and relationship are interconnected and validated by an external source like a metronome or a group playing together. From the field of education, Benjamin Bloom's *Taxonomy of Learning* might have something to say about feeling, relationship, and affirmation as each being a part of the psychomotor, the cognitive, and the affective domains of theoretical taxonomies.

#### *Odd Meters II: The Return to 5s and 7s*

Robert's next task for the beginner's group was an elaboration of the exercises in 5 and 7 that he introduced to us yesterday. We were divided into two groups, each responsible for one of the meters. The group in 5 was to play a note on beats 1 and 4, and the group responsible for 7 was to play a note on beats 1, 4, and 6. Unable to play, we dropped the guitars and resorted to clapping. Unable to clap, we resorted to a single meter in 5. Unable to deal with the single meter in 5, we resorted to clapping only on downbeats. Unable to clap on only downbeats, well ...

After failing at this, Robert nevertheless decided to up the ante and had us memorize a form. We were divided into 5 smaller circles, with each circle playing a power chord figure in New Standard Tuning in a different position on an assigned beat. The first circle played on beat 1, the second circle played on beat 2, and so on. This was the first section. Each section was 4 measures long. The second section, circles 4 and 5 switch beats. On the third section, circles 1 and 2 merge and play on beat 1, circle 3 remains on beat 3, and circles 4 and 5 merge to play on beat 4. On the fourth and final section, all circles play eighth notes on their respective chord. It was rudimentary and rough in many places but we somewhat held our own as a beginner's group. Nevertheless, there were moments where it almost completely fell apart. Well ...

#### *Pedagogy: On Sequencing and Achieving Success*

I do not think that we were ready for any of these exercises at all. I also think that the way these exercises were sequenced and presented could have been presented more systematically. We need to slow the tempo down of all exercises in order for the brain to apprehend and process what is being asked. Also, we should experience success at particular stages of the exercise before moving forward to more progressive levels of difficulty. If we have not experienced success, then we are not ready to move on, plain and simple. Otherwise, frustration ensues. Systematic and graduated presentation of the exercises and a slow tempo that the brain can adjust to will result in improvement over time.

#### *Setting Up the Circle*

Before breaking for lunch, Robert showed us how to setup the circle. We stand behind our chairs, and we are responsible for our own chair in relation to the circle. We stand behind our chair and when prompted, or ready, we enter the circle from the right and are seated.

## *Irritations*

There are some initial instances of irritations taking place. Some, for example, are playing before and after entering the chapel space. To me, it seems like there is a sense of violation to the attention and the development of awareness of the purpose of what is taking place in the space. In other words, all of the Alexander Technique ideas, the Morning Sitting sessions, and the Visiting of Silence over meals seem to fly out the window when we enter the chapel space.

## *On Ritual*

As I exited the chapel, I made a general comment that there is so much ritual to what we're learning here. Another participant overheard me and replied in a rather snarky way that there is a purpose to the ritual. I agree. Ritual has a definite purpose. I am engaged in Liturgical Studies, for Pete's sake. Perhaps my tone of voice was misinterpreted and she had thought that I had equated ritual with mindlessness.

Speaking of ritual, lunch is in a few minutes. I wonder what comments shall be presented.

*Tuesday, June 2, 2009 Lunch*  
Baked Tofu  
Baby Lima Beans Braised in Lemon

### *Baked Tofu*

1 lb - firm tofu - sliced in eight even slabs

#### Marinade:

1 tablespoon - rice vinegar  
1 tablespoon - toasted sesame oil  
2 tablespoon - soy sauce  
2 teaspoon - sugar  
1/2 teaspoon - ground ginger  
1/2 teaspoon - cumin  
1/2 teaspoon - coriander  
pinch - cayenne

#### Optional:

1/2 teaspoon - garlic powder or minced fresh garlic  
fresh ground black pepper  
chopped scallions

#### Marinating the Tofu:

Make the marinade by shaking in a jar (put the lid on first!)  
Arrange the tofu slices in a flat baking pan.  
Spread the marinade over and under the tofu slices.  
Cover and marinate 1 hour or more in the fridge, turning once or twice if possible.

#### Baking the Tofu:

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.  
Bake 30 minutes in the marinade, uncovered.  
Turn over halfway through the baking.  
Less baking time, if it looks very done halfway through.  
Broil for a few minutes if the tofu isn't golden on both sides.

*Baby Lima Beans Braised in Lemon*

3 tablespoons - unsalted butter at room temperature  
1 1/2 teaspoon - grated lemon zest  
1/3 cup - olive oil  
1 - Jalapeno pepper seeded and minced  
3/4 cup - pine nuts toasted  
6 cups (about 2 lbs) - fresh or frozen baby lima beans  
1 1/4 cup - Water  
juice of 1 lemon  
3/4 tablespoon - coarse sea salt  
1/2 teaspoon - freshly-ground black pepper  
8 - green onions thinly sliced  
1/2 bunch - fresh mint - leaves only cut chiffonade

Mash the butter together with the lemon zest and set aside. In a large heavy skillet heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the jalapeno, pine nuts, lima beans, water, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally, then reduce the heat so that the liquid is simmering. Simmer uncovered for about 8 minutes, until the beans have absorbed all the liquid. If the beans are still not tender and they have absorbed all the water, add a little more hot water. When the beans are tender, stir in the green onions and remove from the heat. Stir in the lemon butter and the mint, taste for seasoning, and serve immediately.

To toast pine nuts, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spread the nuts on a cookie sheet and toast in the oven until golden, about 15 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Yields 6 servings.

**Tuesday, June 2, 2009 - 2.16 PM**

*Irritations II: Robert's Comment at Lunch*

Robert is tired of dealing with people who can not count to 5 or 7, much less count to 1. Certain necessities in his life has prompted him to move forward and to deal with other arisings, which necessarily excludes dealing with people who cannot count. This mini-burst of frustration had the effect of motivating the group to resume practicing in the afternoon in an attempt to assuage the master.

**Tuesday, June 2, 2009 - 4.32 PM**

*A Course Within a Course: Mistakes, and How to Make Them!*

Tom Redmond, one of the experienced team members, led a so-called *course within a course* that dealt with making mistakes during performance. We were composed of a mixed group of beginners and intermediates. We began with a circulation to get things started. Then, Tom showed us a song in 40 beats: 19 notes and 21 rests. We had good success with this even if we were not able to get through the whole piece. Tom is a good teacher. He is systematic and delivers in small manageable chunks of information.

Tom gradually increased the difficulty level with speed and alternations until we made some mistakes. Once the mistakes were made we paused to analyze why these were happening. We also shed some light on some of the physical reactions we express when we make

mistakes. Tom's suggestion was to put those mistakes aside and to analyze them after the performance, not during. I was reminded of stage acting. If someone misses a line, or a cue, or otherwise makes a mistake, the show continues. The actor would not break character to acknowledge the mistake in front of the crowd. The show must go on.

### ***Tuesday, June 2, 2009 - 5.41 PM***

#### *Personal Meeting II: Developing Wrist Technique*

I had a personal meeting scheduled with Luciano Pietrafesa, guitar buddy and Tai Chi master. In continuing to work on the right hand and picking, the focus of our lesson was on developing wrist technique.

The pivot point is right at the wrist. The forearm takes the wrist and hand from string to string. As Martin had done before, Luciano demonstrated for me the advantage of these techniques when playing at a brisk tempo. He also gave me an exercise to practice:

#### *Luciano's Exercise Solution*

Begin with downstrokes on an open string at a tempo of 60 beats per minute, then add upstrokes thus subdividing the quarter note into equal eighth notes. When comfortable, add sixteenth notes. Then, mix with variations on sixteenth notes: two sixteenths and one eighth; a sixteenth, an eighth, followed by a sixteenth, and so on and so forth. Then, skip strings. There are lots of variations possible and the idea is to continually alternate downstrokes and upstrokes.

### ***Tuesday, June 2, 2009 - 8.35 PM***

Had the second of two Tai Chi sessions today with Luciano running a little late from finishing personal meetings. As he rushed to the gathering area, Robert looked at his watch and left.

Dinner was superb.

#### *Tuesday, June 2, 2009 Dinner*

Rotini with Garlic Tomato Sauce  
Roasted Broccoli  
Cashew Cream Squares

#### *Rotini with Garlic Tomato Sauce*

2 lbs - can whole tomatoes  
2 heads - garlic with cloves peeled and halved lengthwise  
6 tablespoons - extra-virgin olive oil  
3/4 teaspoon - hot red-pepper flakes  
1 lb - rotini

Cut an X on bottom of each tomato and blanch in a large pot of boiling water for 10 seconds. Immediately transfer tomatoes with a slotted spoon to an ice bath to cool, then peel, seed, and chop.

Cook garlic in oil in a small heavy pot over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until golden for 3 to 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, red-pepper flakes, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, 1 hour. Season with salt.

If ripe tomatoes are not available, substitute 1 (28-ounce) can whole tomatoes in juice (not in purée; preferably San Marzano), chopped, including juice; season sauce with sugar if desired.

Yields 4 servings.

*Roasted Broccoli*

1 head - broccoli - washed and cut into florets  
2 teaspoons - olive oil  
1 - lemon - juiced  
Sea salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees fahrenheit. Use a large bowl to toss broccoli florets with olive oil. Lay florets in a single layer on a baking sheet. Evenly distribute sea salt and pepper. Bake until tender, usually around 15 minutes. Right after you take the florets out of the oven, drizzle with fresh lemon juice. Try oven-roasted broccoli by itself or with any whole grain like quinoa or brown rice.

*Cashew Cream Squares*

3/4 cup - cashews - raw  
1 1/3 cup - walnuts - raw  
1 1/4 cup - coconut - sugar-free, shredded  
8 - dates - soft pitted  
1/4 teaspoon - sea salt  
2 1/2 tablespoon - agave nectar

In A 7-cup Cuisinart, process cashews and walnuts until crumbly. Add dates, salt, and 3/4 cup of coconut, blend for a minute or so, then add the agave nectar.

Turn on the food processor and watch carefully! Once the oil begins to separate from the nuts about 3 minutes (you'll see it start clinging to the sides of the processor) the batter is done.

Press the batter down into a 4x9 glass pan (the oil will rise to the top, but do not pour it off!) Then sprinkle the remaining coconut over the oil-topped batter and place in refrigerator. Once the oil congeals, the coconut becomes the frosting. You can add more coconut until all of the oil is absorbed.

Once chilled, cut into Squares.

Yields 10 servings.

Bill Reiflin has returned and is leading a workshop on time. Leo, one of the other guitar buddies is leading a session on Guitar Craft repertoire. Most others are heading into the chapel for a *House of Guitars*.

*Irritations III: A Tipping Point and Getting to Work*

My sense is that today was a tipping point for many. People's various irritation levels are coming into the foreground. Of course, this was to be expected. Anytime you cram a whole

bunch of strangers together into a place with little space and with little time to get acquainted with the idiosyncrasies of people's personalities, you are bound to get irritated. It even says so in the *Guitar Craft House Rules!* One of the intermediates reminded the whole course of the sacredness of silence during meal times.

The participants are trying desperately to get to work on the exercises at hand in between sessions. I am hearing less noodling, and less overcreativity, and more basic and fundamental work being accomplished in small, informal rehearsal groups.

## ***Tuesday, June 2, 2009 - 11.29 PM***

### *Two Fripp Smiles in One Day*

I just remembered something about this morning. Robert Fripp smiled at me on the way to chapel for morning sitting. I mouthed back a sheepish "Good Morning" in reply. Then, he smiled at me again while I was on my way to chapel for Alexander Technique. Two Robert Fripp smiles in one day!

### *Guitar Craft Repertoire*

I chose to work with Leo this evening on Guitar Craft Repertoire. Our rehearsal space was the so-called *Intermediate Zone*. While we were rearranging chairs and tables, Leo admonished some of us to pick up our chairs rather than dragging them across the floor.

"Hey guys, how about a little attention to what we're doing here. Rather than dragging the chairs, lift them."

In some ways, Leo admonishing us was not unlike a school teacher getting annoyed at school children for being careless. With all of the directed attention exercises, it is amazing that something as simple as dragging chairs and potentially damaging furniture or carpet is still beyond the awareness of some of our members.

After getting situated, Leo led us in a directed listening exercise. Starting near and venturing outward, we were instructed to listen to the various layers of ambient sound present. We brought attention to ourselves, our group, and our left hands. Then, we proceeded to learn a piece called *Theme One*.

The piece began with a series of random harmonics which gradually gave way to an eighth-note arpeggio figure: "1 - 3 - 5 - 3; major7 - 3 - 5 - 3; major6 - 3 - 5 - 3" with various other parts including a bass line that implied a harmonic progression that went: "Imajor ; IIIminor; VIminor; IIIminor; Imajor."

While we were learning the piece, I also tried to incorporate the various alternating picking strategies that both Martin and Luciano equipped me with earlier. I am having trouble keeping the alternate picking going especially since it seems more efficient to use strokes that coordinate with the direction of the forearm or wrist.

As we added more parts to the song, the *rushing* devil reared its ugly head again. Leo somehow remembered my comment about rushing from yesterday and said,

"It's not you not being able to move forward, but the group who is not able to keep time."

### *Release and Return: Listening Before Speaking*

Leo's directed listening exercise provided a new insight based on release and return, giving and receiving, and listening before speaking. There are a few ways to look at this. In one sense, perhaps we release our need to blab incessantly, or to play notes on the guitar without due regard, and instead focus our attention on returning to access the quality of the intentions present in the person we are with, or the people in the room. Another way to look at this is to allow what is around us to release its energy. By using a directed listening exercise, we make ourselves available to what is present before returning with a response in due kind.

*Answers? Answers!*

Perhaps in more vulgar terms, we ought to just shut up and listen before offering anything of value in return. Perhaps, in a way, it is an *inverse* reminder of what Robert had prompted us with when participants ask questions. So, instead of wondering whether participants are asking the right questions, for the right person, at the right time, perhaps we should ask: Are we offering the right answers, for the right person, at the right time?

To sleep.

### ***Wednesday, June 3, 2009 - 1.50 PM***

It has been a long morning with plenty of activity and learning. After morning sitting and breakfast, I volunteered for eating area and kitchen clean up duty. Incidentally, there is a call for volunteers for various clean up duties following each meal and so today, I decided to earn my keep.

We began clean up in the kitchen with a *Short Beginning* and we brought attention to the body and the hands. At the half-hour mark, we would pause whatever it was we were doing, to bring attention once again to the body and the hands.

#### *Alexander Technique Imagination with Brad*

Alexander Technique lesson began slightly before I had completed clean up duty. Brad had us lay on the floor and we brought attention to the spine and our bodies' various connecting points with the ground. While still on the ground, Brad introduced us to a balancing hand exercise.

It began with us imagining ourselves cradled in the hand of God. Then, with our palms up we cradled an imaginary person in our hands and we made 'spirals' such that our palms were always up and that the imaginary person we cradled in our hands did not fall off.

Brad had us take this concept further. We imagined a giant plate rested in the middle of the room. He had us jump onto the imaginary plate. The object was to imagine how to balance the plate as people jumped on and so we had to move continually and fluidly in order to continue balancing the imaginary plate.

Our next exercise was another movement exercise where we stood in a circle, found a partner across the room, each moved toward the center, met in the middle, switched places, and walked toward the other person's previous spot within the circle. Remarkably, we all completed this exercise without bumping into anyone else. It seems with all of our awareness training, we had a much better sense of the room. A participant brought up the point of how many times we enter a room without a sense of awareness, or the people inhabiting the space within the room.

Following these exercises, Brad gave us an overview of what we had completed for the last lesson. Good teacher!

### *Better Time with Robert*

After Robert's admonition at lunch yesterday, everyone got their butt in gear and started working on their time feel. Collectively, the group's time feel improved immensely and there also seems to be common pulse emerging.

As with all of the other sessions, we began with a circulation in a fairly steady tempo. It also seemed like we were willingly in control where if, as a group, we wanted to slow it down, or speed it up we could, at will. All of the individual and small group work with metronomes seemed like it paid off.

Robert then set up a vamp for the group and he gave everyone an opportunity to 'SOLO!' He pointed to people at random and most people had a run with it. Robert's humour really came out today. He actively encouraged people to 'SOLO!' and he gave thumbs-ups and smiles. Occasionally, he uttered 'BURNING HANDS!' or 'HOT STUFF!' And, when Robert utters, everyone lightens up.

He pointed at me, and I thought I would be clever by playing a single note while alternating the dynamic level. Perhaps I was paying homage to the 13/8 figure he played on the song *Starless* from the *King Crimson* album *Red*. Well, he cut me off with a smile and said 'TOO SUBTLE!' I shrugged and smiled in return as he pointed to the person next to me. Midway through that person's solo, Robert pointed back to me. Surprised, I played a little more actively to which he cut me off once more and with face scrunched up said 'NOT SUBTLE ENOUGH!'

### *Division of Attention*

Following the solo excursions, we returned to our work on polyrhythms. Robert initially divided our group into two with one group responsible for *thrakking* in 5/4 and the other in 7/4. Thrak was the name of a King Crimson album that came out in the mid-nineties. Robert has also referred to thrak (and, by extension thrakking) as "the sound of 117 guitars almost striking the same chord simultaneously."<sup>6</sup> Those in the 5 group played a chord on beats 1 and 4, while the 7 group played a chord on beats 1, 4, and 6. At one point, Robert added a third group which was responsible for playing in 11/4. This group played a chord on beats 1, 4, 7, and 10. Surprisingly, our overall time feel improved and we were actually able to concentrate on holding all of the rhythms together.

Robert then initiated a *whizz*, which is a circulation using the old power chord shape in Guitar Craft standard tuning. Again, it seemed that with our newfound confidence and focus on time feel, we were able to speed up as a group at will.

Not only has the overall musicality improved but also a real sense of attention to the moment and is emerging more strongly. When we enter the chapel space, there is less aimless noodling. Thus, silence has the capacity to speak.

Then, to lunch.

---

6

[http://www.elephant-talk.com/wiki/FAQ\\_-\\_What\\_Does\\_It\\_All\\_Mean%3F#What\\_does\\_.27THRAK.27\\_mean.3F](http://www.elephant-talk.com/wiki/FAQ_-_What_Does_It_All_Mean%3F#What_does_.27THRAK.27_mean.3F)

*Wednesday, June 3, 2009 Lunch*

My Mama's Hommous  
Egg Salad  
Szechwan Carrot Soup

*My Mama's Hommous*

2 - garlic cloves  
1 (19 ounce) can - chickpeas - drained and rinsed  
2/3 cup - olive oil  
1/2 cup - tahini  
4 tablespoons - fresh lemon juice  
1 teaspoon - salt  
1/2 teaspoon - cumin

Garnish:  
cumin  
parsley  
olive oil  
paprika

Food process all and garnish with any of the above.  
Yields 4 servings.

*Egg Salad*

2 - eggs - hard-boiled  
1 teaspoon - minced onion  
1/8 teaspoon - celery seed  
1/8 teaspoon - Dijon mustard  
2 tablespoons - mayonnaise  
1 dash - salt and pepper

Finely chop hard boiled eggs with a pastry blender or knife and fork.  
Add onion, celery seed, dijon, mayo, and mix well.

Yields 1 serving.

*Szechwan Carrot Soup*

1 medium - onion - chopped  
1 - celery rib - chopped  
1 - garlic clove - minced  
1 teaspoon - vegetable oil  
1 pound - carrots - cut into 1-inch pieces  
3/4-inch piece - fresh gingerroot - peeled and sliced thin  
1/8 teaspoon - dried hot red pepper flakes  
3 cups - chicken broth  
1 1/2 tablespoons - soy sauce  
1 1/2 tablespoons - creamy peanut butter  
1 teaspoon - sugar  
1 teaspoon - sesame oil  
1 cup - milk

Garnish:  
1/4 cup sour cream mixed with 2 tablespoons heavy cream

In a large heavy saucepan cook onion, celery, and garlic in oil over moderately low heat, stirring, until onion is softened. Add carrots, ginger root, red pepper flakes, and broth and simmer, covered, until carrots are very tender, about 45 minutes.

Stir in remaining ingredients and in a blender purée mixture in batches (use caution when blending hot liquids). Return soup to pan and heat over low heat until hot, being careful not to let boil. Serve soup drizzled decoratively with sour cream mixture.

### **Wednesday, June 3, 2009 - 4.45 PM**

#### *Sessions with Guitar Buddies Martin and Luciano*

At 3.15 we gathered in the chapel for a session with Guitar Buddy Martin. We worked on diatonic notes in C major across 5 strings. With 3 notes per string and using all downstrokes, the experienced folks called this the *Third Primary*.

After a short break for tea, it was back in the chapel for a session with Guitar Buddy Luciano. He introduced us to *Theme Two*, which, like *Theme One*, began with a constellation of sparkly harmonics. And, like *Theme One*, this piece had a gradual introduction of a basic arpeggio pattern but this time in 6/8: "6 - 6 - 3 - 5 - 3 - 6; 7 - 6 - 3 - 5 - 3 - 6; 1 - 6 - 3 - 5 - 3 - 6" In a way, *Theme Two* is a minor key elaboration of the major key *Theme One*. I had a lot of fun learning this material but it was torturous on my hands keeping the arpeggio patterns going.

It seems like the organizing team has Luciano working fairly hard. At 6.30, he will lead us in another session of Tai Chi. Then, to dinner!

#### *Wednesday, June 3, 2009 Dinner*

Tom Redmond's Famous Nut Sausage  
Thyme-Roasted Sweet Potatoes  
Lemon Curd Marbled Cheesecake

*Tom Redmond's Famous Nut Sausage*  
1 cup - Bread Crumbs  
1/4 cup - Butter - melted  
1 cup - Rice - cooked  
1 1/2 cups - Walnuts - chopped  
2 Eggs - beaten  
1/4 teaspoon - Celery Seed  
1 tablespoon - Soy Sauce  
1 tablespoon - Worcestershire Sauce  
1/2 teaspoon - Sage - dried  
1/4 teaspoon - Thyme - dried  
3 tablespoon - Parsley - minced  
2 tablespoon - Onion - scraped  
1/2 teaspoon - Black Pepper - coarsley ground  
taste - Salt

Combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Toss together with forks to blend thoroughly. Take up by handfuls and form into round, flattish patties about 3/4 inch thick. Pat gently together so that they bind but are not tightly packed. Heat a very little lard in a heavy skillet and brown the patties quickly on both sides over high heat. Reduce heat to low and cook them gently until done, 7 to 8 minutes, turning them once more in the process.

Serves 6 or 8.

*Thyme-Roasted Sweet Potatoes*

4 medium - sweet potatoes - peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch-thick rounds  
3 tablespoons - olive oil  
4 large - garlic cloves - minced  
1/3 cup - fresh thyme leaves - plus 6 thyme sprigs for garnish  
1/2 teaspoon - kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon - red pepper flakes

Preheat oven to 450°F. In large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients and toss. Arrange potato slices in single layer on heavyweight rimmed baking sheet or in 13x9-inch baking dish. Place on top rack of oven and roast until tender and slightly browned, about 40 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature, garnished with thyme sprigs.

*Lemon Curd Marbled Cheesecake*

For lemon curd:

1 teaspoon - finely grated fresh lemon zest  
1/2 cup - fresh lemon juice  
1/2 cup - sugar  
3 large - eggs  
1/2 stick (1/4 cup) - unsalted butter - cut into small pieces

For crust:

1 1/3 cups (5 oz) - graham cracker -finely ground  
1/3 cup - sugar  
1/8 teaspoon - salt  
5 tablespoons - unsalted butter - melted

For filling:

3 (8 oz) packages - cream cheese - softened  
1 cup - sugar  
3 large - eggs  
3/4 cup - sour cream  
1 teaspoon - vanilla

Make lemon curd:

Whisk together zest, juice, sugar, and eggs in a 2-quart heavy saucepan. Add butter and cook over moderately low heat, whisking frequently, until curd is thick enough to hold marks of whisk and first bubbles appear on surface, about 6 minutes.

Force lemon curd through a fine-mesh sieve into a wide shallow dish, scraping bottom of sieve, then cover surface with wax paper. Cool completely, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes.

Make and bake crust:

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 350°F. Invert bottom of springform pan (to make it easier to slide cake off bottom), then lock on side. Stir together crust ingredients in a bowl, then press onto bottom and 1 inch up side of springform pan. Place springform pan in a shallow baking pan and bake 10 minutes, then cool crust completely in springform pan on a rack.

Make filling and bake cheesecake:  
Reduce oven temperature to 300°F.

Beat together cream cheese and sugar in a bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed until smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low and add eggs 1 at a time, beating until incorporated. Beat in sour cream and vanilla until combined.

Pour two thirds of cream cheese filling into crust, then spoon half of lemon curd over filling and swirl curd into filling with a small knife. (Avoid touching crust with knife to prevent crumbs getting into filling.) Repeat with remaining filling and curd.

Bake cheesecake until set 1 1/2 inches from edge but center trembles when pan is gently shaken, about 45 minutes. (Center of cake will appear very loose but will continue to set as it cools.) Transfer springform pan to a rack and immediately run a knife around top edge of cake to loosen. Cool completely, about 2 hours, then chill, uncovered, at least 4 hours. Remove side of springform pan before serving.

### **Wednesday, June 3, 2009 - Late**

#### *Entering The Circle*

We met with Robert in the chapel at 9.30. He sat us down and introduced us to the Guitar Craft convention of *entering the circle*.

We enter into the circle, walk around the inside perimeter, and we take the first available seat. Otherwise, we keep walking around until we find a seat. If seat adjustments are to be made, we make them from behind our seats, and then re enter the circle on the right. It seems to me that these directions have practical implications. Everyone agreeing to move in a particular direction will mean that no one will bump into another person.

#### *The Challenge*

Following this discussion, Robert then issued the beginner's group a challenge. We saw this coming, and I had read about it in Eric Tamm's book. We are to present a work for the larger ensemble and a smaller group. These songs were to be presented tomorrow evening in the chapel. From a hat, Robert drew names at random and arranged a sextet, a quintet, a quartet, a trio, a duo, and a soloist. After the names were drawn, Robert announced that the chapel would be available to us until 5.00 AM. He walked out and one of our group read the names out loud. I was placed in the quintet group.

We convened in the dining hall to make some sense of our challenge. Immediately, 25 different ideas begin to coalesce. We also agree upon a time to meet and we set a time limit for our large group rehearsal this evening. A short break to meet in our small groups to discuss various approaches. And ... I volunteer to help moderate by virtue of my experience as a conductor. A few moments after speaking up, I thought to myself: "What have I gotten myself into?"

### **Wednesday, June 3, 2009 - Later**

## *Serving Others*

After the small group meeting, I retreated into a corner, pulled out a sheet of paper, and jotted down some notes for how I was going to try to manage our group. We had a little less than 24 hours to come up with an ensemble piece and a small group piece, and I could see that this whole large group endeavor could turn into a giant waste of time and into a massive ball of frustration. My teacher training taught me ways of being efficient and of sequencing approaches in order to achieving aims. Our aim was to come up with a group piece. I thought I could be of *service* to the large group aim. And, how do you democratically manage a group of 25 creative individual adults?

I thank you for this privilege, and I'm honored to moderate. Now that we are here, I will honour your creativity and when it comes to deciding an idea I will impose a time limit and maximum of 10 minutes for any idea at which point I reserve the right to call for a motion on the idea and that becomes binding for the group. If at the conclusion of the presentation of ideas we are stuck, I have a plan for a form as a failsafe. If we are not amenable to these conditions, then I will politely resign as your moderator.

I folded my note in my pocket and with guitar in hand walked toward the chapel slightly unsure of what would follow.

### *Moderator? or Benevolent Dictator!*

The modus operandi I spent 15 minutes devising in my corner went out the window as soon as I entered the chapel space. I proceeded to improvise, attempting to best maintain a sense of democracy and understanding, while honoring individual ideas and everyone's sanity. Several operational ideas emerged from the circle and included a suggestion that I change my role from moderator or conductor to *benevolent dictator* I was okay with this.

Someone from the circle, however, was not okay with the energy in the room. I agreed. I made a chance decision that I believe set everything in motion in the right way. The person who was tasked the solo performance tomorrow evening was sitting immediately to my left and I asked him to present a musical idea to the group. It was simply three notes with simple strokes. Most people seemed agreeable to those three notes as it was being taught around the circle. I sensed signs of mini-resistance as others presented alternate ideas and others improvised on the theme. I suggested to the group that perhaps we follow a systematic process of honoring the initial idea first. Some bristled at the suggestion, but most honoured the request.

### *A Point of Seeing II*

I began to think more and more that this large group challenge was not a musical exercise at all. It was an exercise in bringing about attention and awareness to one another and of trying to invoke the muse in a loving way. If every person has an idea, does every idea need to be presented? Would there be a need for restraint? I also sensed that there was a genuine desire and ample goodwill to get on with the project, but how do we do this? Well, everyone's got an idea about that too.

So, the benevolent dictator made his first proclamation: base the basic form of our piece on *Theme One*, with a basic arpeggio, a harmony arpeggio, a bass line, and a lead line. The first suggestions from the floor were honoured. And the second proclamation this benevolent dictator made was to adopt those ideas.

Tired and restless, we adjourned for the evening. Most went to sleep, but others got right

to work in their small groups. For me, to sleep.

**Thursday, June 4, 2009 - 2.38 PM**

*Irritations IV: Executive Decisions*

I skipped morning sitting in order to get a few more minutes of shuteye. At breakfast today, I acknowledged our group's desire for me to announce a time to meet to continue the work we had begun last night. The general procedure at meal time was to "clink" glasses before making announcements. After I clinked and announced our meeting time, one of the course *executives* asked out loud,

"Was that an executive decision?"

"I was asked to speak on behalf of the group."

"... are you an executive in real life?"

I did not understand the intention behind the question and whether it was meant to be malicious or sarcastic, but in any event, I replied,

"... in a manner of speaking, yes."

Perhaps she may have had a meeting planned for the space, or perhaps she was upset that she or the other course executives had not been consulted. In any event, I went to her at lunch and apologized if I had offended her. She looked at me quizzically and said,

"I don't know what you're talking about, so, you're fine."

I was a little taken aback by the remark. Perhaps, I should not have been seeking forgiveness when it really was not sought. On my part, I was simply trying to clear up any potential misunderstanding. Maybe, she was just saying that the moment had passed and that there was not anything to it. I would like to think that was it.

*Thursday, June 4, 2009 Lunch*

Apple and Aged Cheddar Grilled Cheese  
Russian Cabbage Borscht

*Apple and Aged Cheddar Grilled Cheese*  
1 tablespoon - unsalted butter, softened  
2 slices - wheat bread  
1 ounce - extra-sharp aged cheddar cheese - thinly sliced  
3 slices - granny smith apple - thinly sliced

Heat a large frying pan over medium-low heat. Meanwhile, spread butter on 1 side of each slice of bread. Once the pan is warm, add 1 slice of bread buttered side down, then top with 1/2 of the cheese, all of the apple slices, and finally the remaining cheese. Close sandwich with second slice of bread, buttered side up. Cook until bread is toasted and cheese is melted, about 3 minutes per side.

*Russian Cabbage Borscht*

2 tablespoons - butter  
1 1/2 cups - chopped onion  
1 1/2 cups - beets - sliced thin  
1 1/2 cups - potato - sliced thin  
2 - carrots  
2 stalks - chopped celery  
3 cups - chopped cabbage  
1 teaspoon - caraway seeds  
4 cups - stock or water  
2 teaspoon - salt  
pepper  
1/2 teaspoon - dill weed  
1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon - cider vinegar

1 cup - tomato puree OR 1 cup - tomato sauce + 1 cup - tomatoes

Place potatoes, beets and water in a saucepan. Cook until tender. Save water.

Begin cooking the onions in the butter in a large kettle. Add caraway seeds and salt.

Cook until onion is translucent. Add celery, carrots and cabbage. Add water saved, cover, and cook until all vegetables are tender. Add potatoes, beets and all remaining ingredients.

Cover and simmer slowly for at least 30 minutes. Taste to correct seasonings.

Serve topped with sour cream, extra dill weed, chopped fresh tomatoes.

Robert presented his ideas about performance post-lunch.

#### *Six Principles of the Performance Event*

1. The Principle of Common Presence: When people get together with music, something happens.
2. The Principle of Mutual Adjustment: In a performance, things come together, mysteriously; and go better than we might anticipate; and better than we deserve.
3. The Principle of Organization and Disorganization: A performance can take on a life and character of its own.
4. The Principle of Multiple Existence: Any one performance is a multiplicity of performances.
5. The Principle of Connectedness and Independence: The possible is possible.
6. The Principle of Normality: The impossible is possible.

Music so wishes to be heard that sometimes it calls on unlikely characters to give it voice, and ears. This wishing-to-be heard calls into existence the Performance Event; where music, musician, and audience may come together as one, in communion. This communion has six different forms of being and experiencing itself (plus an invisible seventh); and these forms, or principles, are simultaneously present within the Performance.

Trust the Event.

(The Seventh Principle resides within Silence.)

[\*]

**Thursday, June 4, 2009 - 6.53 PM**

*Honouring the Process*

Skipped the Tai Chi session right before dinner for a quick runthrough of our small group piece. My sense is that the small groups are getting more and more organized. And, people are really respecting the process, or they are abstaining from offering ideas just to get the whole thing together and be done with it.

*Band Names and Song Titles*

At one point, someone came up with a name for the large ensemble: *The Arrhythmics*. It was an appropriate homage to our collective inability to count to 5 or 7 consistently, and perhaps let alone count to 1. One of the experienced Crafties even had time to put together a poster for us. We also came up with a name for our song: *Latitude*. Perhaps we were asking our audience for forgiveness in advance of our performance.

Since one of our small group members' name was Alex, we decided to call our quintet *Alexander and the Techniques*. The song name? *Shoes*. It was a blues in 5/4.

[\*]

*Servant Leadership*

It has been interesting for me to serve as a leader of sorts. Many individuals are coming up to me in private with various suggestions and while I deeply wish to honour as many of those ideas as possible, it is next to impossible to actually carry out. One person's idea is another's bane. And, so it goes. Perhaps learning more about the art of leadership will allow me to better understand people in these situations, particularly when I am working with people older than me, more experienced than me, and so forth. My intentions are genuine: I want to give, to be of service, and to return and release that which had been given so freely to me.

*Thursday, June 4, 2009 Dinner*

Chickpea Cutlet  
Vegetarian Mushroom Gravy Recipe  
Curried Roasted Cauliflower

*Chickpea Cutlet*  
1 cup - cooked chickpeas  
2 tablespoons - olive oil  
1/2 cup - vital wheat gluten  
1/2 cup - plain breadcrumbs  
1/4 cup - vegetable broth or water  
2 tablespoons - soy sauce  
2 - garlic cloves - pressed or grated  
1/2 teaspoon - lemon zest  
1/2 teaspoon - dried thyme  
1/2 teaspoon - Hungarian paprika  
1/4 teaspoon - dried rubbed sage

olive oil - for pan frying

Mash the chickpeas and oil together until no whole chickpeas remain. Add remaining ingredients and knead for 3 minutes until strings of gluten have formed. Preheat large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Divide dough into four equal pieces. Flatten each piece and stretch to roughly 4x6 inches. Add a thin layer of olive oil to the pan. Place cutlets in the pan and cook on each side for 6 to 7 minutes. They are ready when lightly brown and firm to the touch. Yields 4 servings.

*Vegetarian Mushroom Gravy Recipe*

3/4 cup - white or button mushrooms - chopped  
1 small - yellow or white onion - minced  
1/4 cup - butter  
2 1/2 cups - vegetable broth  
2 tablespoon - soy sauce  
1/4 cup - flour  
1 tablespoon - poultry seasoning - or 1/2 tsp each of sage, thyme, and marjoram  
salt and pepper to taste

In a large skillet, melt the butter and add onion and mushrooms. Saute for just a minute or two over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and add vegetable broth and soy sauce. Slowly add flour, stirring well to combine and prevent lumps from forming. Bring to a simmer or a low boil, then reduce heat. Add poultry seasoning, salt and pepper, stirring constantly. Allow to cook for 8-10 minutes, stirring regularly, until gravy thickens.

*Curried Roasted Cauliflower*

1 head - cauliflower - cut into small florets  
1/3 cup - extra virgin olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon - salt  
1/8 teaspoon - freshly ground pepper  
1 tablespoon - Madras curry powder or Garam masala  
1 tablespoon - black or yellow mustard seeds

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Toss all the ingredients in a bowl and spread evenly on a rimmed baking sheet or in a large roasting pan. Try not to crowd the cauliflower; otherwise, it will steam and you won't get the delicious caramelized bits. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes, shaking the pan and stirring the cauliflower midway through roasting. Transfer to a serving dish and taste for seasoning; you may need another sprinkling of salt and a grinding of fresh pepper. Yields 4 servings.

**Friday, June 5, 2009 - 12.36 AM**

*When Ready, Begin II*

Following dinner, we got our performance space setup. And, with doors opening at 9.15 pm, we gathered in the dining hall to tune and to prepare. I was asked to lead our group with centering exercise. Following this, we lined up and entered the chapel and the circle in the way Robert taught us.

As we walked in, we were greeted with genuine and enthusiastic applause. There was such a tremendous sense of authenticity and affection in the way that we were greeted that I was moved close to tears. Making our revolution around the circle, we noticed something

had gone awry: a chair has been misplaced and a stool went missing. The joke was on, and the audience jeered.

We figured out where the missing furniture went, rearranged, and began the show. Sitting in unison, and after settling for a few moments, we began our large ensemble piece *Latitude*. For the sake of maintaining cohesion in the group with the various entrances, I abstained from playing the guitar and instead cued the various entrances. We played well and with confidence to what seemed like the delight of the audience. Robert sat stoically in front.

Then, the various small ensembles performed their pieces, and our quintet *Alexander and the Techniques* led off. We had a lot of fun with our piece. We incorporated a mini-*whizz* and we incorporated vocals to words that our namesake member Alex wrote. It was a fun collaboration. The rest of the groups performed admirably amidst the heckling and jeering of the audience. At one point, Tom, one of the experienced crafties who led us in the seminar on *Mistakes*, shrieked at the top of his lungs and ran out of the chapel, only to return a few minutes later with fake exasperation. Another audience member sat in lotus position for most of the performance and meditated. Others still were shining LED lights in our faces, or otherwise making silly commentary out-loud. It was all in good fun and if the intent was to throw us off our game plan, it did not really succeed. My sense was that our groups were focussed and perhaps all of our training during the week in attention and awareness had really paid off.

### *Kairos*

The solo performer for the evening played his piece and for me it was a kairos moment. Time froze, and everyone, including Robert, was still. Robert closed his eyes as he seemed to savor each note that came out of the soloist's guitar. The heckling and the jeering stopped as if the audience had truly recognized something spectacular. Perhaps, that moment gave credence to the Guitar Craft aphorism "sometimes music leans over and takes us into its confidence." At the conclusion of his piece, the soloist held the silence, and we held the silence with him. The soloist's arm rested, and it seemed like we exhaled in unison. Enthusiastic and rapturous applause ensued led by Robert.

### *Chronos*

We concluded our performance and exited back into the dining hall. We congratulated the soloist and one another on our gig. Some were dissatisfied with their performance, others were lukewarm. All in all, I thought we had done well.

As we took time to revel in amazement at our accomplishment, one of the audience members came into the dining room and relayed the request that Robert wanted us to perform our entire set one more time. So, once again, we lined up, entered the chapel, and performed the whole set as requested. For me, this second set did not have the same magic as the first.

We all adjourned into the dining hall for dessert and conversation. Eventually, I made my way back to the bunk completely exhausted. To sleep.

### *The Ultimate Brownie*

8 - 1 ounce squares of unsweetened chocolate  
1 cup - butter  
5 - eggs  
3 cups - sugar

1 tablespoon - vanilla  
1-1/2 cups - flour  
1 teaspoon - salt  
2-1/2 cups - chopped pecans or walnuts - toasted

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Grease a 9 x 13 pan. Melt chocolate and butter in a saucepan over low heat; set aside. In a mixer, beat eggs, sugar and vanilla at high speed for 10 minutes. Blend in chocolate mixture, flour and salt until just mixed. Stir in the nuts. Pour into prepared pan. Bake for 35-40 minutes. Don't overbake. Cool and frost if desired, but that is not necessary.

### **Friday, June 5, 2009 - 11.02 AM**

#### *Conversation, Contradiction, Criticism*

I slept right through morning sitting since my body decided it needed more sleep. Various comments and reflections emerged after breakfast. A member of the beginner's group acknowledged my work as a leader. I spoke and reflected upon my functional role which I was happy to undertake.

An experienced Crafty made mention his disappointment that a collective intelligence did not emerge. In other words, it is too bad that a leader had to be appointed in order to direct the wishes of the group. In hindsight, I agree. If I had to experience Guitar Craft again, I would abstain from taking on the task of facilitating.

As a school teacher, I am trained to be efficient in anticipating potential issues. I saw that when when our groups were formed on Wednesday evening working on the development of a large ensemble piece could have been a disaster for three reasons. The first, is because of the number of voices present in trying to achieve a kind of consensus might have been impossible. Second, it would only be a matter of time before frustration would set in, and then a kind of desperation would ensue shortly thereafter. Third, we had a limited amount of time to put something together as a large group, and we needed the time to create small group pieces. I wanted to spare the group the pain from the potential frustration and desperation, but perhaps I was being presumptuous in volunteering for the role. Then again, the group accepted. They could have easily dismissed me.

Another comment emerged from one of the experienced Crafties. She happened to be in the *Intermediate Zone* during our first meeting getting our large ensemble together. She would have liked to have been asked for guidance from the beginner group. Another experienced Crafty queried her initial comment: why didn't she see the need to offer her help to the beginners?

My sense was that asking for help depends upon the degree of established relationship. I do not think that any of us beginners felt comfortable enough to ask any of the experienced players for help. No help was offered by any of the intermediates through the whole week, so perhaps the beginners felt that it was not normative to ask.

Guitar Buddy martin suggested that we should have assembled a better set list. We also should have rehearsed the show from top to bottom, he suggested.

All good comments in reflection. The experience has been had. If things had gone differently, the experience would not have been the same.

Now, a guitar setup session with Igor, one of the local team members. He turned my acoustic guitar into a playable machine. He loved the resonance of my Epiphone and called it *awesome*. A nice complement to the guitar by a totally burning player.

*Friday, June 5, 2009 Lunch*

Lebanese Vegetable Soup  
Bread and Salad

*Lebanese Vegetable Soup*

1 large - Spanish onion - chopped  
2 tablespoons - olive oil  
2 1/2 cups - chopped carrots  
1/4 teaspoon - ground red pepper  
1 teaspoon - ground coriander  
2-4 - garlic cloves - minced  
1 1/2 cups - chopped potatoes  
1 teaspoon - salt  
5 cups - vegetable stock  
2 large - tomatoes - chopped  
28 oz - artichoke hearts - cut into eighths  
3/4 cup - chickpeas - canned  
1/4 cup - chopped fresh parsley  
2 - lemons - cut into wedges

vegetable stock - use a combination of vegetable stock,  
the chick pea liquid, and the artichoke heart brine.

In a large soup pot, saute the onion in the olive oil for about 5 minutes.

Stir in the carrots. Cover. Stir again after 3 minutes.

Add the ground red pepper, coriander, and garlic. Cover and cook for a few more minutes.

Add the potatoes, salt, and 2 cups of the stock. Cover the pot and bring the soup to a boil.

Reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes are nearly tender. Be careful not to overcook them. Gently stir in the tomatoes, artichoke hearts, and the chick peas. Salt to taste.

Cover and simmer for 3 or 4 minutes, just to heat the tomatoes. Add the remaining 2-3 cups of stock or even more if you prefer more broth. Heat gently. It is important not to overcook or boil the soup. The potatoes, tomatoes and artichokes should be heated just enough to blend the flavors or they might disintegrate. Sprinkle each serving with fresh parsley and garnish with a wedge of fresh lemon.

Yields 8 servings.

### ***Friday, June 5, 2009 - 6.01 PM***

I am nearing the end of my Guitar Craft experience. This afternoon, we had one final beginner's session with Robert. While working on the basic arpeggio of *Theme One*, Robert had us play the figure in 6/8 rather than 4/4. Robert then asked us to count the figure in 4 while continuing to play in 6/8.

### *Division of Attention II*

Those who became confident in dividing their attention were asked to step forward. While playing the figure in 6/8, Robert then asked them to count in 5/4. Needless to say, this upped the ante quite a bit. Perhaps this was what Robert was alluding to earlier in the week when he said he wanted to try a few things. After it was clear that it would take time for people to master this, Robert kept the pulse and counted out loud in hopes that some would latch on.

### *Jamming with Robert Fripp*

Putting that aside, we learned a new figure from Guitar Buddy Martin. Robert arranged us into two circles: one inner circle seated, and an outer circle standing. He started the jam with a *burning* solo, and soon everyone had a chance to solo. I just realized that this might be the only time I would ever get to jam with Robert Fripp. I sensed that Robert, with a full-on grin, was encouraging us as an equal rather than as an instructor. This helped to lighten the mood in the room and soon smiles were beaming all around.

### **Saturday, June 6, 2009 - 12.32 AM**

#### *Course Completion*

The course was declared completed at 23.18.30 on Friday, June 5, 2009. My initial aim was trying to better understand why music attracts me. At least, that is what I declared that the start of this week. And, my recent theological studies and this experience came together to declare the realization of my aim.

#### *Aims III*

We were staying at a Greek Orthodox institution. The Ancient Greeks had several words for beauty. One of these words was *kallon*, or, *the called*. If music is beauty, then we are called toward this beauty to seek that which is beautiful. Attached to a calling is a special responsibility. We are sent forth into the world to be bearers of the beautiful.

### **Saturday, June 6, 2009 - 2.44 PM**

I am now at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport waiting to board my plane. I spent the morning cleaning, but I did pack up last night. Yet another morning skipping the morning sitting. If I were a monk, and I missed morning prayers, I am sure that I would be in major trouble with the major superior by now. The course ended yesterday, and I must have mentioned somewhere along the line that I really needed the sleep.

#### *Here Comes The Noise*

Here at the airport, the noise level is just a hair above bearable. The week of intentional silence and the various points of seeing made me realize how noisy it actually is here in the secular world. The television is on in the background, people are walking about without much due regard for the noise pollution that exists.

#### *Ideas and Insights*

I have been presented with many ideas and insights as a result of this experience, most of which will probably take more than a lifetime to properly absorb. The themes of awareness

and attention were prevalent throughout the course, and it was clear that I have a lot to practice if I wanted to make any headway.

### *Heroes*

Finally, I had an opportunity to meet a hero of mine, Robert Fripp. He seemed to be a personable man, which perhaps was a little different than what his various interviews, biographies, and even his own diary would allow one to believe. Still, I did not find it appropriate to approach Robert with any of my nerdy progressive rock hero worship questions. Nonetheless, I found him to also be very courteous and gentle. He moves quickly and smoothly from place to place. And, for a man who is 63 years old, he appears like he is in his early 50s. I will not forget how he playfully chided me during one of our group lessons, nor will I forget the smiles he sent my way during the week.

And so, for Carl, Hans, Andrew, Alex, Rick, Frank, Andy, Paul, Erin, Charles, Sotirios, Brad, Matt, Chris, Zane, Jason, Jim, Gianni, Len, Michael, Justin, Sasha, Bruno, Rob, Elisabeth ... perhaps all heroes sent to be bearers of the beautiful in the world.