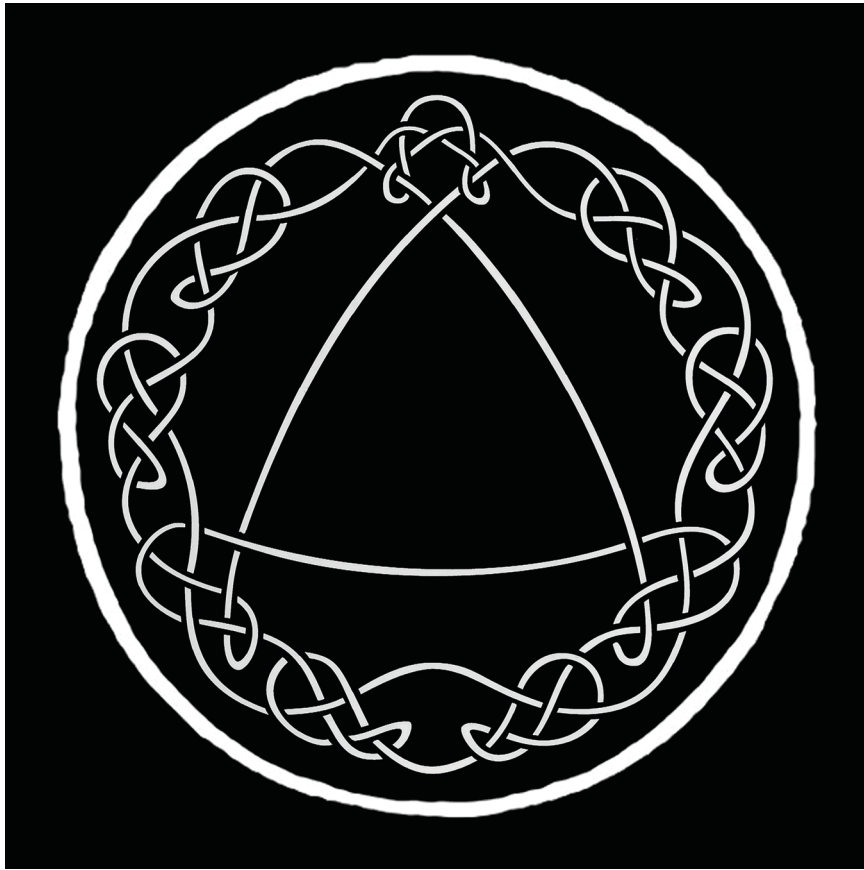


Guitar Craft:
A Brief Introductory Guide
to
Practice



Michael Grenfell

Begun: 18th August 2011
Holy Isle,
Scotland

Guitar Craft¹ is a way of developing:

- I. A relationship to the Guitar;
- II. A relationship to music;
- III. A relationship to yourself...

.... By implication, a relationship to life.

It is a practical activity based on principles of application.

¹ The inaugural Guitar Craft course began on 25th March 1985. It took place at the American Society for Continuous Education, near Claymont Court in Charles Town, West Virginia, USA. In March 2015, a Completion course was held in Sassoferato, Italy. This also marked its 25th Anniversary. Since then, although Guitar Craft has 'ceased to exist', activities of its students, mentors and teachers have continued with a focus on the Guitar Circle, often including the Orchestra of Crafty Guitarists.

Key Principles

I. Honour Necessity;

II. Honour Sufficiency.

The first is a principle of Qualitative Endeavour; the second is a principle of Quantitative Endeavor.

These two can be brought to any activity – whether guitar or non-guitar based: for example, picking up the guitar, sitting down, striking a single note, walking out of the room.

The principles lead to the quality of ‘rightness’: Guitar Craft has been described as ‘doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, rightly’.

Question: How do I know what is right?

Answer: How can you not know? (You know in your heart). So, what prevents you from knowing?

Key Components of Guitar Craft

Concepts

Discipline (Head; Hands; Heart)
Practice
Rightness
Intention
Principle
Suffering
The Unexpected
Observation (Point of Seeing)
Attention
(Consciousness; Sensitivity; Creativity; Cosmic)
Automatic Energies)
(Being; Function; Will)
The Circle
Quality
Aim
Release
Aphorisms
Silence
Reliability
Bright Ideas
Initiative
Fact/ Value
Existence/ Essence
Outside Intervention
Inner Architecture

Practice

Beginning/ Completion

Sitting

Pausing

Job of the day

Recap

Guitar Practice

Levels

Kitchen Craft

Housework

Guitar Circle

Primaries; Secondaries; Tertiaries

Performance

Themes

Exercises

Assumption of Virtue

Prayer

Divided Attention

Public Verification

Levels

Progress in Guitar Craft has conventionally been characterized by a series of 'levels'. These 'levels' denote stages of application; they may be defined in terms of proficiency on the guitar, or another non-guitar activity, or both, or neither. Levels can also be defined in terms of length of time, range of activities/ application, sustainability/ consistency – repeatability. Reliability.

Such imply the Quality of commitment as much as Quantity; thus assimilation and application of principles.

Levels do not necessarily entail a linear process and, in some cases, progress may actually be defined in terms of going back – 'that we may go forward'. And, different component parts may be moving in different directions – back and forward – and at different rates.

Levels, ultimately, need to be defined in terms of Being, Function and Will, as well as the integration of these three; in fact, they are essentially the same.

These levels all again involve Principles of Necessity and Sufficiency.

Notes of Levels (including Course lengths)

Level 1 (Time: Approx. one week)

All the elements of Guitar Craft can be found present at Level 1 – if only we could see them. Loss of innocence. Experience of key principles and components. A shock! A glimpse of what we are! A *Doh* sounded. Many have a good time – for many it is wretched.

Level 2 (Time: Approx. one-two weeks)

We know it all – we know nothing. We have lost our innocence and begin to apply the principles. We think we have them. We ‘think’. Cluelessness often characterised by assertion of ‘knowing’. Bright ideas – at the wrong time and place. Belief in one’s own view. Blaming others. Inappropriate aims.

Level 3 (Time: Approx. three months)

Loss of enthusiasm. Boredom. Mindless application of exercises disconnected from experience of the principles. Dogged attitude. Refusal to give up. Lack of initiative.

Level 4 (Time: Approx. one year)

A critical level – a willingness to take experience and principles gained at levels 2 and 3 into life in a sustained way. Suffering but structured. Familiarity

with principles and component parts of Guitar Craft but a lack of coalescence. Increased Functional capacity but little discernable shift in Being and Will. Will expressed as determination. Lack of creativity.

Level 4 is a critical point. It easily leads back to level 1 where we experience different component parts in level 1 terms, leading to level 2 experience in these parts.

The vicious circuit is to go around the 1, 4, 2 route endlessly. Stuck with these characteristics. Fossilization. We acquire functional skills to a point but to no great end. The creative voice does not speak.

Level 5 and beyond

The only way to go beyond level 4 is to revisit the overall, final aim of the process – level 8.

Usually, this is a shock since we discover that the aim was not what we thought it was. Level 5 entails letting go of the original aim and accepting a newer, truer one. Painful. Loss of idealism, identity, possessions.

The move from levels 4 to 5 can be described as ‘the great divide’ – ‘the dark night of the soul’. Often this is brought about by an external intervention precipitating a shock – current practice in crisis requiring redefinition, re-orientation, recalibration. It also represents a move from predominant Fact to

predominant Value – existence to essence. The move is hazardous. At this point, the student can lose their way; the Guitar Craft process is dispersed, dissolved, becomes dissipated. Nothing is gained and something is lost.

This guitar based process mirrors many others in life; although not all are critically important.

The process is true of Guitar Craft as well. At what level is it at? What is its aim, purpose and goal?

Levels 6, 7, 8

The Lifer

The 'lifer' lives by the Craft. Life principles are synonymous with Guitar Craft principles. Practice is self-initiating and self-directed.

Practice

Guitar Craft is based on a daily 'discipline' or practice. Discipline is a 'joy' – freedom. Discipline is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

One strand in Guitar Craft is to see practice as becoming deeper, more elaborated, involving more demanding exercises/ commitment.

This brief Introductory Guide divides the practice into two levels:

- Basic
- Intermediate

Basic Practice

Sitting (the exercise of doing nothing);
Guitar Practice – tuning, exercises (primaries), scales, repertoire, having fun - one hour per day;
Guitar Circle work;
Performance (although not necessarily 'in public')
Exercise of Qualitative Endeavour;
Day Off per week;
The House

Intermediate Practice

Extended Sitting exercises
Performance (increasingly 'public')

Marking the Beginning and end of the day
Recapping the day
Pausing exercises
Division of Attention
Assumption of Virtue
Extend the Present Moment
Job of the Day
Kitchen Craft
House Work
Themes
33 point hand exercise
The Guitarist within

Basic Practice

The Sitting

The Sitting is a key element in Guitar Craft practice. It is also called the 'practice of doing nothing'. There are slightly different forms and variations but it exists essentially as follows:

Duration: 30 minutes

Time of day: The first action of the day after rise and shower.

Posture²: One to be comfortable for 30 minutes; either on a chair or sitting crossed legged on the floor. Hands on knees, palms down.

Form

- We begin standing; give attention to the feet (soles on floor), the top of the head, the feet again, and what is in between. Sit.
- Preparation phase (MJG variation): Begin with attention to the lips (the most sensitive part of the body). Take that sensitivity to the tongue; relax it; and to the back of the tongue and roof of

² Body posture, balance, force, relaxation – as well as the ways these connect and mirror emotional and intellectual states – are central to Guitar Craft. As a result, most courses include intensive work with an Alexander Technique teacher: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_technique AT principles feature in all aspects of GC work, both with and away from the guitar. Other body work has also been used extensively: Yoga and T'ai Chi.

mouth. It is said that giving this part of the mouth attention 'quiets' the mind. Return to the lips.

** This phase is sometimes preceded by an eye exercise, where the eyes are moved to the right, left, up, down and in clockwise and anti-clockwise circles in order to relax them.

Eyes remain open during the Sitting and should rest on the floor in the middle distance.

- We take the above sensitivity up over the face: one eyes, then the other eye. One development is to give attention to different parts of the eyes. This increasing scope of attention can also be brought to other parts of the body during the attention circuit.

The sequence is then around the body in the following basic form:

| | | |
|--------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Forehead | Left Shoulder | Ankle |
| Top of Head | Left Upper Arm | Upper R Foot |
| Back Head | Elbow | Big Toe |
| Ears | Left Lower Arm | 1 st Toe |
| Back neck* | Wrist | 2 nd Toe |
| R. Shoulder | Back hand | 3 rd Toe |
| R. Upper Arm | Thumb | 4 th Toe |
| Elbow | 1 st Finger | Sole Foot |
| R. Lower Arm | 2 nd Finger | Whole foot |
| Wrist | 3 rd Finger | Lower Leg |
| Back hand | Little Finger | Whole leg |

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Thumb | Palm Hand | R. Hip |
| 1 st Finger | Hand-L. Arm | Left Hip |
| 2 nd Finger | Hand-Arm | L. Upper Leg |
| 3 rd Finger | L. Shoulder | Knee |
| Little Finger | Neck | Left Lower Leg |
| Palm hand | Torso | Ankle |
| Hand-L. Arm | Right Hip | Upper L. Foot |
| Whole arm | R. Upper Leg | Big Toe |
| Right Shoulder | Knee | 1 st Toe |
| Neck | R. Lower Arm | 2 nd Toe |

Contd.

3rd toe
 4th Toe
 Sole Foot
 Whole foot
 Foot and lower leg
 Foot and whole leg
 Torso
 Neck
 Back of Head
 Top of Head
 Face
 Mouth

- Point of special attention.

- This is an exercise that involves muscle and bone
– not inner organs
- Each area is relaxed; this is done by ‘giving it attention’. Tension is given permission to leave.
- Sometimes the movement of sensation can be experienced as if it were warm water moving over the body – a constant movement rather than hopping from one area to the next.
- Various experiences of the body and mind might arise during the sitting and over the course of developing a sitting practice; the recommendation is to simply let them be, and if troubling, uncomfortable, or unfamiliar, consult someone with more experience
- It is important to keep a steady and brisk pace; otherwise, the mind will wander and lose its way. This will happen anyway. Each time it is noticed, we ‘begin again’ from the last point.
- It should be possible to do 2-3 rotations in a 30 minute sitting.
- The mind will stay active. We cannot shut it up, but we do not have to listen to it. We can also give thoughts permission to leave.
- This is less a meditation than an activation. It is based on sensitivity – sense and observation of this.

- It is good to drink a glass of water with a twist of lemon in it before sitting.
- The sitting ends as it began: stand, give attention to the soles of the feet, top of the head, soles of the feet, what is between.
- Good to leave the room and spend a few moments letting go of the exercise and coming into the day before any interaction.
- The sitting is essential to Guitar Craft. Without it, nothing more is really possible. Given a choice, the sitting is more important than guitar practice.
- The sitting is done everyday; apart from the day off. Two possibilities here: an extended sitting (45-60 minutes) or indeed no sitting.
- When to do the sitting? The perfect time is as night becomes day; the movement from night to dawn. But, this is not always possible. We aim for the same time every day – always before 09.00 am. If 30 mins .is not possible, then do 20 mins. If this is not possible, do 10 mins. Do not do less than 10 mins.
- It is possible ‘to sit’ at other times in the day – for example, early afternoon, or last thing at night. This makes it a different exercise.

Guitar Practice³

To be truly a guitarist one must practice at least an hour per day.

Important features of guitar practice:

- Aim for a similar time each day;
- Set a time – if more or less than 60 mins. – stick to it;
- Acknowledge the Beginning and the Completion of the Guitar Practice;
- Begin with Intention: an Aim of what one is going to practice and why;
- Tune the guitar with a tuning fork at the beginning and the completion of the guitar practice, and whenever is needed;
- Pay attention to posture;
- The guitar come to the body;
- A mirror may be useful⁴;

³ This is a huge topic since it IS *Guitar Craft*. If we were shoemakers, it would be 'Shoe Craft' since the principles of Craft are universal. Some enter Guitar Craft primarily to become better guitarists; some to develop their life skills. Some remain with these original aims. Some swap them. The focus on guitar stresses the necessity of practice with Quality; this requires learning what and how to practice.

- Begin with attention: soles of the feet, top of head, space below, above, to the sides, in front, behind;
- Change strings as necessary;
- Balance guitar practice as appropriate: Primaries, Scale Work, Repertoire, Having Fun⁵.

⁴ However, they may also distort angles and can move the attention outside the body and too much to the eyes, rather than connecting to sensation.

⁵ Here, the guidance of an experienced Instructor is very important, as is the application of intelligence.

The Tuning

The New Standard Tuning

In Guitar Craft, the New Standard Tuning is adopted for the guitar:

The NST from low to high is:

C G D A E G

It is therefore tuning the guitar in 5^{ths}, apart from the top string (a minor 3rd)

- We tune with a tuning fork beginning with the A.
- Various guitar string gauges have been used: the standard GC pack uses: .059, .047, .032, .022, .013, .011.
- The tuning therefore allows for lower and higher notes than the conventional guitar. Adopting this tuning returns all GC students to the beginning, requiring a re-learning of fret board knowledge – a new relationship to the guitar - is therefore possible.

The Guitar

Conventionally, the Ovation 1867 Legend guitar is used by those working with Guitar Craft. This guitar is particularly appropriate since it is a shallow bowl steel string, semi acoustic instrument. Its shape therefore fits the body well and also allows for the arm to rest on the body. Its shallow bowl means that it fits well into the body. The truss rod included in the Legend also supports the extra tension produced by the tuning up of – thus tighter – guitar strings. Conventionally, also, the guitar strap is shortened so that the guitar is held quite high up in the body – therefore, supports a ‘free arm’ when playing, and thus effortlessness.

The Legend model is no longer manufactured by Ovation. Many other guitars are used, including custom built instruments by Luthiers in South America and Europe.

GC guitars are also normally played with a particular type of pick. This has evolved over the life of Guitar Craft. However, mostly these picks are characterized by being triangular, not the conventional teardrop plectrum shape; thus, having an extremely pointed end allowing for minimum contact between pick and plucked string.

Guitar Exercises

Much work is done with GC students in cultivation of the right physical approach to the guitar: holding and playing it.

This right approach is based on a series of principles:

- The guitar comes to the body;
- Correct posture;
- Correct form and balance in both the Right and Left hand – see Appendix 1;
- Correct circulation of energies, as exemplified in the amount of effort used to play;
- Pressure/ release in both fretting and picking individual notes.

These principles are developed through a series of guitar exercises, involving various playing techniques. Such exercises are divided into Primaries, Secondaries and Tertiaries. Primary exercises introduce an exercise, Secondaries and Tertiaries extend and apply them.

The Seven Primaries

- 1) The First Primary; for the left hand, to:
 - i) Adopt an efficient configuration of the hand;
 - ii) Incorporate the principles of succession, the completion of flow, release and simultaneous release within the operation of the fingers.
- 2) The Second Primary; for the right hand, to:
 - i) Develop a sense of equipoise along the right hand from the elbow to the fingers.
 - ii) Establish the hand's centre of gravity.
 - iii) Acquire familiarity with suspended arm picking.
 - iv) Acquire familiarity with pivotal picking.
 - v) Establish the method of alternate picking.
- 3) The Third Primary; for the left hand, to:
 - i) Develop lateral fingering
 - ii) Acquire familiarity with the vocabulary of the fingerboard throughout the positions, and bring this knowledge within the hand.
 - iii) Extend the principles of the first primary towards music.
- 4) The Fourth Primary (cross picking); for the right hand, to extend the field of alternate picking across the strings.
- 5) The Fifth Primary; for the left hand, to
 - i) Develop vertical fingering
 - ii) Acquire familiarity with the vocabulary of the fingerboard along the length of the neck, and bring this knowledge within the hand.

- iii) Extend the principles of the first primary towards music.
- 6) The Sixth Primary (the Anchor); where one or two fingers of the left hand are gently applied to a string which the remaining fingers execute a combination, to:
 - i) Cultivate release by restraining removal.
 - ii) Develop the independence, strength and efficiency of the fingers.
- 7) The Seventh Primary (the Finger Pivot): where one finger of the left hand is placed between two adjacent strings, vertically from above the fingerboard, and pivoting slightly either side of this placement to stop notes on these adjacent strings, for:
 - i) The economy of motion between adjacent strings.
 - ii) The cultivation of accuracy.

The Secondary Exercises.

- 1) The First Secondary; of combined ascending and descending fingerings.
- 2) The Second Secondary; of graduated extension for the right hand.
- 3) The Third Secondary; of extended lateral fingering.
- 4) The Fourth Secondary; the tremelo.
- 5) The Fifth Secondary; of extended vertical fingering.
- 6) The Sixth Secondary; of varied duration, where notes held by the left hand are of different values.
- 7) The Seventh Secondary; of combination

Scales

Conventional Major and Minor scales in any key are used in Guitar Craft. However, the following scales feature in particular:

- A minor Pentatonic
- A minor Pentatonic/D minor Pentatonic 'Fifth Way'
- A Harmonic minor
- C Harmonic minor
- C Hexatonic
- C Major
- C Whole Tone
- D Major
- D Melodic minor
- D minor Pentatonic
- E minor Pentatonic
- E Symmetric - Octatonic
- F minor Pentatonic
- G Major
- G Blues Pentatonic

Repertoire

The Guitar Craft Tuning has generated its own new repertoire. Many of these pieces include self-compositions by GC participants, classical arrangements, and a broad range of popular songs. Robert Fripp composed a number of pieces for Guitar Craft, each of which to exemplify its principles, both in terms of guitar technique and the wider physical and emotional aspects of playing the guitar. The key Themes to note are:

- I. Invocation;
- II. Aspiration;
- III. Eye of the Needle;
- IV. The Third Relation;
- V. Calliope;
- VI. Askesis⁶
- VII. The Moving Force

7

⁶ Written by Tony Gerballe

⁷ <http://shop.schizoidshop.com/robert-fripp---seven-guitar-craft-themes-book-p1274.aspx>

Having Fun

‘Letting go’, ‘improvising’, ‘having fun’ are all an essential element to Guitar Craft guitar practice; a time for a freer, instinctive approach to playing the guitar in whatever context.

Improvisation, whilst not based on ‘having fun’ has featured in Guitar Circle work, which superseded and developed Guitar Craft⁸.

⁸ <http://guitarcircleofeurope.com/>

The Guitar Circle⁹

A guitar circle can be made up of any number greater than one. Three is often considered a good minimum. There is almost no limit as far as a performance space can hold. Although any number carries with it implied chemistries and processes. The League of Crafty Guitarists (the professional performance vehicle for Guitar Craft) usually includes twelve players.

Circle work does not have to be, and is usually not, aimed at performance. However, performance does complete the circle of work; particularly, in terms of public verification.

Circles can be local, regional, national and/ or international. There have even been 'virtual circles'. Circles can meet over time or even as a one-off.

Each circle implies a certain time and place – context – which defines what is possible and potential within it.

A circle needs to be led by a circle leader – this role can rotate¹⁰.

The purpose of circle work is to bring individuals together to share practice together: the whole being

⁹ See also The Guitar Circle by Robert Fripp.

¹⁰ It is necessary that someone recognizes rightness and that others recognize that vision .

more than the sum of the parts (and in some cases less!). A Circle can think and act as one person.

It can include any work – mostly, it is based around guitar exercises and repertoire. **Circulations**¹¹, where one note is passed around and within the circle in various combinations, is a key element of guitar circle work, and demonstrates the way that quality is transmitted from one to another. We say that when we pass a note, we also pass on everything that we are – a principle that extends to any activity in life.

Circle work often adopts a similar structure to personal guitar practice: with acknowledging the Beginning and Completion, etc. Formal sitting down and standing up together is a mark of larger circles – and is always adopted in performance.

Once entering the circle, any individual always walks in a clockwise direction until reaching the next available chair.

The guiding aphorism whilst in the circle is:

‘Move with Intention, Act from Principle’

This is an aphorism, which is also relevant and appropriate to all activities in life.

A further important aphorism is:

¹¹ Also known as the Exercise of Transmission of Quality.

‘Honour the Role, Respect the Person’.

Its broader application in life is again important. However, it is particularly important in terms of the circle leader, and indeed other formal roles assumed within Guitar Craft.

Something remains of the Circle when it moves forward.

Performance

Performance is central to Guitar Craft and many opportunities are taken to include it in the work of participants.

At a Basic Level, such performance include playing over meals or to each other in small groups. 'In house' performance are invariably organised for the 'beginner' student, where they are required to write and perform their own material with 24 hours notice. These 'concerts' are usually set up by picking names from 'the Hat'. Indeed, 'the hat' is one means by which the quality of 'hazard', or 'chance' is introduced into a process.

Concerts provide a 'content rich environment' for comment, question and observation.

At an Intermediate Level and beyond, performance increasingly take on a public profile with 'outside' events being organized. Such can take place in almost any context. *The League of Crafty Guitarists*¹² is really the 'professional' outlet for Guitar Craft.

It is essential at this level that one of the performing group takes responsibility to 'call on the muse'.

¹² <http://thelcg.net/>

Exercise of Qualitative Endeavour

In this exercise, the student selects a small piece of work and practices it with a view to discharging it 'superbly'. The choice is with the individual and may include guitar-based or non-guitar-based work. The element of selection is therefore important as is developing a sense of quality in the activity. It is also essential that the chosen task be something that is 'observable' i.e. it should not be attitudinal. The exercise therefore also introduces the notion of 'public verification' where an individual's work is assessed, or adjudicated, by an acknowledged peer or authority in the field in order to confirm or otherwise it being satisfactorily undertaken.

Day Off

The 'day off' is an important aspect of Guitar Craft practice. Here, we practice the discipline of taking a 'day off'.

In practice, this means no guitar or circle work, or indeed, other exercises. One may also take a day off from sitting and practice. In reality, many students of guitar craft do a sitting on their day off. Moreover, this is often an extended sitting of 45 mins. Traditionally, this is also a time when those sitting send best wishes to other Guitar Craft students – both near and far.

The 'day off' is a time for:

- Recuperation;
- Assimilation;
- Preparation.

Intermediate Practice

Who is the Intermediate student?

How do we define them?

What do they do/ how are they that is different?

The briefest answer to these questions is Experience. Since Guitar Craft is working at an essential level (outside of time and space), the most important aspects of work may be entirely invisible – also variable.

As noted above, all elements of Guitar Craft are present in Level 1 – but they cannot all be seen. Intermediate may be defined in terms of proficiency on the guitar, reliability, or other personal and communal aspects. Quality is a key dimension here, as well as assimilation and application of principles.

An Intermediate student would usually have an established (at least a year) Sitting Practice, but many long-term students do not achieve this.

Most students attending longer courses – of say 3 – 6 weeks (+/-) – will come across Intermediate exercises and activities. The issue then is how far they can integrate principles of practice outside of courses to their daily life.

Extended Sitting Exercises

- Eyes relaxation;
- 60 point exercise;
- Collected state exercise;
- Extended present moment;
- The greater 'I am';
- Various Blending exercises.

Division of Attention and Extension Exercises

The so-called Division of Attention features in a number of exercises, and indeed actual guitar pieces. It is also introduced at a Basic level, although probably more extensively adopted by the Intermediate student.

What is it? As the name suggests, it is where attention is divided between two or more points in time and space. This can clearly involve a multitude of applications – both guitar-based and otherwise; for example, playing one rhythm whilst counting another, or attending to sections of a piece whilst playing another, or having separate guitarists both playing and listening to sections of performance. Circulation is a very good context for DoA work. Some of its is also done as part of individual practice, often employing a range of counting variations spread across hands and feet.

Example

- 1) Begin with setting the metronome at a pace that is comfortable for you, and 'warm-up' with tapping your feet one by one in time on the floor (this is usually, the heel, but you can use the ball of the foot if you like). Tap first the left foot then the right foot, and continue with the left – back and forth.
- 2) Then, do the same with the hands placed on the knees. First do feet, then hands, then feet again. Then both together.
- 3) The idea is that we now introduce different sequences. Feet first only; then hands only; then both; then together.

4) Use this sequence of Left and Right in feet and hands:

L-R-R-L-R

5) As you can see, there are five beats here. Work on the feet and hands together tapping out this five beat pattern. We then introduce a different sequence in the hands

6) The idea is that the feet continue with this five beat pattern; whilst the hands adopt a three beat pattern:

L-R-R

7) Treat this as a quality exercise: work on it until you have it – with quality!

8) Once you have it, you can go for variations, in a similar fashion to the Guitar Variations. Some of these might be:

- i) Swapping the five and the three beat patterns between feet and hands.
- ii) Beginning with the right foot and hand.
- iii) Beginning with the foot to the left and the hand to the right.
- iv) iii) with different 5/3 positions.

Such exercises are also based on the guitar; for example, playing one rhythm and counting another. They begin to expand the attention and functionality of the student and lengthen the time that the attention is engaged; for example, following larger patterns with musical (and other) forms.

The Assumption of Virtue

The exercise of the **Assumption of Virtue** is incarnation of quality into form. The form that holds quality is 'assumed' in order that the quality be expressed.

Creativity can be understood as the assumption of innocence in a field of experience.

The House

Guitar Craft courses need to take place within a locale – this is true for short meetings, day events, longer courses.

Many of these involve ‘living as a community’, where we take care of the domestic running of the locale, accommodation, catering, etc.

The concept of ‘the House’ is clearly for longer, residential courses.

The size of the House will obviously depend on the number of participants in attendance: that is from 2-3 to over 100.

To facilitate the running of the House, a series of roles are designated, which are connected to specific areas of activity¹³. So,

House manager
Kitchen Co-ordinator
Facilitator

These roles are normally held for a set period of time and therefore rotate. They also complement guitar focused roles: Circle Leader, Tour Manager, Security,

¹³ These roles can be designated but they are often self selected on the basis of the principle, ‘he who see the need....’. We also say, ‘the role chooses the person’ as a ways of expressing the way that the essential becomes incarnate in the existential world

Merchandise – as needed, as well as overall course Director and Registrar.

The House offers a confined space and participants normally stay within the extent of the property for the duration of the course. On extended courses, there is normally a designated 'day-off' every ten days, or as appropriate and relevant.

Daily life in the house is structured around a schedule. For example:

06.30 – Rise

07.15 – Sitting

08.00 – Breakfast*

09.30 – Guided Practice

11.00 - Guitar Circle meeting

13.00 – Lunch*

15.00 – House work

16.00 – Tea*

17.00 – Guitar Circle

19.00 – Dinner*

21.00 - Guitar Circle

23.00 – Bed

This is an example only: there is a great deal of flexibility and variation as the days requires. For example, Alexander and T'ai Chi lessons are slotted in, individual personal meetings with mentors, guitar buddies, and instructors, small group rehearsals, etc.

- Meals are very important in Guitar Craft. Besides opportunities to perform they provide a context for the community to meet as a whole. Questions, comments and observations are often invited.
- Silence is an important part of Guitar Craft. The aphorism states: “Music is the cup which holds the wine of Silence”. Everything proceeds and returns to Silence. Silence is a frequent visitor at Guitar Craft meals.

Kitchen Craft

Kitchen Craft

The Kitchen and the House are the first available locales in which the student can apply Guitar Craft principles to life away from the guitar. It is possible to develop a relationship to the Kitchen and food in much the same way as the guitar and music. Thus, Kitchen Craft is:

1. A way to develop your relationship with the Kitchen.
2. A way of developing a relationship with cooking food.
3. A way to develop a relationship with oneself.

We say that ‘everything we *are* goes into the food’. It is said that the would-be Sufi monk is put into the Kitchen for six months prior to their training; some never leave. The Kitchen can, therefore, be viewed as a sacred space: where things die and energy is transformed.

GC kitchen are nearly always vegetarian.

The basic meals are Breakfast, Lunch, Tea and Dinner – as well as maintaining the Tea/ Coffee station.

There are many analogies between guitar work performance and Kitchen work; most obviously the movement from Kitchen to Dining Room and

Rehearsal to Performance. We can think of the Kitchen as a process with specific stages:

Centres of Gravity in the Kitchen

0 Kitchen Prepared

1 Assemble in Kitchen: Begin (Kitchen comes alive).

2 Select Tools for the Meal (Kitchen Begins to Work).

3 Raw Food Enters

4 Prepare the Food

Maximum Activity in the Kitchen

5 Cook the Food (Art of Cooking)

6 Move Food to the Dining Room

7 Serve the Parts of the Food

8 Eating Food (Menu)

9 Completion: Clear and wash up

0 Kitchen Prepared

The Kitchen is usually co-ordinated by a Kitchen Co-ordinator who sets meal recipes, buys the necessary

ingredients and draws up a schedule of cooking teams.

We sometimes structure our work in the Kitchen with a series of rules;

RULES OF THE KITCHEN

- 1) Begin on Time. In order to begin on time, we need to arrive early.
- 2) We find the Kitchen in a state of preparedness. In order to find the Kitchen in a state of preparedness, we need to leave the Kitchen in a state of preparedness.
- 3) The Kitchen team completes after the wash-up is done.
- 4) The Kitchen Co-ordinator has overall responsibility for the Kitchen, the menu and purchasing provisions.
- 5) The Chief Cook has overall responsibility for the meal.
- 6) Be available.
- 7) Only enter the Kitchen if you have a job there or are asked to do something.

8) Talk when necessary.

Exercises have also been included in the Kitchen work – Themes and Attention Exercises. For example, a bell is often rung periodically where those working in the Kitchen pause briefly for one minute and bring their attention back to where they are, what they are doing and their task.

Themes

So-called 'Themes' have been introduced on some courses, and have featured extensively in At-A-Distance projects.

Themes are seen as a way of waking ourselves up from everyday life and the world, which we can so easily take for granted. As such, they can be on almost anything.

They are presented for a set period of time in which the student works with it: this can be a day, three days, a weekend, week, month. Presentation often involves statement of principles, issues, and questions or points for consideration. Students then work within this frame and make notes on what they notice, observe, etc.

There are Four basic ways of working with Themes:

- Thinking about them;
- Observation;
- Discussion;
- Experimentation.

Some or all these are often included in Themes presentation. Here are some examples of Themes used:

- Material Objects;
- Noticing;
- Talking;
- Clothes;
- Listening
- Food;
- Commitment;
- Walking;
- Negative Emotions;
- Likes and Dislikes (the First Liberation);
- Other People;
- Touching

Here is an example of the Noticing Theme:

NOTICING (1)

INTRODUCTION

Unless we notice, we cannot be in a position to choose or act for ourselves. It is a transition from one state of existence to another. The significance of this transition is largely neglected. We therefore do not see the opportunity it gives us. Noticing is the opening of possibilities. How can we train ourselves to grasp this kind of opportunity?

EXERCISE

On each of the three days of Theme work, do the following:

- After practicing the guitar, write a short report of what you did. Did we notice anything different or new?
- Choose one thing that occurs regularly during the day: for example, the telephone ringing, or there is a call at the door. Or, maybe something when we are travelling - road signs, traffic lights, etc. Or, seeing someone wearing a certain colour. Choose one thing. Each time this thing occurs, stop and see what else we notice.
- Make a note of anything we notice.

Work on this Theme for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. For this Theme: when do we notice? How do we notice? Why do we notice? The answer to these questions is as important as 'what do we notice/'

Questions/Comments

- Do we notice when we notice? Do we notice when we are not noticing?
- How do you know when we have noticed something? What sensation do we have?
- Do we notice in some situations more than others?
- It is only when we notice that we have the possibility of choosing or changing the course of what we are doing. An opportunity is an important thing. It expresses the moment when something can be done. The more we notice, the more opportunities we have.
- There is 'professional' noticing. We notice more about our specialism. So, what have we noticed recently about professional work?
- There is no real cause of noticing - it is something that happens in us. Noticing is sudden and timeless, from another dimension of life.
- Do we notice a change in our physical state when confronted with certain objects, or food, or tasks, or people, or surroundings? What sensations do we have?
- How do we react when we notice a job that needs to be done? What happens next?
- Noticing is probably the simplest of means of waking up. 'To be is to be perceived' - we and the world come alive when we notice and are noticed.

Job of the Day

The exercise of the Job of the day is often introduced in Intermediate courses. Here, participants select a particular task one day – something they have noticed needs to be done and would not have been done otherwise – and discharges it the next day. The task is usually of about ten minutes and is something material; i.e., not simply attitudinal, intentional, or emotional. As the exercise is partly one of reliability, there is usually a ‘forfeit’ if the job is not done. The ‘forfeit’ is not to be seen as punishment but as a way of involving the body; so, missing a meal, forgoing treats, standing with arms outstretched for 10 minutes.

Form

Day 1: Notice/ Choose a job. Bring it to mind last thing at night.

Day 2: Bring the job to mind at the end of the sitting. Decide (or otherwise) to commit to doing it.

Do the task.

Bring the job to mind at the recap at the end of the day.

Select job for next day.

As above, once a student has committed to doing the job, it must be done¹⁴. Otherwise, the forfeit must be 'paid' – again to stress, not as a punishment but to involve a physical aspect to commitment.

¹⁴ 'We do not fail to do the job'.

Reports, Comments, Observations

From the very outset, Guitar Craft participants are encouraged to offer feedback on their work. On live courses, communal meal times are an excellent opportunity to receive such. Personal meetings between students and instructors, mentors and buddies are also an occasion for personal reflection. At-a-Distance courses also require students to submit written reports.

All these are example opportunities for ‘Noticing’ and ‘Self Observation’.

Differentiation is a key principle in Guitar Craft and students are encouraged to think of their reflections in terms of depth and insight. For example:

A **Report** is a factual description of what occurred.

Comments are subjective opinions and thoughts.

Observations are seen as having more general applicability. Known also as ‘points of seeing’, these may change the course of a life.

Some of Robert Fripp’s own Observations are offered as a series of Aphorisms to GC students – see Appendix 2 – as points for reflection, consideration and instruction.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge Robert Fripp with thanks for his permission to quote his work in this text.

Tony Gerballe read the draft with tremendous care and sensitivity, and made numerous points of detail, which has improved both its style and accuracy.

I am also grateful to Leo Requejo who also provided very useful feedback on an earlier version of this text.

Steve Ball is allowing me to use his Guitar Craft logo, which is a powerful representation of its work.

The version of GC presented here is, of course, my own. Others would have theirs and it would be different. It seems that GC develops its own voice as to where and when it is needed.

I should also state that what is written here is shaped by my own personal experience of Guitar Craft. I undertook my first GC-related course in December 1997, which was an Introduction to the NST organized by Hernan Nunez with guitar work led by Bert Lams. I then participated in several courses in the years that followed: both residential and At-A-Distance. The first phase of these was mostly based in Alfeld, Germany. We then relocated to San Cugat, near Barcelona, Spain. Other occasional locales were used in Spain, Italy, Argentina, France. Hernan Nunez and Martin Schwutke were the principal GC Instructors for these courses. Many course participants helped and supported me in numerous ways – too many to list here. However, I would also wish to acknowledge Alessandro Bruno and Luciano Pietrafesa as individuals who were close to me as GC Mentors during these years.

Appendix 1

Right and Left Hand

(Robert Fripp - The Art of Craft)

The Left Hand

1) The Position. The hand is brought to the neck of the guitar and the thumb placed in the middle of the neck. The thumb is drawn back, but without force, and gently locked. When playing, there is no movement within the thumb. The hand is arched, the fingers falling from above to touch the strings. The thumb is generally at an angle of about 45 degrees to the neck, and roughly beneath the second finger while in the lower positions. As the hand travels up the neck toward the body, the angle of the thumb moves gradually into line with the neck, and the thumb moves farther from the fingers. Position changing is effected in two ways:

- i) for small position changes: by the pressure of the thumb being released, but light contact with the neck being maintained during the shift;
- ii) for larger position changes: the thumb is swiftly and lightly removed from contact with the neck, returning to contact as soon as the new position has been established.

The arm is allowed to fall from the hand, the elbow naturally moving in towards the body. Alternatively, the hand is allowed to rise from the elbow, which is gently established at the side of the body. The only point of contact between the left hand and the guitar is the first digit of the thumb, and the tips of the fingers. It is recommended that the finger nails are filed to the quick. When not playing, the hand is placed to rest on the leg, or knee. The rule is: when the hands are on the guitar they are working. When they are resting, they are at rest.

Common Faults:

- i) Bent thumb. This compromises the most effective use of the pressure between the fingers and thumb. Then, the hand will have to squeeze. Often the rationalisation for this position is string bending.
- ii) Movement of the elbow.
- iii) Excessive bending of the wrist. Often this is because the guitar is too low from our shoulder, or our left arm is resting along the leg.
- iv) Thumb away from the middle of the neck: that is, the centre of gravity of the left hand is poorly established. This restricts the fingers' even access to all the strings.

v) The hand supports the weight of the guitar.

2) The Fingers. We adopt the posture of readiness, with the four fingers hovering slightly above the relevant position, their centre of gravity a point between the third and fourth strings. Each finger is assigned to a successive fret within the position. While playing, the shape of the hand remains constant, the fingers moving across the fingerboard to the particular strings to be played. The fingers fall from immediately above the strings, stopping the string closely behind the fret with the tip of the finger, applying sufficient pressure for the note to sound cleanly when struck by the pick. The operation of the fingers honor the five principles of succession, completed flow, release, simultaneous release and constant release.

i) *Succession*. The principle is: when ascending, leave the fingers down. Any preceding finger in a sequence is left in contact with the string, maintaining the application of pressure, whether the finger combination is of two, three or four fingers.

ii) *Completed Flow*. When two or more fingers are stopping any one string in an ascending sequence, to honor the principle of succession, the pressure applied by each of the fingers to the string is maintained until the finger combination is completed. The principle is: complete the motion undertaken. Otherwise, the flow of the sequence is interrupted. This principle is addressed to the practical problem of when to release the leading finger from the combination of fingers to begin the next fingering combination. The leading finger, if involved in an ascending combination, will not move to the next phrase until the ascending sequential combination of which it is a part has been completed.

iii) *Release*. This is an important principle in approaching an effortless practice. In the traditional approach, stopping the strings with the left hand involves two actions:

- a) Placing the finger on the string and applying pressure;
- b) Taking the finger off the string.

The second action is unnecessary: all that is required is the release of pressure. This completes the first action without initiating a second: release, not remove. The principle is: letting go.

The regular application of this principle brings us from labour to work. We discover how we avoid the necessary, invest in the unnecessary, and bring force to both. We labour where a little work is sufficient. In the experience of release, dropping the unneeded second action, we experience the lightness which characterises the quality of letting go. This quality of lightness can be applied to the

other parts of our lives: as a quality, it will inevitably spread. We discover we can let go of our anxiety about letting go; then, we let go of our anxiety about not letting go. Then we let go.

The Rule of Quality is: *Honor necessity*.

The Rule of Quantity is: *Honor sufficiency*.

iv) *Simultaneous Release*. This is applicable where no finger in an ascending combination leads in the following combination of fingers: that is, simultaneous release will occur with a two or three finger combination where a finger outside the combination leads to the next phrase, and only in a four finger combination which does lead to a new phrase would be “a little more simultaneous than the others.” Simultaneous release and completed flow are closely related, and address the two concerns of:

- a. Completing a motion undertaken;
- b. Preparing for, and anticipating, the next motion.

These concerns are particularly noticeable at speed in the ascending combinations of two fingers (1,2; 1,3; 1,4; 2,3; 2,4; 3,4), ascending combinations of three fingers (1,2,3; 1,2,4; 1,3,4; 2,3,4), and the only ascending combination of four fingers (1,2,3,4).

An example of each will make this clearer.

- a. In a two-finger combination, say 1 and 2, where either 3 or 4 play the next note on another string, 1 and 2 will be released simultaneously, honoring the principles of succession, completed flow and simultaneous release. Where 1 takes the next note, it will only be released after 2 has been applied to the string but the release will be slightly ahead of the release of 2.
- b. In a three-finger combination, say 1,2 and 4, where 3 takes the next note, fingers 1,2 and 4 will be released simultaneously. Where 1 takes the next note, 2 and 4 will be released simultaneously and 1 will be released slightly ahead of them, but only when 2 and 4 have been applied to the string.
- c. In a four-string combination, say 1,2,3 and 4, where 1 takes the next note, fingers 2,3 and 4 will be released simultaneously and 1 will be released slightly ahead of them, but only when 2,3 and 4 have been applied to the string.

The exercise of Simultaneous Release incorporates a direct experience of this principle in the hand.

v) *Constant Release*. This principle is most obvious in descending sequences on the same string, and in sequences of notes of equal duration played across strings. This principle reinforces the principle of release: we are constantly letting go of unneeded effort. This is applied throughout our practice where one observes the duration of

notes, and does not contradict succession, the completion of flow and simultaneous release.

vi) *Digital Equality*. All the fingers of the left hand are to have equal capacity in strength, release and stamina. This is of primary importance. Most guitarists have a weakness in the little finger, which can often be rapidly rectified by specific exercises.

vii) *Equality of Combination*. Assuming equal strength among the fingers, some combinations of fingering are more reliable than others. These may be of any two, three or all four fingers combinations of ascending and descending fingerings are particularly difficult.

viii) *Stretch*. We go as far as we can, and then a little further. How much further is moderated by the application of intelligence and the demands of the situation. The principle is: establish the possible, then move towards the impossible, gradually, for example, we may begin a stretch exercise in a higher position, an move towards a lower.

Common Faults:

i) Weakness of the little finger.

ii) Combinations involving the little finger.

iii) Combinations involving both ascending and descending fingerings.

iv) Stretch between the second and third fingers.

v) Removing fingers from the strings, rather than releasing them.

This often involves considerable movement away from the strings, particularly of the little finger.

The Left Hand

1) The operation of the hand and arm.

The right arm is supported at the elbow by the guitar. The elbow brings the hand to where the wrist will work. The wrist works by releasing the hand downwards and allowing it to return. There is no movement in the hand, the movement coming from the wrist. We establish the motion and apply the motion to the string, with no concern for the string: our concern is the quality of motion.

The only point of contact between the right hand, the forearm and the guitar is at the elbow. This suspended position is dependent upon a sense of balance within the hand and the arm. This can be rapidly acquired by practice and the direction of attention.

The centre of gravity of the hand may be visually determined by a straight line through two planes:

i) Looking at the arm from in front, from the elbow through the second finger;

ii) Looking at the arm from above, from the elbow through the thumb.

In this position there is no unnecessary tension in the musculature of the wrist. Visual determination should be abandoned as soon as the position of the hand and arm has begun to be established. The experience of the hand's position from within the hand itself is our most reliable template in finding the position for ourselves. Once the arm knows this in itself, the assumption of the position is automatic. The Position of Readiness for the right hand is where the centre of gravity of the right hand is in the middle of the strings; that is, the elbow brings the pick to a point between the third and fourth strings. The pick is held between the first digit of the thumb, and the side of the first digit of the first finger. There are three parts of the thumb which concern us: the ball of the thumb, the thumb itself, and the joint at the base of the thumb.

i) The ball of the thumb is erect;

ii) The thumb is gently locked backwards;

iii) The first digit of the thumb moves towards the side of the first digit of the first finger from the joint at the base of the thumb.

The first finger moves towards the thumb, and the other fingers follow beneath the first in support. All four fingers are held gently together, pointing back towards the elbow along the line of the arm. The release of the hand, and the pick, downwards is called a down

stroke. The return of the hand, and the pick, is called an up stroke. The motion of release and return is in the same plane as the strings: i.e. there is no rocking in the forearm. The disadvantage or referring to the motion or release-and-return as down and up picking is that a kind of effort is implied which is not actually made.

In alternate picking, the pick is vertical to the string and strikes the string straight on. The angle of the pick is established by the thumb. Slight variations in the shape and pressure of the thumb have considerable influence over the application of the pick, and directing the angle and strength with which it hits the string. The ball of the thumb may pivot gently on the lower strings or the bridge for additional support in picking at high speeds, and for damping. This is referred to as pivotal picking.

Where a series of down strokes are best suited to the music, for example, strong, even tone at higher volume, the pick strikes the string at 45 degrees, the completed stroke bringing the plectrum to rest on the string below.

The principle in all of this is: *each part does the work of that part, but no other.*

i) The function of the elbow is to establish the centre of gravity of the hand: that is, to bring the wrist to where the wrist applies the motion to the string.

ii) The functions of the wrist are:

a) To establish the motion to be applied to the string. The wrist does this by releasing the hand downwards and allowing it to return. The release and return are called down and up strokes, although this implies a kind of effort which is not actually made.

b) To work with the thumb in the production of volume. Additional pressure is applied by the joint at the base of the thumb, so the thumb applies more pressure to hold the pick on the side of the first digit of the first finger. Then, the wrist applies a momentary vigour to the release, and perhaps return, of the hand.

iii) The function of the thumb and first finger is to hold the pick.

iv) The function of the pick is to strike the string.

v) The function of the second, third and fourth fingers is to provide support to the first finger in holding the pick.

vi) The function of the thumb is to produce volume and tone. It does this by:

a) Holding the pick on the side of the first digit of the first finger;

b) Calibrating the angle at which the pick strikes the string;

c) Applying pressure to the pick.

Common faults occur where the principle that each part does the

work of that part, and no other, is violated.

Common Faults:

- i) The wrist locks, and the forearm moves from the elbow (the elbow does the work of the wrist);
- ii) The thumb bends in the middle, and the wrist twists upwards to compensate for the changed angle of the pick (the wrist does the work of the thumb);
- iii) The ball of the thumb collapses, and the pick is held on the first finger by the joint in the middle of the thumb (the thumb does the work of the ball of the thumb);
- iv) The pick is moved by rapid motion of the joint in the middle of the thumb (the thumb does the work of the wrist);
- v) The hand is anchored by fingers resting on the soundboard (the fingers do the work of the sense of balance along the arm, undermine the sense of balance, deprive the first finger and pick of their support, and restricts the rapid shifting of the centre of gravity);
- vi) The hand is anchored by the ball of the thumb resting on the bridge or lower strings (the ball of the thumb does the work of the sense of balance, undermines the sense of balance, and restricts movement of the centre of gravity);
- vii) The forearm rests on the front of the guitar (the forearm does the work of the elbow, and restricts movement of the centre of gravity);
- viii) The forearm rests on the edge of the guitar (as above, but squeezes the muscles and restricts the supply of blood in the forearm);
- ix) Excessive movement up and down in the wrist (the wrist does the work of the elbow, rather than allowing the elbow to shift the centre of gravity);
- x) Reliance upon visual contact (the eyes do the work of the hands);
- xi) The thumb holds the pick on the joint, or second digit of the first finger (the joint or second digit does the work of the first digit);
- xii) Hand pulled upwards prior to picking (the centre of gravity is too low). This resembles the startle reflex;
- xiii) Hand fallen downwards prior to picking (the centre of gravity is too high). This is sometimes referred to as "rock 'n' roll wrist."

2) Picking.

- i) Alternate picking. This is the system of picking in which a down stroke is followed by an up stroke and an up stroke is followed by a down stroke in a series of consecutive notes of equal duration. A down stroke is assigned to the down beat and an up stroke is

assigned to the up beat. The beginning stroke, whether down or up, is therefore determined by whether the first note is a strong or weak beat.

This method establishes a coherent and reliable approach to picking, which can be modified in response to the demands of the music.

ii) The two main modifications:

a) Accented picking, where prime accents are given down strokes.

But, within the accented picking, alternate picking continues as normal.

b) Consecutive down strokes. At a slow tempo, consecutive down strokes are generally preferable to alternate picking.

iii) Free hand, or suspended, picking. This is where the right arm is only in contact with the guitar at the elbow. The support for the hand is our sense of equipoise and internal balance.

iv) Pivoted hand. This is where the right hand pivots lightly from the ball of the thumb, usually on the bridge or lower strings. This is useful when picking at high speeds in a restricted compass.

v) The motion. There is no such thing as a down stroke: rather, it is the release of the hand holding the pick. The motion established by the release of the hand allows the pick to make contact with the string. Similarly, there is no such thing as an up stroke: rather, the return of the hand holding the pick from its position following the release. The return of the hand allows the pick to make contact with the string. The hand returns to the same position as prior to the release. We establish the motion and apply the motion to the string, without compromising the motion.

a) Release. In establishing the picking, we allow the action to occur. This is a principle of working: we release unnecessary effort. This is the way of effortless effort: it is the way of the artist.

b) Return. The inevitable and necessary response to release: having gone nowhere, we return to where we were.

vi) The electric guitar is power driven, and electricity does much of the right hand's work. Sounding notes may be given to the left hand, for example by hammer-ons and pull-offs. Technology does most of the work of tone and volume production. But, the quality of our sound on acoustic guitar reveals the degree of our skill. But this approach makes possible a clarity of execution on electric guitar which would otherwise be unlikely.

Appendix 2

Aphorisms – Robert Fripp

Honour necessity.

*

A

A beginning is invisible.

A bona fide practitioner engages with their tradition, to the degree that they are able to bear.

A bona fide tradition, in turn, reaches over and takes the practitioner into its confidence.

A burning question comes from need.

A code of ethics aims to remind us of right action when:
 conscience is unawakened;
 conscience is awakened but we are deaf to its promptings;
 we choose to act otherwise.

A comfortable life and a creative life are mutually exclusive.

A completion is a new beginning.

A craft instructor does not work for money, but may accept payment.
A professional teacher teaches for money.

A decision changes the world.

A function of language is to disclose.
An effect is to reveal.

A Guitar Craft course reflects the state of the kitchen.

A group comes together in service of an aim.

At a particular level, each member of the group *is* that group, and the group may act in and through that person.

A gift to be repaid is not properly a gift.

A lie divorces who we are from what we are.

A Lifer is one whose commitment is persistent and ongoing; that is, persistent and ongoing in the good times, the bad times - most difficult of all - the experientially long times when nothing seems to be happening at all; and which commitment is available to be tested and verified, also on an ongoing basis.

A living tradition of craft is a source of power which supports us in our efforts.

A memory is available to us when we are in a qualitatively equivalent state.

A mistake is always forgivable, rarely excusable and never acceptable.

A measure of the person: being in tune, in tone and in time.

A musician is a trained, responsive and reliable instrument at the service of music.

A necessary property of good form is internal consistency.

A performer in the public eye is revealed for what they are.

A point of seeing takes precedence over experience.
But not even creative insight is a substitute for experience.

A present moment is the measure of our presence in time:
a moment in which our attention is engaged.

A principle is an instruction in qualitative endeavour.

A principle is universal.

A rule is specific.

A law is invariable.

A question worth asking is born in experience and driven by necessity.

A reliable sign of an impoverished nature is the seeking of fault in others.

A reliable sign of maturity is that one has established a responsible attitude towards the acquisition, generation and dispersal of money.
A reliable sign of immaturity is the inability to recognise this maturity in others.

A small piece of quality is as big as a big piece of quality.

A technique simulates what it represents, and prepares a space for the technique to become what it represents.

A test of our understanding is whether we can apply it in practice.

A tradition is creatively renewed by its practitioners, those who exemplify the unique quality of Creative endeavour which the tradition broadcasts and makes available through their practice.

Abandon concern for hitting the right note.
Then, hit the right note.

Accept nothing less than what is right.

Act always in accordance with conscience.

Act in accordance with time, place and person:
where you are, when you are, with whomsoever you are.

Act from principle.
Move with intention.

Act in private as if your behaviour were known in public.

Act with courtesy.
Otherwise, be polite.

Address the process rather than the outcome.
Then, the outcome becomes more likely.

Adopt the form.
Hold the space.
Discharge the function.

Alertness is generated by the intentional disturbance or interruption of habitual behavior.

All creative leaps are the same creative leap.

Although I stumble and fall, each time I will rise again.

An act of quality carries intention, commitment and presence, and is never accidental.

An artist acts with the assumption of innocence within a field of experience.

An end may be a finish, a conclusion or a completion.

An exercise is a simulated situation that prepares us for the real thing.

An honest society is an ordered society.
An ordered society is an efficient society.
An efficient society is a richer society.
A richer society may support a poorer society.

An intentional act is against gravity.

Answers will come through the guitar.

Any act that is knowingly non-consensual offers violence on some level.

Any action by a member of a group affects the group as a whole and each of its members.

Any action conveys the intent that gave rise to it.

Any creative endeavor has to accept that the uncertain is not only inevitable, but utterly necessary.

Any culture whose artists are directed or controlled by commercial interests is in mortal danger.

Any artist directed or controlled by commercial interests is in mortal danger.

Any artist willingly directed or controlled by commercial interests is not to be trusted.

Any fool can change the world, but it takes a hero to make their bed and clean the toilet.

Any fool can play something difficult, but to play something simple requires skill.

Any living practice is creative in its nature.

Any practice that does not lead to compassion may be said to have failed.

Any success carries with it an opportunity, a responsibility and an obligation.

Any true way will be able to describe itself through its practitioners.

Any undertaking that has its origins in past practice is determined, a repercussion and an outcome, and not a creative undertaking at all.

Anything real originates in Love.

Anything within a performance is significant, whether intentional or not.

Anything worth doing is worth doing for nothing.

Anything worth doing for nothing is worth doing well.

Appreciation is quieter than complaint.

Art is an operation in the phenomenal that reveals the noumenal.

Artistry repeats the unrepeatable.

As much as any of us bring to a situation, we also bring limitation.

Ask *why*? seven times.

Assume the virtue.

At a certain point all crafts are the same craft.
But up to that point, each craft has its own identity and specialised work to undertake.

Attention is the prime tool of any line of craft.

B

Beauty is the reflection of the appearance of Truth.
Better to seek Truth than the reflection of its appearance;
but better to seek beauty than nothing.

Become a critic only if you have no fear for your soul.

Being: a measure of our reliability, repeatability and responsibility.

Being is a measure of our coherence.

Before we do something, we do nothing.
While doing nothing, we observe ourselves doing nothing.
While observing ourselves doing nothing, we have begun to cultivate the attention.

Before we move from A to B, better to know we're at A.

Before we play standing up, we practice standing up.
Before we practice guitar sitting down, we practice sitting.

Begin and end the day with definition, intention and clarity.
Then, begin and end the day with definition, intention, clarity and love.

Begin with the possible and move gradually towards the impossible.

Better not to ask the future to present itself if we're not prepared to follow where it leads.

Better to be present with a bad note than absent from a good note.

Be very careful about the beginning.

Then, be very careful about the end.

Then, be very careful about the middle.

Boredom is a reliable indicator of the poverty of our inner lives.

Breathing is optional.

C

Change one small part and the whole is changed.

Choice:

The necessary is possible.

The optional is expensive.

The unnecessary is unlikely.

Necessary repercussions are manageable.

Inevitable repercussions are expensive.

Unnecessary repercussions are dangerous.

Circulation is an exact auditory representation of the character and condition of a Circle at any given time.

Comments on others are commentaries on ourselves.

Commitment to our aim carries us through The Great Divide.

Commitments are to be honoured.

Comparison with others is a mark of the fool.

Completion is a new beginning.

Conscience is utterly impersonal.

Courtesy is an inward grace that extends outwards to others.

Courtesy may be too much to ask;

but politeness is not.

Craft acts from knowing, artistry from understanding.

Craft is a universal language.

Craft is its own necessity.

Creative action by one enables creative action in another.

Creative events reach back from the future and draw us towards them.

Creative work is serious play.

Cynicism is death for the artist.

Craft maintains skill.

Discipline maintains craft.

Craft follows the tradition.

Discipline maintains the tradition.

Music creates the tradition.

Curiosity isn't enough to light a fire.

D

Decide to undertake the inevitable.

Define the aim positively.

Do not define the aim negatively.

Define the aim simply, clearly, positively.

Define the space;
organize the space;
protect the space;
hold the space.

Desperate doesn't mean hopeless.

Hopeless doesn't mean impossible.

Impossible doesn't mean unnecessary.

Discard the superfluous.

Discharge one small task superbly.

Discipline confers reliability, repeatability and responsibility.

Discipline confers the capacity to make a commitment in time.

Discipline holds the middle.

Discipline is a vehicle for joy.

Discipline is doing what we say we'll do.

Discipline is necessary, both if we wish to succeed in the outer world or the inner.

Discipline is not an end in itself, only a means to an end.

Discover joy in small things.

Distrust enthusiasm.

Distrust those who profess altruism.

Distrust anyone who wants to teach you something.

Division of attention is only useful if there is attention available to divide.

Do nothing – as much as you can.

Doing nothing, intentionally, is very hard.

Don't be helpful: be useful, be available.

Drugs may open a door to "higher worlds" but render us unable to participate.

Duration is subjective.

Dynamics are good, and more obvious when some notes are quieter than others.

E

Each part does the work of that part, and no other.

Effective action begins when we cease to concern ourselves with being effective.

Efficiency: as little as possible and as much as is necessary.

Efficiency: the right amount of the right kind of energy, in the right place at the right time, doing what is necessary.

Equilibrium is not static.

Establish a point of certainty, clarity and definition.
Then, establish points of certainty, clarity and definition throughout the day.

Establish the principle.

Even genius requires a competent technique.

Everything is different.
Everything is the same.
But in how I see the same, is the difference.

Everything we are is revealed in our playing.

Exceptional performances have the power to change the course of our lives.

Expectation is a prison.

Expectation is the prediction that history will repeat itself, exactly, precisely.

Expect nothing.

And become familiar with C major.

F

Faith is one.
Beliefs are many, and contradictory.

Fear is a preparation for failure.

Firstly, we are ignorant;
secondly, we know we are ignorant;
thirdly, we acknowledge our ignorance;
fourthly, we move to address our ignorance.

Five ways to determine the quality of a person:
their conduct in front of

- sex;
- money;
- the use of time;
- the expression of negativity;
- the exercise of authority over others.

Five ways to determine the extent of our personal freedom:
our conduct in front of

- sex;
- money;
- the use of time;
- the expression of negativity;
- the exercise of authority over others.

Four qualities of improvisation:

- riffing;
- developing variations;
- improvising;
- spontaneous composition.

Four qualities of operation:

- arbitrary;
- optional;
- useful;
- necessary.

Forever is a long time, eternity in the moment.

G

Good habit is necessary.
Bad habit is inevitable.

Good things happen for good reasons.
Bad things happen for good reasons.
Good things happen for bad reasons.
Bad things happen for bad reasons.

Good to listen to yourself;
but listening to others is necessary.

Grace provides a Gate to Paradise for each and every soul that approaches with sincerity and determination.

Gradually extend the parameters of your competence.

Gradual transitions take place suddenly.

Guitar Craft is a blessing.

H

Habit = habitual.
Habit + presence = skill.
Skill + presence + attention = craft.
Skill + presence + attention + understanding = artistry.

Happiness is an outcome of living rightly, not a result of seeking happiness.

Happiness is balanced by unhappiness, so any attempt to achieve happiness is equally to achieve unhappiness.
Better to do what is right, and then we are "happy" whether happy or not.

Hearing transforms sound into music.

Heaven and earth hold hands.

Heaven and earth share the same space.

Help is closer to us than the air that we breathe;
and is carried to us on the breath.

Helpful people are a nuisance.

Honour the role.
Respect the person.
Discharge the function.

How we hold our pick is how we organise our life.

How we see the world changes the world.

Humour is not permitted.

I

Ideas of value escape the grasp of those nominally responsible for them.

If a group is a group, it has an identity.
If a group has an identity, that identity is recognisable and can be named.
So, what is the name of the group?

If a quality is present, it is recognisable and may be named.

If in doubt, consult tradition.
If still in doubt, consult experience.
If still in doubt, consult the body.

If Music wished to enter our world, it would require a vehicle.
One necessary condition of that vehicle is competence, at least.

If our habits are useful, efficient and support our aspirations in life,
they are likely the result of training.

If our habits are the result of trauma, bad education, misdirected intention, accidental and arbitrary arisings, give us discomfort, pain, distress, and fail to support what we wish for ourselves and hope to become, good to address them.

If you wish to discover the degree of habitual functioning, change the tempo of the operation.

If we are able to describe the characteristics of the level to which we aspire, our aspiration becomes possible.

If we are able to make one small act of quality, it will spread throughout the larger act of living.

If we are divorced from the consequences of our actions, our actions are likely to be inappropriate;
perhaps dangerous;
perhaps disastrous.

If we are present in the Circle, we may find the Circle present within us.

If we are unable to say *no*, we are unable to say *yes*.

If we believed that the future of music entering our world depended upon us alone, would anything change?

If we can ask our body to do nothing for half an hour, perhaps we can ask our body to do something for half an hour.

If we can define our aim, we are halfway to achieving it.

If we can describe what success means for us, it becomes attainable.

If we can't listen to ourselves while speaking, we're not quite present with what we are saying.

If we can't play away from the instrument, we can't play with the instrument.

If we change our practice, we change our lives.

If we don't know where we're going, we'll probably get there.

If we have a clear aim, we are on the way to achieving it.

If our aim is unclear, we are on the way to achieving that as well.

If we have nothing to say, better to say nothing.

If we live in the way of craft, the craft lives in us.

If we notice that something is needed, we are called to address it, and halfway committed to doing so.

But, although there may be necessity, there is no compulsion.

If we really love someone, it doesn't matter.

If we don't really love someone, it doesn't matter.

If we wish to know, breathe the air around someone who knows.

If you wish to change the world, better first to know the world you wish to change.

If we work in a group, something becomes possible which is not possible if we are on our own;
providing we can work as if we are one person.

If you know what you are going to play, play something else;
or nothing at all.

If you wish to know, breathe the air around someone who knows.

Impartial observation, without seeking to change anything, changes nothing.

It changes everything.

In commerce, the musician makes music.

In craft, the music makes the musician.

In naming myself, I acknowledge who I am.

In popular culture, the musician calls on the highest part in all of us.

In mass culture, the musician addresses the lower parts of what we are.

In popular culture, our musicians sing to us in our own voice.

In mass culture they shout what we want to hear.

In Right Practice, we establish our personal equilibrium before moving into action.

In strange & uncertain times, such as those we are living in, sometimes a reasonable person might despair.

But hope is unreasonable;

and Love is greater even than this.

In the creative act, the Creation continues.

In the creative act, the future reaches back to invent the present and repair the past.

In the creative leap, history waits outside.

In the creative world, all musicians are one musician.

In the small things, we see the large things.

Integrity: a togetherness of all our parts.

Intelligence is social.

Intentional action generates intentional results and unforeseeable repercussions.

Unintentional action generates unintended consequences, inevitable repercussions and unintentional activity.

Interrogate the error.

Intuition is the seeing of understanding.

In tuning a note we are tuning ourselves.

It is a folly to expect an open door to remain open forever.

It is absurd to believe that practising our instrument is separate from

the rest of our life.

It is difficult to exaggerate the power of habit.

It is impossible for a performer to control a performance.

It is in the nature of Intelligence to make connections.

It is necessary to know the next step;
but not necessary to know the step after that.

It is not asked of us that we never fall.
It is asked of us that we always get up.

It is not necessary to be cheerful.
It is not necessary to feel cheerful.
But look cheerful.

It is not necessary that we succeed.
It is necessary that we make the effort.

It is not possible for the musician to play music.
But, it is possible that the musician is played by music.

It is not possible to create music.
It is possible to be created by music.
It is not possible to play music.
It is possible to be played by music.
So, our question is practical, simple: how?
How may I be played by Music?

It is not our aim to drive out noise.
It is our aim to invite in Silence.

It is possible by work alone to acquire craft.

It's the recovery that matters.

It is through creative acts that we connect to the creative future and
enable it to enter our world and timestream, here and now.

It is unbearable to experience a higher world while present in a lower.

J

Joy is a natural response to being alive, and music one way of giving it voice.

Just below the surface of our everyday world lie riches.

K

Know that the world will die if we do not extend our good wishes to it.

That is, if we do not do the work that is given to us to discharge, part of the world will die.

Know this for a certainty.

L

Learn to recognise the shift between worlds;
that is, the changing qualities of our experiencing.

Let us embrace our mistakes as friends and teachers.

Let us find clean and cheerful friends.

Life is often desperate, but never hopeless.

Let us take our work seriously, but not solemnly.

Life is too short to learn only from our mistakes.

Life is too short to take on the unnecessary.

Life without the morning sitting is like trying to walk without legs.

Like and dislike are cheap.

Limitation is necessary.

Listen also with the ears of the heart.

Listening changes what we are listening to.

Listening is a craft.

Hearing is an art.

Listening is how we eat music, hearing how we digest it.

Local events have global repercussions.

Loud, endless strumming = death.

Love cannot bear that even one soul be denied its place in Paradise.

M

Make better mistakes.

May we have the clarity to see what is required of us;
may we have the courage to accept what is required of us;
may we have the capacity to discharge what is required of us.

May the quality with which we live our life honour the lives of our
parents and mentors.

May we have the courage to fail.
May we also have the courage to succeed.

May we wish for others what we hope for ourselves.

May we trust the inexpressible benevolence of the Creative Impulse.

Memory is a measure of the quality of our attention.

Mistakes are at the centre of learning.

Money is not a problem, only a difficulty.

Motives push.
Aim pulls.

Motives push us as far as the middle.
Aim pulls us out of the middle.

Moving forward feels like moving forward;
and also feels like moving backwards and standing still.

Music changes when we hear it.

Music creates the musician.

Music is a benevolent presence constantly and readily available to all.

Music is a field of benevolent, living intelligence that wishes for us
more than we can bear to know.

Music is a language to talk to God.
Fortunately, music is a language through which God speaks to us.

Music is a powerful and direct teacher which speaks to us all, to the
degree that we are able to hear.

Music is a quality, organised in sound and in time, by people.
The quality is ungovernable.
The forms of organisation are mainly governed by the cultures,
societies and people in and through which music appears.

Music is a process of blending the world of Silence and the world of
sound.

Music is a way of transformation.

Music is as available to us as we are available to music.

Music is our friend.

Music is the architecture of Silence.

Music is the cup that holds the wine of Silence.

Sound is that cup, but empty.
Noise is that cup, but broken.

Music is a language of creative intelligence.

Music is Silence, singing.

Music moves us by speaking to us directly and immediately, in ways
that elude easy explanation;
but are no less real for that.

Music reaches beyond words and between cultures.

Music so wishes to be heard that sometimes it calls on unlikely
characters to give it voice;
and to give it ears.

Music without love is not properly music.

N

Necessity is a measure of aim.

Necessity is never far from what is real.

Never become so popular that the public takes an interest in you.

Not even death can end the process of our becoming.

Nothing is compulsory, but some things are necessary.

Nothing worthwhile is achieved suddenly.

Noticing is a creative moment.

O

Offer no violence.

Once a decision is made, life becomes simpler.

Once we develop an understanding of our particular practice, the practice changes: it has grown, and continues to grow, with and through our engagement in it.

One key to personal freedom: the extent to which we accept responsibility for exercising our rights and meeting our obligations.

One measure of possible and impossible is the probable.

One measure of the power of a new idea: the degree of hostility that rises to meet it.

One note, struck truly, is a symphony.

One small act of quality is as big as one big act of quality.

One string is often sufficient;
and sometimes already one string too many.

Our concern is with process rather than result.

Our enemy is our friend.

Our fond beliefs, of who and what we are, are merely puff and flutter.

Our living is as rich as our attention is available.

Our sense of personal responsibility, and capacity to exercise it, is primarily a result of education.

Our will is free to the extent we accept responsibility for exercising that freedom.

P

Perfection is impossible.
But I may choose to serve perfection.

Performance is inherently unlikely.

Performance is intimate, yet utterly impersonal.

Perhaps music is the language spoken by angels.

Perhaps Paradise is not what we expect it to be.

Persistence is a measure of our wish.

Playing fast is easier than playing slow.

Play is at the heart of creative endeavour.

Philosophy without a practice is a form of madness.

Power is the capacity to access what is possible.

Practice is how we are.

Practicing is an ordered activity directed towards the service of an aim.

Practicing attention is a way of practising love.

Process is Intelligence getting to know itself.

Professionalism is already a considerable achievement.
But professionalism is not enough.

Professionalism repeats the repeatable.
Artistry repeats the unrepeatable.

Q

Quality is an economy.

Quality is ungovernable by number.

Quiet is the absence of sound, silence the presence of Silence.

Quality spreads.

R

Reason alone is a one-legged stool.

Recognising error in ourselves is an opportunity to forgive error in others.

Relaxation is necessary tension.
Tension is unnecessary tension.

Relaxation is never accidental.

Rely on what someone does, not what they claim to do.

Remain in motion, whether stationary or not:

Remember to play.

Rhythm becomes more apparent when we stop playing from time to time.

Right action moves from principle.

Right action, without a discipline, is unlikely.

Right Proportion: a harmony between our outer and inner lives, a balance between responsibilities to self, family and community.

Rightness is its own necessity.

Rules are only necessary where conscience is not engaged.

S

Signposts are useful when we know where we are going.

Silence confers the gift of insight, if we are able to accept it.

Silence has a different frequency range to Quiet.

Silence is a bridge between worlds.

Silence is a distant echo of the approach of the Muse.

Silence is a vehicle for Grace.

Silence is an invisible glue.

Silence is not silent.

Silence is the field of creative musical intelligence that dwells in the space between the notes, and holds them in place.

Small additional increments are transformative.

Sometimes God hides.

Sometimes God waves.

Sometimes God smiles.

Some things protect themselves by being what they are.

Sometimes no answer is an answer;
especially when the answer is no.

Sometimes the impossible is necessary.

Space has its own rules and determining conditions.

Spirit embraces matter.

Stillness is dynamic, and only appears to be static.

Such is the benevolence of the Creative Impulse that creative insights, invested by the tradition in its practitioner, are shaped to marry the individual and their Individuality to their tradition, and provide a dwelling-place for them within it.

Suffer cheerfully.

Suffering is necessary, unnecessary, voluntary & involuntary.

Suffering is our experience of the distance between what we are and who we wish to become.

Suffering of quality is invisible to others.

T

Talking is expensive.

The absence of presence is loss.
The presence of absence is dangerous.

The act of music *is* the music.

The act of music is, fundamentally, a social act.
So, how do we music with others?

The aim is to reach the place where we stand face to face with Music.
Then, we make our own judgment.
But, if we are touched and held by this gentle embrace, nothing can ever be quite the same.

The aim of Guitar Craft is to know Right Conduct in all situations, even situations where we find ourselves for the first time.

The aim of the musician is to create a construct through which music may enter our world.

The apprentice is noisy;
The craftsman shapes sound;
The master shapes silence;
The genius is silent.

The artist is a bridge between the possible, the impossible and the actual.

The attitude that life owes us something encourages life to thwart our endeavours.

The audience is Mother to the music.

The benevolence of the Creative Impulse is inexpressible.

The centre of discipline: the degree to which we are able to hold ourselves in front of a challenge.

The concern of the musician is music.

The concern of the professional musician is business.

The craftsman teaches by what they do.

The master teaches by who they are.

The Creative Impulse inhabits whatever instrument is made available.

The creative process is utterly mysterious: magical, unknowable, indefinable.

The creative process is also know-able, do-able, feel-able, available.

The creative impulse *will* create.

It has to: this is its necessity.

The criteria are reliability, repeatability & responsibility.

The effect of a bright idea is to undermine the aim it nominally serves.

The finest quality of attention we may give is love.

The foundation of learning is play.

The future is what the present can bear.

The gates of Heaven open to persistence.

The Great Divide: too far from the beginning to go back, too far from the end to go forward.

This is a dangerous place.

The greater the seeming imperfection, the greater the possible transformation.

The help available is not what we might expect; and the help we receive does not always take the form we might want.

The Key To it All: the quality of our attention.

The master musician works from Silence.

The mind leads the hands.

The musician and audience are parents to the music.

The musician has three disciplines: of the hands, the head and the heart.

The only contribution we make is the quality of our work.

The performer can hide nothing, not even the attempt to hide.

The poverty of our nature is no limit to our aspiration.

The power of a Network lies in the connections between the centres, not in the centres.

The primary characteristic of Right Practice is effortlessness.

The principles we honor in our musical life may be applied in our personal life.

The problem with knowing what we want is, we might get it.

The process invents itself as it unfolds.

The professional musician asks: does this work?

The master musician asks: is this true?

The professional musician is required to be honest.

The master musician must be true.

The qualitative dimension of Music is an aspect of Intelligence with which, through which, and to which we may connect and be interconnected.

This should not be difficult, as we are already connected.

So why is it so hard?

The quality and extent of our life is governed by the quality and extent of our attention.

The quality of our perceptions determines how we see the world;
how we see the world determines our judgment;
our judgment determines how we interact with the world;
how we interact with the world changes the world.
So, the quality of our perceptions changes the world.

The quality of the question determines the quality of the answer.

The quality we bring to one small part of our life is the quality we bring to all the small parts of our life.
All the small parts of our life *is* our life.

The question holds the answer.
So, what is the question?

The questions we ask direct the course of our lives.

The *real world* is as available to us as we can bear to be present to what is *real*.

The *real world* is not what we imagine it to be: because it's real, not imaginary.

The refusal to be who-we-are by what-we-are: *negation*.
The refusal to accept that what-we-are is a sufficient condition: *aspiration*.
The refusal to be less than who we are: *attainment*.
The refusal to accept less than what we are born to achieve: *service*.

The right thing at the wrong time is wrong.
The wrong thing at the right time may be right.
The right thing at the right time is beautiful.

The same act in different worlds is an entirely different act, with entirely different repercussions.

The science is in knowing, the art in perceiving.

The simplest is the most difficult to discharge superbly.

The source of our knowing is of greater value than the extent of our knowledge.

The student creates the teacher;
but only where there is a Teaching to create the student.

The tradition is unique.
The practitioner is also unique.

The trouble with knowing what we want is that we might get it.

The unity of all things is experienced primarily through the feelings.

The visibility of any particular school of craft depends upon the nature of its work and the conditions of the culture it works within.

The way we describe our world shows how we think of our world;
how we think of our world governs how we interpret our world;
how we interpret our world directs how we participate in the world.
How we participate in the world shapes the world.

The work is in the middle.

The work of one supports the work of all.

There's more to hearing than meets the ear.

There are as many paths to music as there are musicians.
Subjectively, each path is unique; objectively, each path is the same.
But, there are signposts; there are maps; there are guides.

There are few things as convincing as death to remind us of the quality with which we live our life.

There are no mistakes, save one: the failure to learn from a mistake.

There are three kinds of repercussions: the necessary, the unnecessary and the inevitable.

There is a listening that contributes.

There is an essential danger in seeking fault in others.

There is little that is dull in an active practice.

There is merit, and blessing, and reward for those who undertake necessary work; attenuated to the degree that their work is undertaken in anticipation of merit, and blessing, and reward.

There is no record of the saints arguing amongst themselves as to who is closer to God.

There is no separation.

There is nothing like exposure to public ridicule to galvanise the attention.

There is nothing that we can do.
But we must do what we can.

There is only one musician, in many bodies.

Things are not as bad as they seem.
They are worse than that.
They are also better than that.

Thought is tangible and has effect.

Three ways to discover our faults:
 ask a friend;
 ask an enemy;
 recognise a fault in others.

“Tomorrow” is the first lie of the Devil.

To take care, in any activity, is a way of expressing love.

To try is to fail.

Trust is the recognition, and acceptance, of commitment.

Trust the process.

Turn a seeming disadvantage to your advantage.
The greater the seeming disadvantage, the greater the possible advantage.

Twenty quality minutes a day and the world turns.
One hour of quality a day and the world changes.

U

Understanding changes what we understand.

Understanding is simple. Knowing is complicated.

Understanding is without end, but understanding is the beginning.

Unless we are able to hold two contradictory positions simultaneously, solutions will escape us.

Unless we can describe the characteristics of mastery, mastery will elude us.

W

Want is of the earth.
Wish is from the stars.

We are all at the beginning.

We are all at the same point.
But our understanding of that point is different;
our experiencing of this point is different.

We are asked to work as honourably we may, but not too hard.
Too hard:

1. Two steps beyond hard, rather than one.
2. When determination becomes “grim determination”.
3. When we lose a sense of ourselves.

We are each created unique, to fulfil a destiny.
For that, we move through the conditions of our fate.

We are each equipped to recognize what we need.

We are where we need to be.

We attract Silence by being silent.

We may trust that, even in the noise and confusions of daily living,
necessity speaks to us.

We are held responsible for our actions, whether intentional or not.

We are not apart from the world.
The world is not apart from us.

We are not held responsible for the repercussions of play.
We are held responsible for the repercussions of creative endeavour.

We begin again, again.

We begin by doing nothing.
Then, we move to doing something.

We begin where we are.
But we begin *today*.

We begin where we are.
So, where are we?

We can do whatever we like, providing we can pick up the tab.

We cannot govern the weather.
But perhaps we can push out the boat;
and raise the sail.

We can't go far on enthusiasm, but we don't go far without it.

We can't fix the problems of the world, but we may deepen our
practice.

We cross the threshold, between the space where our ordinary activities take place, into the sacred space of musical performance; paying attention to our first footfall; relying upon one person, at least, to call on the Muse for help.

We go as far as we can, and then a little further.

We have the freedom to exercise our rights to the same degree that we meet our obligations.

We have the right to choose our form of suffering.

We have three rights:

- the right to work;
- the right to pay to work;
- the right to suffer the consequences of our work.

We have three obligations:

- the obligation to work;
- the obligation to pay to work;
- the obligation to suffer the consequences of our work.

We know others to the extent that we know ourselves.

We learn also by osmosis.

We may not have an equality of talent;
we may not have an equality of experience.
But we may be equal in aspiration;
we can be equal in commitment.

We may understand our knowing, but we can't know our understanding.

We move from making unnecessary efforts, the exertions of force, to making necessary efforts: the direction of effortlessness.

We must be able to play in our sleep;
because usually we do.

We only have what we give away.

We pay our own tab.

We perceive our perceptions.

We recognise in others what we know most deeply in ourselves.

We'll never get rich by hard work.
But, we'll never get rich without it.

Welcome the unexpected, but not the arbitrary.

What do you notice when you have noticed something?

What is highest in us is not apart from the Highest.

What is right accords with principle.

What we get out is in direct proportion to what we put in.

What we hear is the quality of our listening.

What without how, even assuming the why, is not much use.

When a musician believes that music is a commodity, music dies in them.

When a record company makes a mistake, the artist pays for it.
When a manager makes a mistake, the artist pays for it.
When the artist makes a mistake, the artist pays for it.

When an efficient habit is combined with an alert and engaged sense of personal presence, we are on the way to developing a flexible skill.

When facing an impossible task, make it harder.

When our note is true, we are surprised to find that it sounds very much like Silence; only a little louder.

When the quality of the student is low, the school asks high prices.
When the quality is high, the school pays.

When Silence visits, it speaks to us to the degree that we are able to bear.

When stuck, increase the complexity.

When there is noticing, something is noticed.
This *something noticed* becomes available to reflection.
With reflection, the experience may be digested.
When digested, there is evaluation.
Then something else becomes possible.

When we act as we want, we may get what we like.
When we act as we like, we may get what we want.
But not what we need.

When we act wrongly, let us not compound the error by offering justification.

When we are in The Basement, we don't know we are in The Basement.
We only know when we've left.

When we do what is necessary for us to do, the world keeps turning.
When we understand what we are doing, the world changes.

When we are being creative, we may not know we are being creative.

When we have nothing to say, it is very hard to say nothing.
When we have nothing to do, it is very hard to do nothing.

When we recognise a fault in others, we recognise a fault in ourselves.

When we stand face to face with Music, we see what is behind it.

When we walk on stage, we have a lot more on our hands than making music.

When you're tired, you've had enough, and can't do anything – don't do anything.
And while you're not doing anything, practice.

Where the spirit leads, follow.

Where we're going is how we get there.

So, if where we're going is how we get there, we are already where we're going.

Wish attracts I.

With commitment, all the rules change.

With craft the musician can copy something old.

With discipline the musician may copy something new.

Y

You are playing with friends;
whether you like them or not;
whether they like you, or not;
whether we know it or not.

*

Honour sufficiency.