

Body Map Self Map II

The Andover Educator exploration of the self map as it affects practicing and performance began some years back in this very building, in Lisa Marsh's Coordinate Movement class. Some probing questions put to a pianist in the class concerning her ineffective practicing revealed that she did not think of herself as an artist, in spite of her long training in music and her scheduled recital. "Oh, I wouldn't consider myself an artist," she said. She seemed to think that would be presumptuous. She wouldn't presume, she seemed to be saying.

I asked her to change her mind, and I offered her my dictionary's definition of artist, "...one who produces or expresses what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance." Brahms produced the beautiful, appealing sonata of more than ordinary significance that the student was practicing. The student must produce it, again, in performance. She must express it. To do that successfully she must behave like an artist. To behave like an artist, she must be one in her own mind, that is, in her own self map.

Assuming provisionally the status of artist, our student practiced again in front of the group, this time with greater attention and intention. Nine weeks later she reportedly played a fine concert, as an artist. She had changed her self map to secure what she had earned in perfecting her body map.

Now, a decade later, we know that inquiry into one's self map as an artist is as essential to success as inquiry into one's body map, which, as you all know, is carried out by self-questioning. How do I conceive a hip joint? Where is the hip joint located? Inside the pelvis or outside? Facing downward? Or outward? What bones move at the hip joint? Through what range? How does the hip joint coordinate with other joints--in pedaling the organ, for instance? Is the hip joint the joint of choice for the task at hand? If not, what joint is? You all know that when this kind of scrutiny leads to the discovery of an error in the body map, you correct it.

I'm proposing this morning that there is a similar set of questions that will reveal what your self map as an artist really is and help you correct it, as you would a body map, and then refine it, just as you constantly refine your

body map. Let's begin with the question that confronted our pianist years ago, "Do I really claim my status as artist?"

Our understanding of the artist's self map took a walk-the-moon kind of leap forward with the publication of Thomas Mark's *Motion, Emotion, and Love: The Nature of Artistic Performance*. A trained and accomplished philosopher, Tom wrote of his book, "...I shall offer arguments to establish the artistic status of performers. I shall claim that they are indeed artists in their own right and make clear what their artworks are. That is, I shall insist that although a performance presents an artwork--a sonata, a work of choreography, or play--which is the work of one artist--Beethoven or Balanchine or Shakespeare--it also offers another artwork that is the work of the performer. Two artworks are present simultaneously. In addition, I shall insist that the performer's work is as complex, demanding, expressive, and profound as any other kind of artwork."

Long ago, I took an intensive summer course in linguistics from the great scholar of language Henry Lee Smith. One of Smith's goals was to establish the importance of adjectives in our use of English. He delighted in discovering examples of adjectives trumping nouns in meaning, his ready example being those that modify mother: birth mother, adoptive mother, surrogate mother, absentee mother. Tom Mark takes advantage of the power of the adjective when he advocates the term *performing artist* in his analysis. When you say to yourselves, "I am an artist," you recruit a powerful noun. When you say, "I am a performing artist," you enhance its power with a modifier that defines your tribe as including not just Arthur Rubinstein, Jascha Heifetz, and Maria Callas, but also Lawrence Olivier, Sarah Bernhardt, Margot Fonteyn, and Rudolf Nureyev. This list illustrates the poignancy inherent in the designation *performing artist*. These performing artists are dead and their art works no longer exist. In this, they differ from Beethoven, Balanchine, and Shakespeare, whose works survive them. Tom Mark argues that performers' works of art are no less so for being ephemeral.

This poignancy is present among us here today as we remember Connie Barrett. If you were present at past conferences, you heard Connie perform. Now you cannot, though you may hear other performances of the music she played when she was with us. They won't be the same, though. As a performing artist, Connie gave us her own interpretations of what she played. Her Bach Suites for Solo Cello didn't sound like anybody else's. She

gave them an unusual rhythmic drive and brought out their capacity to delight. To describe Connie, we can call on another adjective. She was an interpretive artist. Tom's wonderful book explicates interpretation in a way to assign interpretation its full glory and responsibility.

"Interpretation," he writes, "refers to the ways in which two instances of a single work may differ from one another while remaining instances of the same work." Think Hamlet. One interpretation has him in blue jeans and a black t-shirt on a bare stage, another robed in furs in a cold castle insufficiently warmed by massive fireplaces. In one interpretation, he is brashly adolescent. In another, older, self-conscious, cerebral. Recent interpretations of Balanchine dances make them more robust and athletic than the man himself would have approved, and today we are not surprised by new performances of Beethoven symphonies that hark back to less gushingly romantic sounds than we have heard in recent decades.

Tom continues, "...since every instance is made up of elements that could have been otherwise, every instance is under some interpretation or other. When a performer produces an instance, every part of it can be seen as the result of a choice among possibilities, which means that the performer chooses among interpretations....If a performer does choose consciously, he is deciding exactly how he wants the work to go. When he has reached clear conclusions about that, we can say that...he has an interpretation in mind."

Having arrived at an interpretation, in itself a demanding task, the performing artist must then go ahead and actually produce the instance, as our Portland State artist did in her successful recital. We can help young students with their dual tasks of preparation and performance by referring to practicing as "practicing to perform" and by constantly reminding even very young students that they are making choices. "Oh, you seem to like that on the fast side. Am I hearing that right?" "You played that passage softer than the markings suggest, but that's okay if it's what you really want."

Having considered, "Do I claim my status as an artist?" we can move on to question number two. Have I *mapped* myself as a performing artist, with all the obligations and privileges that entails? The obligations are big ones and the privileges, profound. It is your privilege to interpret works of art by recreating them in performance. It is your privilege to deepen your interpretations over time and to communicate them to receptive audiences.

It is your privilege to build within yourself an emotional range few humans even dream of because you experience first hand the emotions of all that amazing music.

An implication here is that a musician may learn from other performing artists, such as actors, whose training, more than yours, involves being reminded that any great work of art to be performed holds within it an infinite number of interpretations. The world may run out of oil, but it is not going to run out ways to do Hamlet.

How does an actor, then, arrive at his interpretation of Hamlet? By making himself profoundly available to the text in the light of his own nature. A forty year old actor approaching the role will necessarily make choices different from those a younger man might make. The actor becomes intimately acquainted with Hamlet, this person, Hamlet, with these emotions, and these thoughts, who expresses them in these ways. How, after all, is Hamlet Hamlet rather than some peevish, disillusioned, over-indulged brat any reasonable person would want to avoid in any circumstance? Because he expresses his disillusion and his anguish in stunningly eloquent and surprising ways. The means of expression elevate conflicted thoughts and feelings, taking them out of the ordinary, rendering them singular and engaging. Once in a while an actor comes along who can give us Hamlet's thoughts and feelings full out while simultaneously indulging delight in his own powers of expression. Now, that's really something to see. It's in the text, but few actors have the range to manage it. Tom wrote, "I shall insist that the performer's work is as complex, demanding, expressive, and profound as any other kind of artwork." Indeed.

A musician comes to interpretation through a similar process as the actor learning Hamlet, which Tom describes this way, "I cannot know before studying the score what feelings will or should emerge, because each work is unique. I must learn the emotion of the piece from the music and then, by examining my responses and refining my movement, find ways to make my experience more nuanced, more coincident with the emotions that the score seems to demand. In the end, the whole composition is mapped as a complex of interrelated emotions as well as a complex of sounds. I am using emotion and feeling cognitively to discover the nature of the work." In this kind of art making, the sensory, the cognitive, and the emotional form a whole greater than the parts. Interpretation is an internal team sport.

Question three. “When I call myself an interpretive artist, do I credit how “complex, demanding, expressive, and profound” are the requirements?” In other words, do I fully confront and accept the obligations? Singers, it is your obligation when creating a role in musical theatre of any sort to give us not just this person, with these feelings and these thoughts, but also he or she who would express them in these ways, lyrically, for instance, or in aria. Don’t forget those words: who would express them in these ways. The power of “these ways” was made evident to me on seeing my first opera, *Der Rosenkavalier* with Elizabeth Schwarzkopf in the role of the Marschallin. On a ten week National Collegiate Players tour of Europe in the summer of 1960, I knew something about the stage but little about music and nothing about opera. I gamely went with everyone else to the Salzburg opera house and was promptly thrown into the deep end of a very big pool. I swam there, not by my own actions, but by those of the performers, who buoyed me up and eventually hurled me out of the pool and into the streets of an everyday world where I could contemplate something of extreme importance: these ways. Schwarzkopf gave us a woman, not merely with all those poignant feelings and bitter but reconciling thoughts, but also she who would express them in these fabulously dramatic ways. No one could doubt it. When roles fail in musical theatre or in song recitals, it is most often for this reason. An example, I saw a singer attempt the role of rock star Janis Joplin. She seemed throughout more likely to use the expressive means of a Joan Baez than a Janis. For all the singer’s effort and for all her movement, she couldn’t convince anybody that as a singer she would express her thoughts and feelings in these rock and roll ways. This matter is as important for oratorio as for any other form. How often have you seen soloists in oratorio who seem to ache for any other way but this? Some seem to want to launch themselves into opera!

Question four. When I say I am an artist, by what definition am I so? What is my own definition of artist? In Lisa’s studio, I offered our student a definition from *The American College Dictionary*, “...one who produces or expresses what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance.” This definition has the virtue of being a working definition, one consistent with mapping oneself as a performing artist in its emphasis on the producing and the expressing. The matter of what is art and who is an artist has been muddied and muddled by intense and convoluted contention among critics, anthropologists, and historians. In creating your self map, don’t worry about that. You don’t need a graduate course in

aesthetics to create your self map. The contradictory definitions coming out of scholarship do not for the most part come from artists. Scholars' definitions, which fulfill criteria relevant to their professions, are rarely as useful to working artists as our own definitions. In this realm, you can forget scholarship. Find a good working definition for yourself and leave the theorizing to people whose self map is, "I write theory."

Question number five. You are a performing artist. Who, in all honesty--who, in your experience--is in that category with you? If you sing, are instrumentalists there? If you sing opera, do you include singers who do not? Do only classical singers qualify? To put the question another way, "Whom do I call my peers?"

Some of you belong to subsets that offer challenges in self mapping. Bridget Jankowski is writing a book called *What Every Pastoral Musician Needs to Know about the Body*, to be published next year by GIA, in which she eloquently explores the special requirements of that adjective *pastoral* and how to meet them. I can tell you from personal experience that conventions of pastoral musicians have a congenial atmosphere all their own. Because I have one in my family, I have spent a good deal of time with persons self-identified as liturgical musicians, a different breed altogether. They gather for support and study in the AAM, the Association of Anglican Musicians, where the emphasis is on sterling quality in choral performance. Liturgical musician: a subset of a subset. Perhaps you can imagine the complex obligations of such a role, which, as I observe their being met by my son-in-law, often seem more in the world of theatre than other musical settings.

In the mix among church musicians who use the adjectives *pastoral* and *liturgical* are, oddly, those who do not define themselves that way. Playing churches may be what they do but it is not who they are. Though they play in a church, they are in relationship to the music but not to the setting. They might as well be playing the organ in a barn for the annual meeting of the Farm Bureau for all the difference the setting makes to them. That these musicians are usually not fired from their jobs means that they can meet at least some of the obligations of a church musician without claiming the adjective. This is often true of Jewish musicians who play in Christian churches and non Jewish musicians who play synagogues. It seems that something inherent in relating to an audience suffices in relating to a congregation, a truth worthy of contemplation.

Symphony musicians confront a profound self-mapping issue in that they play someone else's interpretation of the music they perform. The conductor may form his or her interpretation of a symphonic work by appreciating the particular musical qualities of individuals within the orchestra, but that's not much consolation for a performing artist. Having been married to a symphony musician for twenty-seven years, I can tell you that late night discussions over glasses of cognac often dwell on this problem, musicians confiding to each other that they feel more like a collective instrument in the hands of some conductors than they feel like performers. It's why so many symphony musicians carve out ways to perform on their own or in chamber music, where they get to be what they call "real musicians." Now, there's an adjective for you! Real! "Only when I play outside the symphony do I feel like a real musician!"

One possibility is to conceive an alternative, which I believe I have witnessed, at least in chamber orchestras. One conductor, I wish I could remember his name, who frequently conducted a chamber orchestra drawn from Columbus, Ohio's larger orchestra, did so from the violin. For visibility, his chair was elevated somewhat above the others'. He functioned as both concertmaster and conductor. In rehearsal, he listened intently to the other musicians, always encouraging them to reveal their sense of the music. He crafted what he did as conductor based on what he heard. The performances presented a collective interpretation coordinated by one musical intelligence but not dominated by it. This can happen in very lucky choral groups, too.

In any case, please do examine in yourself who are your peers. Ask yourself what would happen to the quality of your practicing and your performance if others were included? Could you as a singer map yourself as a performing artist in league with Maria Muldaur, David Bowie or George Strait? Or not? Maybe not, but it is a question to be asked.

Question number six. What do I say of my tribe, whoever they are? A student of mine, a singer, wrote down everything she heard herself say about singers over a period of two weeks. Then she sat down with her list and a colored pencil and assessed the truth of each assertion. Not one notion was wholly true. Some were patently false, and yet she had said them. They were part of her self map. They informed her expectations, and they limited what she could achieve in her career. The most important

question about every aspect of your self map as an artist may be TRUE or FALSE.

As an outsider all these decades, with a nonetheless intimate look into your various worlds, I often wonder what would happen if musicians saw themselves as part of a universal tribe in somewhat the way scientists do, or journalists? Your being a member of a community of musicians, as it were, might involve a Yo Yo Ma kind of collaboration with others or it might be internal to yourself, only affecting your self-conception. When Yo Yo Ma goes on the silk road, is he slumming or is he claiming one of the perks of being a performing artist as he invites others to make music with him, however different their training or background?

If we take the definition of self as “the individual consciousness in its relation to itself” seriously, as I hope we will, it is in your deepest self that you become part of a great community, if you do. Classical musicians are very good at putting themselves in a category that goes back centuries and forward over some unknown period of time, as long as the likes of John Adams keep coming along. There is a “communion” of classical musicians, as it were, in time. An opera singer in Peoria may be more identified with someone who sang her roles a hundred years ago than she is with the jazz singer living in the next block. Does this make sense? Is it healthy? The inquiry goes on.

It would be wrong to take up this subject without mention of persons for whom it is moot. In wide areas of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, musicians are forbidden to play or sing. Punishments for doing so are extreme and cruel. By their own accounts, the musicians are personally devastated, having lost both their livelihoods and their vocations. Colleagues in parts of the world where they are free to be themselves try to bring those artists out into civilization, but this is hard to do, as hard in some cases as getting Jewish musicians out of Germany and the occupied countries before and during World War II.

Another question. I am a performing artist. What do I say of my audience? Is my relationship with my audience truly included in my self map? I am a performing artist and I perform for whom? Tom devotes quite a few pages to this important matter in his book, inviting readers to prepare to communicate to an audience and to commune with an audience, to share

the experience of the art being played, and to remain receptive throughout to the power of an audience's attention.

I have a vivid memory of seeing Yehudi Menuhin play the Bach Double Concerto with the then concertmaster of the Columbus Symphony, Michael Davis. Before the piece began, Menuhin took a long look at the beautiful space he was in, he acknowledged the orchestra and shook hands with the conductor and with Michael. Then he visibly put himself into relationship with his very large audience. We could feel him seeing us. I'm pretty sure he winked at us as he brought his violin into playing position. We were taken into a large embrace that lasted throughout the performance. Everybody knew it. It was profoundly enlivening.

In the practice room, you must claim a space for movement large enough for the audience you will have in performance. I learned about this from rock musicians who studied with me when they played Polaris Amphitheater back in the old days, in Columbus. It is highly instructive to be in the presence a guitar player who wouldn't tune a string without claiming a space big enough to hold twenty-thousand ardent fans. Some of these musicians seemed almost constantly, within themselves, in relation to an audience. I am a performing artist and, boy, do I have an audience. That's the musician's operating self map. There is every reason to recommend it.

The relationship between performer and audience is more complex than most people realize. It is crucially important to understand it, however, both for performers and for audience members. I cannot explore it fully here, but I refer you to Tom's analysis in *Motion, Emotion, and Love*, the "Loving Relationships" section.

I *can* share this secret with you. Right relationship to audience is the way to win symphony auditions. When frustrated musicians told me they couldn't win auditions, I would ask, "Do you treat your hearers as audience?" No, it turns out. They didn't. It even seemed to them an odd question, especially if they were playing their auditions behind a screen. Never mind, I would say. Auditioning is a real performance and you must treat that audience with all the regard you would bring to any other. Being behind a screen is all the more reason to communicate, not an excuse not to. Your music has to reach across that barrier and move your audience. Your hearers may be initially listening for technique but you will win them over with music.

Year ago, at Asilomar, I spoke about our preliminary understanding of the self map as an elaboration of the body map. Having incrementally built the neural equipment for locomotion, manipulation, and speech, three-year-olds naturally begin to link all their new-found movement to an emerging sense of self, which, in favorable circumstances, they appear to celebrate.

Tom's *Motion, Emotion, and Love* provides a lucid account of how the body map grows through experience to ultimately produce a nervous system with the nested capabilities to execute feats of performance such as you will hear this week. Andover Educator trainees should study those chapters. Let me proclaim, as an aside, that what the Board of Directors of Andover Educators is accruing is nothing less than a canon, a set of documents that we hope will stand for all time as a growing resource for artists. Tom's book will hold a central place in that canon, I believe, along with the constantly improved manuals for training, all the profound understanding that has come to us from Richard Nichols, the works coming out of Mountain Peak Music, *What Every Singer* from Plural Publishing, and everything available from GIA. I offer that word *canon* for its reflecting the importance of the information being garnered and the value of its being seen as a whole, not just a collection of parts.

Richard Nichols. I now get the opportunity to thank Richard publicly for his profound contributions to Andover Educators and to many of you personally. Richard has given you teachers and trainees the scientific story of the body map. He exemplifies how a self map grows from a body map and then remains throughout life a part of it. In Richard, the musician is part of the man, and what a generous man he is. When I first devised the six-hour course called *What Every Musician Needs to Know about the Body*, I gave it five times free of charge around the country to as many people who would come, trying to get it right. When I gave the course in Atlanta, Richard was there, taking notes. Afterward, over dinner, he gave me invaluable feedback. Among other parts of the course that still reflect his thoughtful expertise is the matter of humero-scapular rhythm. That single understanding has saved careers and furthered others. It's there in the arm hour because of Richard, and I am so very grateful.

I now give you, not the scientific, but the grandma view of the self map. A self is a body plus everything that body does to know and express itself. With proper nurturance, oneself grows organically. The darling three year

old whose body map has developed to the remarkable degree that she can now run, jump, talk, and sing, finds her frontier in the care and feeding of her self map as she becomes a reader, a daughter with increasing responsibilities within the household, a strong swimmer, a fledgling musician, and a person of moral integrity fiercely protective of her leisure. If things go well, every aspect of her emerging self remains linked to movement and to the neural structures that make movement possible. She is herself the movement of eyes across a page. She is the dance she makes as she sets the table for dinner. She is every swim stroke, every bow stroke, every wave and handshake, every teenage rolling of the eyes, every movement of lips and tongue in increasingly sophisticated speech. Suppose she does go on to become a performing artist. With luck, her teachers will support her in acquiring the technical skills she needs, but also the generosity of spirit, self-regard, reciprocity, attention, and receptivity that Tom writes of so eloquently in his book. That's what a grandmother wants.

So, next question. How does my self map as a performing artist relate to my self map as a whole? Students often told me that the corrections in their body maps that made it possible to play their instruments free of pain and with great efficiency also helped them in their daily lives, getting infants in and out of car seats, vacuuming the rug, working out in the gym. The body map for playing the violin informed the rest of life. Similarly, a self map that grants you right relationship with your body, your instrument, the music you play, and your audience can inform your relationship to colleagues and students. Concerning students, ask yourself, "When I teach, do I teach as an artist?" Is the person in the studio with a student from 11 to noon the same person who will rehearse a string quartet at 4? If the answer is no, please change it to yes. Learn to bring your full artistic self to the giving of a lesson. You will be teaching by example while remaining true to your vocation.

We can imagine a virtuous circle, can we not? One in which one's self map as an artist profoundly informs the rest of life. You care for your child calling on everything you learned in taking care of your Steinway. You relate to your spouse as respectfully as to your audience. And vice versa. You bring the regard you gain for the natural world through your hiking and camping to bear on your sonata. This week you give the piece you are learning the same deep attention you devoted last week to a series of spectacular sunsets.

You are practicing your sonata. Do you fully claim your status as performing artist when you are practicing? If not, study Tom Mark's chapter on the subject and do all the inner work recommended there. It will be well worth the effort, I promise.

Nearing conclusion here, I can't help indulging in a conceit, not in the sense of excessive pride but in the sense of an elaborate metaphor, how elaborate is up to you. Imagine your self map is an interpretation. Let's paraphrase Tom's paragraph, thus, "...since every instance {of an artist's self map} is made up of elements that could have been otherwise, every {map} is under some interpretation or other. When a performer produces {himself or herself,} every part...can be seen as the result of a choice among possibilities, which means that the performer chooses among interpretations {of oneself}....If a performer does choose consciously, he (or she) is deciding exactly how he (or she) wants {to be}. When he has reached clear conclusions about that, we can say that...he has an interpretation in mind." Or, she has an interpretation in mind. This is a benevolent analogy which encourages you to produce and express something of an intricacy and specificity sufficient to the demands.

Near the end of his book, Tom writes, "Because the existence and the making of the artwork generated in performance are simultaneous, a performance is a period of uninterrupted artistic creation. We in the audience are present at the creation of an artwork. We encounter artistic creation in "real time." The performer molds our feelings into a coherent experience of the artwork within the context of a loving relationship and our experience ends when the performance ends. What is created passes out of existence as fast as it is created."

In closing, I return to Connie Barrett. Her performances passed out of existence as fast as they were created, a fact which Tom's book places in the context of the human condition. Connie Barrett's life similarly passed out of existence. She is the first certified Andover Educator to die, and we must not allow that fact to go unremarked at this conference. Instead, let's allow Connie's life to inform what we do here. "Motion, Emotion, and Love" was the nature of Connie. She cared so much about the quality of Motion in music that she learned to teach it. She committed herself to express the Emotion of the music she performed, but, in Connie, "the greatest of these" truly was Love. Connie embodied the qualities of love Tom explores in his book: other-directed action, acceptance, exposure, and reciprocity. Connie

was other-directed. When she played her cello, she played for you. She graciously accepted herself and her audience as we were in the moment, not abstractly. She fearlessly exposed herself in performance to the degree that she “became the music” in the manner that Tom describes in his profound explication of self-creation in performance. “We are the music/While the music lasts....” T.S. Eliot could have been describing Connie. Connie’s was a reciprocity of self and other that we may cherish in memory, vowing to carry it forward into the next four days of being together. Artists, here in Portland and onward, be the music while the music lasts.