

## The Infinite Evolution of Learning Music

By Mariah Picot

© Lucid Blue Music

*The Piano: the love and terror and the constant call*

I saw Oscar Peterson at the Colonial Tavern in Toronto when I was in grade 11. I was totally enthralled but I didn't have a clue what he was doing, this big guy grunting while he was playing the piano. I had just done the lead in "My Fair Lady", so "The Rain in Spain" was still going through my head as I was sitting there trying to fathom this thing called "The Blues".

Never in my life did I ever think I could learn to play the piano. My mother tried to teach me as a child and then she sent me to private lessons. It was very physically painful. I never understood why it was so difficult and my hands just didn't seem to work right. Eventually I gave up serious study as a teenager in favor of musical theatre.

I have had a professional career in music and theater since I got out of university in 1977. It has taken many twists and turns. The more I tried to avoid playing the piano out of terror and pain the more it would keep nudging itself into my life as a gentle reminder of what was possible. Along with the nudging was a perpetual restlessness always searching for something more musically.

Four years ago I moved to Panama City and a grand piano just happened to show up in my apartment. It's almost as if the universe trying to tell me that I could actually learn to play? I can't stand to appear fraudulent so I decided I better get to work. I found a new teacher and a deeper process of healing had begun. By this time I had had a lot of old memories surface and I started to have deeper release from the tensions in my neck and shoulders that had been so locked and immobile. The deep emotional healing I was going through was making it possible to learn to play things on the piano that I had been unable to before. My hands were starting to take shape. My elbows no longer hurt. My left shoulder started to unlock and my left hand did not feel so uncoordinated and could get through exercises a lot easier. I started to believe that I could do it. It's as if the knowledge is in the soul but the body needs to be taught. This process continues and deepens, and my dream of total creative freedom is still very much alive. and continues to evolve. I know that the more comfortable I get physically at the piano, and the more I integrate the languages of jazz the more it opens the door to other levels of musical expression

I have had a myriad of musical influences of the past 20 years. I realize that they have all been leading be forward to discover something for myself. I am interested in finding that musical voice that will take people to the infinite.

I love the piano and all the possibilities in those 88 keys. One of the reasons I love jazz is because of where it goes harmonically and melodically. I become totally engrossed with the sound. I am fascinated by the evolution that the music has taken since it's inception and the process of each player and composer pushing the limits of the paradigm and what was accepted at the time. What were they all looking for? What is naturally in the soul of every artist? Beyond the search for unlimited creative expression

I believe it can take you across the veil into the infinite. We live in this finite reality and music especially jazz music has the potential to bridge the discrepancy between the finite reality and the infinite. How many times have you sat at a concert and gone into another place. I have been at live jazz concerts and felt the veil of reality part. I think it also comes from the consciousness of the artist and where they are coming from and their vision of what they want to create. It can change your view of reality. It can change the world.

I believe as an artist that it is my duty and calling to get past all the industry BS and be of service to humanity in helping shift the collective consciousness. As someone said at the Academy awards last year, "This world would be a pretty barbaric place to live without the arts". Without music I probably would not be still alive. Without jazz I would not be so continually enthralled.