

I'm a Slow Learner

Recently, this wasn't too many months ago, I was visiting Ben Paille and we were playing and he was showing me a bunch of stuff that I didn't have into my fingers; a whole bunch of shit that he was already, by that point, very good at, and I wasn't.

And it was really frustrating. It's very frustrating for me, the fact that I am not a fast learner. I don't learn *anything* fast. I'm not very physically coordinated. I'm usually the last one in a group of people to get something; to get the dance move, or to get the three-conga pattern, or *whatever* it may be. *Whatever* it is, I'm probably the last one to get it. But *when* I get it, I've got it for life. Whereas it's a lot of "easy come, easy go" for other people I know.

Ben's just better [laughs]. He's just better than me. He's got a better mind and learns faster, and all that. So in this particular instance, I came up against a lot of shortcomings; harmonic shortcomings, and speed-of-learning shortcoming, and I experience this stuff in the presence of others. Actually, I don't really feel all that much anxiety when I'm not around someone else. I'm very comfortable just going at a slow pace, "tempo de learno", and doing whatever it takes to get something. I'm okay with that. I've made peace with the fact that I'm slow.

But when I'm around other people, that sucks. You don't want to be the slow kid; nobody ever wants to be the slow kid in class, and I don't wanna have to *constantly* be the only one saying "Sorry, can we take that down tempo? Sorry can we take that down tempo?" But, at the same time, it is what it is; and if down tempo is what it takes for me to get it, then down tempo it's gonna be.

So, I guess that grounded emotional vibe - that's a thing that you've gotta do before you start playing, for sure; before you start doing, engaging in any activity, especially in something where you're gonna try to improve your technique on something. You've gotta be able to clear your mind to the point where you can approach it absolutely [exhales] clean-slate. Like,

the only thing that matters in the world right now is *this*. There's nothing else. It doesn't matter. "We're in the zombie apocalypse?" "What zombie apocalypse?"; "Don't know when your next gig is coming?" "That's okay, whatever. All that matters right now, is that I'm trying to beat the crap out of the G-Sharp harmonic minor scale. Or make friends with it. And that's all there is to it." That's the kind of vibe that you have to cultivate before, and during, any experience trying to get something under your fingers.

I don't know if I can say I'm an emotionally grounded person. I'm hot and cold; up and down; oscillating between dread & despair and ecstatic joy. Like a lot of artists, I think that's a constant struggle. But, when I put - when I pick up the horn or I know I'm about to pick up the horn, there is a certain peace that comes over me, because I know that no matter how shit anything else might be, no matter how little money I may have at any given time, or which plans are now screwed-up - whatever challenges there are - at least I've got this thing, and I know what this thing is all about.

And I know; I have confidence, I have faith in a process; in *my* process - that it's gonna be slow enough, and it's gonna be self-aware, self-compassionate enough, and it's gonna be what it needs to be for me to improve. I know, that every time I pick up the trumpet, I'm going to get what I'm looking for out of the experience. Because my process is healthy.

And I think that's what you're reading as a grounded emotional vibe. Well, you're seeing me on comfortable ground. Home turf: Trumpet; music. It's a thing that I'm comfortable with. Thus, I have grounded emotional vibe. But there are other things that trigger me like whoo! Like crazy! *So*, part of my life involves working on those things.