

Performance Initiatives

An Introduction

Most people I've known who are involved with creative pursuits have ideas for which they care enough to want to communicate with them, through them, because of them, and with an audience of some description. In the doing of course, one hopes that the communication is, in fact, communication of a two-way nature and that as a result of this we expand our human base a little.

What is 'a performance initiative'? Is it really necessary to differentiate? And if so, between what sorts of entities? Does, I wonder, the Berlin Philharmoniker and a garage band have the same basic aim when they are established? Is a small group of instrumentalists who come together every other Saturday afternoon to play through a few standards for fun, or perhaps experiment with a bit of 'free improvisation' the same as a group like Pipeline Contemporary Music Project, the John Coltrane Quartet, the Mark Simmonds 'Freeboppers', or, for that matter, the LaSalle (string) Quartet? Is it possible that their aims are considerably different? Is it possible that their reasons for engagement are considerably different? For some I imagine, answers to these and similar questions wouldn't require too much thought. Others might wonder, Why ask them at all? I'm one of those for whom a great deal of thought wasn't necessary, though not because I took the answers for granted. And not because my engagement was whimsical, either. Rather, to me, the answers seemed predetermined. Dedication and truth at the core are prerequisites. I care about the difference, and in my view the difference is worth caring about.

I never had to think too much about the act of initiating a project whereby creative ideas could be explored creatively; exploration through forms of mutually beneficial exchange. It seemed to me inevitable given that I had clear ideas about how I thought music should, or might, go, and the will to see it go that way. In the doing, of course, it often turned out to go some other way, if for no reason other than the influence brought to bear on it by those with whom I collaborated. Reason though, has been neither singular nor simple.

For me, to initiate a creative endeavor is to set in motion a search; one based on firmly grounded ideas; one powered by the will to discover answers to questions embracing these ideas; and one that confronts in one way or another, entities who's convergence procreate, giving rise to unexpected progeny. To my way of thinking then, to initiate means to generate life. To initiate, and, to create, are infinitives that collocate. There is, I believe, a fundamental truth in this criterion; a truth that will counteract any ill-directed motivation; a truth that will counterbalance the weight of convention; and a truth that will, by dint, reveal essence beyond conscious striving.