

AEC POP & JAZZ PLATFORM MEETING 2015  
Berklee College of Music - Valencia  
13-14 February

Pop/Jazz and ME:  
developing diversity and identities  
amongst artists and audiences

Extracts from keynote speech  
by Danilo Pérez

# Music as a Motivational Tool



- My father taught me that, through music, you could actually change people
- Seeing the impact of music in people's lives – as a motivational tool and as a tool for change - was my first experience with the idea that music helps, if you use it correctly, to create possible change in humanity
- Social change can come through music: using music to help in the restoration of communities – your family, your network, your city, your country

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# Music as a 'Cultural Passport'



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- We need a 'cultural passport' – one that would be the same for everybody
- We are all united by tone, rhythms and the idea of sharing
- Music – and specifically Global Jazz - is an example of how global cooperation could be maximised – a tool for diplomacy; a practical way to create exchanges between cultures in the pursuit of peace, inter-cultural value and social change
- Global jazz could be the new 'cultural passport' to universal tolerance



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# Music as a 'lens to view the world'



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- We should be using music as a lens to view the world, creating collaboration between the arts and with science, biology and other humanist opinions. This process empowers creativity
- Through interconnecting the practice of improvisational music-making with all the other academic subjects in the school system we can create communities that use improvisation to harmonise individual and collective needs
- Music can be used to harmonise ideas



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# Mastering music; mastering life



- Music is more than mastering your instrument or becoming accomplished in music – it's about mastering your own life
- The thing is to 'play and behave the way you would like the world to be'. We are not disconnected
- By playing with passion, love and really embracing music as a way to affect humanity in a positive way - with that gift, that transmission, musicians can touch a lot of lives and deliver a 'medicine to help the world'

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- Music shouldn't just be the 'icing on the cake' but should be at the forefront of any policy-making in the world - they need us so as to come up with better laws, with better human designs; scientists, musicians, artists together and in the forefront - that's the answer for the future
- What if every political meeting started with a collective musical improvisation? If you started like this, *then* you'd be ready to talk about life.

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# Music and Overcoming Fear



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- Composition and improvisation in the moment [‘comprovising’] - at the beginning, it’s scary
- You can’t rehearse the unknown, but you can practise living with the unknown (*fear*-training, not ear-training)
- Collective improvisation can enable us to reconnect with ourselves, with nature; it’s a tool for *value creation*
- The world needs the creative process; in the creative laboratory [working with the unknown] we can practise equality and tolerance without fear

# Music and the Audience (I)



- The audience has been growing with us; we have nurtured each other; they expect to be challenged; the issue of connecting with the audience is a challenge for the artist but also gratifying
- On the few times when I've felt separation from the audience, it was because I felt disconnected in myself. The solution is to accumulate more stories in your life so that you can tell them in your music

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# Music and the Audience (II)



- The way to reach out to a larger audience is not by focussing on the ‘what’ , but on the ‘how’; we should think of any music, and especially jazz, not as a genre but as a process
- ‘Syncretism’ in music has been going on for a long time; we have been changing the music ‘ for many years and notes’; it’s only now that we ponder about these words like diversity and try to find how to give a formal justification for cross-over, fusion, etc.

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- Music, and especially jazz, is a platform for cultural exchange, for cultural sharing; there are so many combinations that are happening and jazz ‘licenses’, or permits, all of these
- The important thing about diversity and identity is that we make sure we don’t actually go back to a way of finding *new* borders; there is a mysterious element about humanity, about jazz, about music about the idea of becoming - one that should be addressed as part of our quest in anything we’re doing

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