

Head vs. Heart

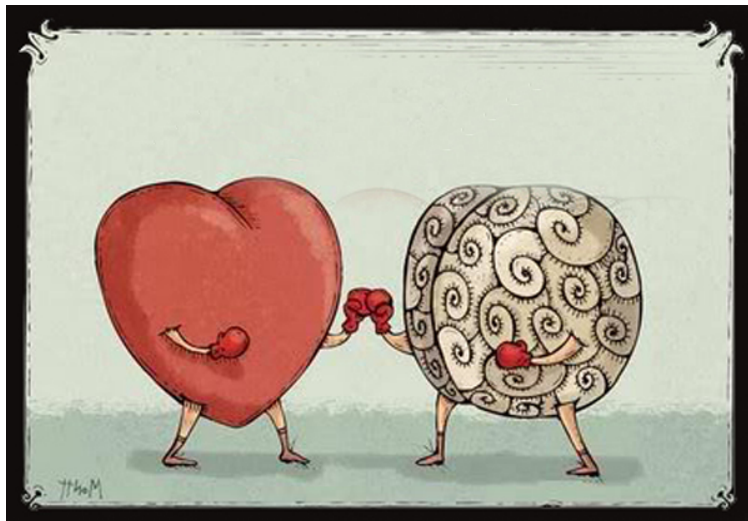
It should come as no surprise to you that we spend more of our lives practicing than performing. This is not only true of the student and aspirational musician. Even the weekly schedule of a major symphony orchestra consists of more than 50% rehearsal. When you include personal practice and preparation, the balance shifts even more toward practice. It can be challenging to shift between the different mindsets that are required. Practice vs. performance have incompatible goal sets, and using the wrong strategy in the wrong situation can lead to confusion and frustration (not the good kind!).

Practice

Left Brain
Analytical
Process
Head
Critical
Judging

Performance

Right Brain
Expressive
Result
Heart
Emotional
Accepting



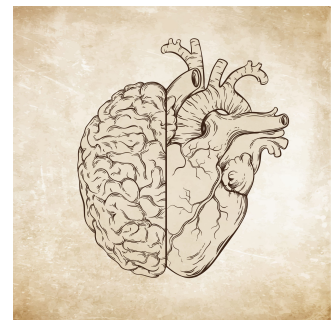
So much time is spent focused on the physical aspects of the preparation phase that we can forget to incorporate the right mindset. Thoughts that serve us in practice will be detrimental in a performance context and are often accompanied with associated judgements that undermine our best efforts. Simply wishing these thoughts away is ineffective, especially since negative modifiers are a construct of language and not conceptual. For example: think of a polar bear in a pink tutu riding a unicycle. Excellent. Now DON'T think of a polar bear in a

pink tutu riding a unicycle. As expected, the **balletic ursus** is still firmly ensconced in your imagination. Now try that with a visualization of performance involving any sort of “helpful” instruction that you might give yourself. You will realize that thinking the phrase “don’t miss that shift” involves picturing the very thing you are trying to avoid! There is a classic example of this which is the sports car on a lonely highway wrecked on a telephone pole. The poles are a quarter mile apart, so how does this happen? Imagine the driver swerving to avoid an unexpected armadillo and beginning to go off the road. The next inevitable thought: “DON’T hit that telephone pole”, rather than “steer toward that open field”. The simple admonition is always ask for what you want, and not for what you don’t want.

Making the shift

The challenge as I see it is more complex than changing from a “practice mindset” to a “performance mindset.” I think the issue is with the very idea of “mindset.” All of the thinking that is at the root of mindful practice becomes a burden and a distraction when it flows unchecked during a performance. I invite you to do an experiment with me, and I would love to hear your experiences and feedback at davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com. You will need either a recording device or a willing audience of at least one person.

It is common to think of consciousness as existing in the brain as it is behind our eyes, and this is the dominant way that we experience the world. It is time to realize that our Awareness exists wherever we place it and use this knowledge to our advantage. Select a passage to perform that you have memorized so that your full attention can be on HOW you are playing and not WHAT you are playing. Perform the passage once with your full Awareness focused in your head. This doesn’t refer to thinking any specific thoughts. It should be an experience of allowing your actions to flow from that point of Awareness. Take note of how it feels and how you think it sounds so that you can compare and contrast with your second performance, your audience’s reactions, and/or your recording. After a short pause, play the passage again. This time perform with your full Awareness focused in your heart. Yes, I am asking you to LITERALLY play from your heart. Again, note how it feels, how you think it sounds, and the reaction of your listener(s). Notice and changes in your sound, quality/quantity of expression, and feelings of control and engagement. I look forward to hearing the results of your experiments with this new “Heartset” (see what I did there?)



**THOMASTIK
INFELD
VIENNA**

HANDMADE STRINGS SINCE 1919

FRACTAL FRIDAY TOPICS!

Please submit comments or suggestions for future topics to davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com

WORKSHOPS COMING SOON!

Stay tuned for new dates in October.

FRACTAL BASSIST Channel on YouTube (Coming Soon!)

This invite-only YouTube channel will be a continuation, development and place to share these ideas and principles. Although the entire Fractal Fingering course and samples are available online and at DiscoverDoubleBass.com, this channel will provide a forum for more in-depth content and to address questions on a more individual basis.

If you have any questions, comments, ideas you'd like explored, or inspiration you'd like to share please email: davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com.

With Love,

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