

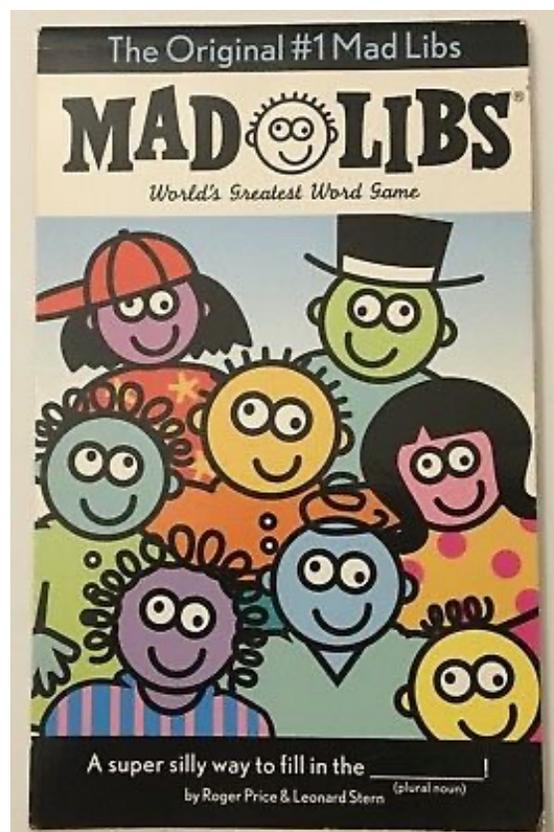
Musical Honesty, or

“How you do Anything is how you do Everything”.

-Zen saying

Honesty in music can be an elusive pursuit. What standards are being applied? What blind spots do we have? How can you even know if you have a blind spot, since it is by its very definition unseeable?? A teacher or mentor can be a helpful advocate in pointing us toward those dark areas, but what are we supposed to do with the other countless hours of solitary practice during the week? Video and audio recording can be a helpful tool to bring attention to details that need improvement in one’s playing, but again, the standards and filters applied may reinforce personal biases, and we may miss other important aspects entirely.

I would propose a game that we will call “Musical Mad Libs.” For those of you unfamiliar with the concept, Mad Libs were a staple of my family’s road trips and consisted of stories that were missing various words. One player would have the story in front of them with the absent words and would ask the second player for the appropriate parts of speech required to fill in the blanks.



Inevitable hilarity ensued as phrases like “(proper noun) (past tense verb) (singular pronoun) in the (noun) with a/an (noun)” could result in a nonsensical “Clue-like” declaration, or frequently something potentially very NSFW.

In “Musical Mad Libs” we need to first write our own story. Choose an aspect of your playing over which you feel a sense of pride or ownership. For my example I will use “sound”.

“My SOUND is very important to me. I spend a lot of time working on my SOUND and take great pride on being able to execute at a high level. My SOUND is always consistent and refined, and I bring my best SOUND whenever I perform in any situation. Someone would be able to extrapolate the type of player and musician that I am just by noticing the quality of my SOUND.”

This has to be a phrase that works for YOU, and I would suggest reading it out loud with focus and clear intent. Own the emotions that are generated by asserting this statement. Now let’s convert the statement into a “Mad Lib”:

“My _____ is/are very important to me. I spend a lot of time working on my _____ and take great pride in being able to execute at a high level. My _____ is/are always consistent and refined, and I bring my best _____ whenever I perform in any situation. Someone would be able to extrapolate the type of player and musician that I am just by noticing the quality of my _____.”

Create a list of as many aspects of performance as you like. It should include musical and technical items. Here are just a few: intonation, expression, shifting, stylistic awareness, spiccato, connection with an audience, vibrato, etc. Place your selected term into the statement. Notice the emotions generated by the new statement. Does it ring as true as the first phrase that you wrote? What would happen if you invested the same attention and ownership in the new phrase in order to bring it to the level of the original? How can you use these “Mad Libs” to bring you awareness and focus to new areas of your Artistry?

The examples provided are only suggestions. What is most important is crafting an original phrase that rings true for you. I hope these ideas allow you to examine your playing in a new way and hopefully you can (present tense verb) the (adjective) (singular noun) out of it! (Exclamation)!

SEPTEMBER WORKSHOP!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 @ 10AM PDT on Zoom: Fractal Workshop Pt. 3

Visit the “Workshops” page at www.fractalbassist.com to purchase an invite.

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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