

# On Becoming a Self-Actuated, Virtuoso Guitarist

- I. Play with soft hands
  - A. Play lightly
  - B. Move as little as possible
  - C. Only do what you need to do
  - D. Use minimal effort
  - E. Play rhythmically
- II. Make it easy
  - A. Simplify when you can
  - B. Work within your technical limits
- III. Develop a sense of flow.
  - A. Stiff, jerky movements cause hesitations
  - B. Left hand anticipation is critical to...
  - C. Develop a sense of forward drive that becomes part of the piece. Then just let it go
- IV. Trust your body. Don't try to give your body precise instructions on how to move.
  - A. Let your mechanics take over.
  - B. Get out of the way of your body
  - C. Does it work for me?
  - D. Distrust all rules and conventions
- V. Be loose in the Chair.
  - A. "Be" in rhythm. It's easier to do anything if you can find a rhythm.
  - B. Our actions define our inner sense of rhythm, so ...
  - C. Use a Metronome and tap your foot. The right hand is notorious for bad actions that will define our rhythm
- VI. Enjoy your playing. A child becomes oblivious to the distractions around them when they play. Find this place. It's there.
- VII. Be a virtuoso beginning today.
  - A. Virtuosity is a state of mind, not an indistinct arrival point.
  - B. If you believe you are a student, you will play like a student.
  - C. This takes time to believe but there will be a "eureka!" moment when all self-doubt is gone.
  - D. Don't take yourself too seriously
- VIII. Use Power lightly.
  - A. Use of brute force creates tension. Use skill instead.
  - B. Firm up the finger-tip and snap the finger like an arrow; use the momentum to play louder and release tension, not create it.
- IX. Intonation accuracy (the absence of buzzes and muted notes) happens with experience. Let them go for now.
- X. Speed happens. But you will need mastery of all of the above to get it.
  - A. You have to have speed to be a virtuoso.
  - B. It's all in the fundamental mechanics.
- XI. Practice all the time.
  - A. Allow your body to find virtuosity.
  - B. Love what you play. Do the unexpected. If everyone plays the piece quiet and slow, you play it fast and loud.
  - C. Love yourself enough to let go, like we need to do with older children.
  - D. Sing your heart out when you play.