

Louka Patenaude

<http://www.myspace.com/areyouoptimistic>

Louka Patenaude has been teaching music (guitar, bass, piano, songwriting, improvisation, jazz theory, and studio production/composition) in Madison since 1998. As a 12 year old Van Halen fan who had thoroughly mastered the art of air guitar jumping around in the basement, he quickly took to practicing his new obsession. While in highschool playing rock n' roll drums provided by his older brother he studied jazz guitar with guitar master Roger Brotherhood and started playing in local clubs at 17. While at UW Madison Louka joined Richard Davis' Black Music Ensemble and began earning a reputation as a guitarist in the Madison music scene. Since then he's played with Ben Sidran (at home and in Europe), Natty Nation (regionally and Japan/Guam/Marshal islands), Blake Thomas and Josh Harty, and most jazz musicians in Madison (was a founding member of the New Breed Quintet who's Jam Session has been a mainstay for budding musicians since 2000) as well as the center of his original groups, The Optimistic, and The Fingers (in which he is producer and engineer). Educated at the University of Wisconsin - Madison with a B.S. in Anthropology he has a wide understanding of the fundamental functions of music in society. In 2009 he won a Madison Area Music Award for Best Guitarist.

Louka has students in particular who are easily the most knowledgeable guitarists at the high school level, some who have since gone on to study with scholarships to schools such as Berklee College of Music and some who are performing professionally today. However he still enjoys breaking concepts down to the basics for students as young as 6 years old.

In his own words

"We use the information to guide the physical actions of making music. This requires observing, thinking/remembering, and acting. Eventually one will find themselves in a performance in which the demands of the music will leave no room for thinking. At that time one must trust that the instincts and intuition have been well trained."

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Louka's Concept

Music is made of sound that interfaces with our physiology (via ears, brain, sometimes chest) and produces an effect or experience for us. The results vary depending on the listener, due to mental or emotional tendencies and receptivity), but because of universal physiology among typical humans certain mechanisms in music have an almost universal effect on the listener. Ideally this effect is generally pleasing.

The first, and I believe foremost of those mechanisms is the pulse, beat, or rhythm. The first sound heard by a fetus is probably that of the mother's heart. Humans generally breath with a constant pulse. And of course the act of walking shares the same attribute. Sound repetition can result in a focused state of mind (reducing mental chatter), bringing the listener into the moment.

Harmony and melody are also relatively fixed constants in music because of their interface with the ear . The same mathematical ratios that give us our twelve tone system (the building blocks of western harmony and melody) account for the structure of our inner ear, the cochlea (the snail shell shaped organ filled with nerve cells). -see pythagorean music-

Song form generally fits with psychology and learning mechanisms of the brain. Repetition of a segment of sound promotes familiarity while a change causes stimulation. For instance, if you put you

hand in cold water, it feels cold. If you remove it and do it again, it doesn't feel as cold. Then, if you put your hand in hot water, it feels much hotter than if you hadn't put it in the cold water. Likewise, sections of music affect the listener due to form (or in the case of the water: the order and repetitions of dipping the hand). In music the two mechanisms (repetition and change) must be balanced, however, if interest is to be sustained over the time period of a typical song.