

THE ESSENCE OF A MOMENT

It wasn't a big thing but it was tremendous. It was a moment, time encased in ice. And, then it was over leaving laughter and good fellowship among the seventeen musicians who had made it happen.

The meeting of the PLC started musically with Odean exploring ear training with the musicians. He asked everyone to play a bass tone of **Phrygian Love Theme's** six tone scale to achieve a collective pianissimo. It is challenging to achieve a pianissimo with eight saxophones (Julian, Bobby, Marilyn, Terry, Sam, Joe, Victor, Odean), two violins (Tamara, Zoe), vocalist (Kevin), piano players (Tom, Aaron), one upright bass, one bass, one guitar (Monette), and drums. The iron sound was gripping. Tom suggested that people pretend to be practicing at 2:00am, trying not to wake their neighbors. The sound softened to a muted roar, a hungry lion waking from slumber. Rehearsal revolved around **Elixir Suite**. The successful blending of saxophone and violins created an other worldly sound. I heard themes from **To The Roach** and **Epitome**.

Rehearsal is work. It is tedium, repetition, correction, focus, perseverance and patience. With Julian at the helm, taking it from the top, all of a sudden, music bursts forth with audacious fervor! Stop!! There are questions and comments."Too many tempos." "Just the rhythm section." "Everybody!" "Double time!" Terry solos. Julian says, "Let me run that down one more time." Go again." Terry transitions to the changes. eight measures over... and so on. Bobby solos. Julian insistently says, "Let me talk this down again." And, one more time from the top. Done!

It was only moments but it sounded to me like sound bouncing down a path following a theme and then heard more and more in the distance. Solos spilled out in all directions celebrating individual freedom, momentary as it was, yet still confined to an overall structure like a painting in a frame. The theme steered on down the path sometimes like a train careening down the track. The music unfolded progressively adding hue and harmonies till it cascaded like water down a lush hillside. The music burst its constraints, running like electricity throwing sparks.

The group successfully played through Odean's **Elixir Suite**. For me, however, it was almost a transcendent experience, magnified by the anticipation of hearing Odean's composition for the first time. It is like **lightening in a bottle** when it all works, both musically and with all in attunement; performer to performer, to listener, forming a reciprocal ring that has both a shared cultural experience and yet also has idiosyncratic

subjective meaning to me. This phenomenon provides a feeling of oceanic oneness and exhilaration often involving release and relief for varying reasons for each individual. I suspect that I was not the only one to have this heightened experience because when I left, all were engaged in what seemed to be delighted conversation with smiles, laughter and good cheer filling the room. I will save the effects of relationship for my next reflection.