

Stan Hirsch Emergence Liner notes

(Written in big letters so you can see it on the folder)

Liner notes: “The Emergence Project”

I have never before felt the need to write liner notes for any of the albums I have produced, but this project was very different for a number of reasons. This whole project came together so quickly that it felt a bit like a magical gift. I just sort of “all of a sudden” started to take a new approach. I do feel a need to write something about the processes involved in getting this project together.

It would be informative for me to give a brief history concerning some aspects of my musical directions. I am mostly known as a “Blues” artist, and that has been my main professional career path. But also (outside my “blues” career), I have for many years been composing and recording albums of original instrumental pieces for solo guitar.

Along with that, I've involved myself in projects that might be called "experimental" and "post minimalist" and/or whatever? I can vividly remember bouncing tracks around using two mono tape recorders and a Japanese lute back in the mid- 60's. At one point forty something years ago, I attached all manner of objects to my guitar. Things like small drum pads and a kalimba in order to somehow give my guitar more reach. Many years ago I recorded a piece titled "Time Traveler" ...a multi-track recording using guitar, tabla, shakers of all manner, harmonicas and weird chanting vocals. So the search for a different approach to my music making has always been part of my trip. But, I didn't realize that it was going to be such a long journey that would so suddenly come together! That it came together so quick is just weird to me. OK, enough... Here is the short story told without getting into all the head trips.

This whole project from conception to publication came together within basically one (+-) month. Sept. 2015. (Yes, I worked very hard!)

Just to "set the scene", it was the last week of August. Trish (my significant other) and I were in Greece (Santorini) just finishing up some travel and getting ready to head back home (New Mexico). My reason for mentioning this will become apparent...(it's not just to sound cool).

As per my regular routine I was up early in the morning spending time with my guitar. Considering that it had been some time since I had felt the need to work on any of my "regular" repertoire, I was just letting musical ideas in and "go in' with the flow". (Something I do quite often.) Anyhow, a very simple melody line came to me, (not an unusual occurrence for most composers), but the treatment I started using to develop it was different than my usual working methods. Now usually with something that grabs my attention, like this short eight measure melody, I start developing, extrapolating and arranging the composition using all my general methods for such work (including waiting for inspiration). But that was not what I did this time.

Now to write some music down in standard notation is not that unusual for me. I'll do that if it's not so involved I feel I should make a quick "Sketch" recording, but still, it is an idea I want to remember. But again that is not what I did this time.

What I did do was go grab some of Trish's art supplies (tools for drawing and painting) and a piece of music manuscript paper. I have never felt a need to produce any kind of art on paper (except maybe back in school forty something years ago), so this was very weird behavior for me. What I did proceed to do was draw/paint a picture depicting how this thing felt to me.

The first thing I did was title it "Emergence".

Now the idea of things having emerging properties is something I had been thinking about, albeit not for the past few months and also in two totally different contexts. I had recently read a book by Lee Smolin about the possibilities of space being an emerging property of time. (Not something to go into here.) Also, I had recently read some philosophy articles about consciousness being an emergent property of mind. (Again, not something to go into here.) Anyhow, so the idea of emerging properties did not just pop up. But now those ideas had a much stronger significance for me as a composer/player. (A novel, but not entirely new concept...minimalism etc...)

Now for the Greek connection...

There is this archeological artifact in Greece named the Phaistos Disc on display at the archaeological museum of Heraklion. It is a disk of fired clay from the Minoan palace of Phaistos on the island of Crete, possibly dating to the middle or late Minoan Bronze Age (second millennium B.C.).

While browsing in the village of Fava on the island of Santorini, an inexpensive medallion really caught my eye...so I bought it. Well after getting back to our lodgings I became more and more intrigued with it, so I searched Goggle images and found out what it was. It was a copy of this disk. The really intriguing thing is that no one has ever figured out the symbols, the language or the meaning. OK, so what does this have to do with this whole “emergence” thing happening? I think it had to do with me (and everybody else for that matter) being so intrigued by this object which held so much mystery. I believe that this then greatly influenced my ideas and inspired me to do the drawing/painting instead of applying my usual approach to developing and arranging a musical idea.

So now I had this composition, this “experimental” music notation drawing/painting and this title for it all- “EMERGENCE”. This was all in the same day!

A few days later...immediately upon arriving home, I went and purchased a bunch of art supplies and furiously went to work on all the nine drawings/paintings/ included in this project. Along with them the compositions came together. At first brand new ones including that one I had written while in Santorini. Then I pulled out some previously conceived musical ideas applying this new approach. “Songs” that had been floating around looking for a home.

Then the ideas and technologies for the recordings literally just popped up and presented themselves. I started using “Garage Band” software to record. (This was the default music recorder on my computer and I had always hated it.)

But this time around it seemed like the easiest thing to do since I had it sittin' there. I tried out a few of the sounds ending up with "clean guitar" , then used some of the built in tremolo/echo/chorus processors. This time was totally different. It sounded perfect for this project! (I used "Audacity" to master it.)

Then up popped the ideas and technologies for the video. (I didn't even know I was gonna make any recordings or a video.) I just downloaded a cheap (as in kept crashing) App. software program written for slideshows that you could put background music to. I slapped the drawings/paintings up in it and added that first song (Opus.45) and juggled the buttons around winding up with what needed to happen. Again, it looked perfect for this project!

In the first paragraph of these notes I wrote "This whole project came together so quickly that it felt a bit like a magical gift." I don't necessarily believe (or not believe) in "magical gifts", but the whole project seemed to just flow through me. (Although it took many hours a day of demanding work.) It all happened so smoothly and fast while seeming to fit me as a musician so perfect. It feels like a great place for my playing and composing to hang for awhile. Upon viewing the video, paintings and listening to the sound recordings, I hope you will feel the same. Enjoy...Stan Hirsch - Oct. 2015

ps...Another nice aspect of the thing is that I still just play one guitar...solo and live! All this recorded music was made that way. It just sounds so different because I'm incorporating modern guitar sound processing. And because it sounds so different than my past stuff, like I said, is the reason why I just felt a need to write something in the way of explanation.