



ASVA

G. STUART DAHLQUIST

Your question about the spirituality of music, what it means or brings might be more appropriate, in our lives is tough for me to answer directly. Most of the qualities in music that effect me on a higher level tend to either the tonal aspect of what ever is being played or the culmination of several pieces strung together, the finale. In my own music the goal is to achieve a sort of emotional overload in the listener, the forces throughout the recording finally all sort of gnashing together and creating what I tend to think of as either an overwhelming breakdown or an immense awakening. Like when you've pursued something as hard as one can and utterly failed, the anguish of that knowledge, that you cannot do "it", whatever that might be. The frustration of watching the world fall into the wrong hands, of losing a loved one to death or estrangement. On the other side of that coin would also be the possibility of the great unknown, whatever lay in store can be eclipsed and overcame. I just hope to set those wheels of the mind turning and either bring you down hard or create an opening for hope. With some listeners there's success on both ends; others don't lean toward the more emotional and have less of a tendency to find these things in Asva's music, and that's ok as well. There's a great deal of music that I grew up with that brings me back to those younger days, whenever they might have been, and can really create a longing for return to those times. Elton John, a first musical love of mine, certain bits of Frank Zappa's guitar playing, Phil Lynott, Neil Young, Nina Simone, and of course, deeply, Silkworm, and many others as well. It's all pretty damn spiritual really, just the points of reference pertaining to the individual listener vary. Duran Duran might do it for someone. A good example of the tonal music that sets me off is Miles Davis and Gil Evans' *"Sketches Of Spain"*. I've been listening to this record for at least fifteen years and still find myself trembling at points; its such a caring piece of music, everyone is so in the moment and the players filled with love for each note, each breath so thoughtfully taken. I've heard several different versions of this music none to comes to mind as so breathtaking. The finale of Penderecki's *"Polish Requiem"*. Talk about powerful! Everything pushes the emotional envelope, pushes until bursting over and over again, it's truly withering. I had an opportunity to see it performed in Vancouver, British Columbia, some years ago and was exhausted, truly overwhelmed by the hugeness of it all, just bombarded; at one point I actually felt as though I was floating. This piece of music is the most important in my world. There was a time when I played bass in a Gospel band, nothing but spirituals twice every Sunday; the congregation would absolutely go mad, dancing, singing, hallelujah-ing; it was a great time and those players were the best I've ever played with but it didn't do for me what it did for them. I felt out of place, like what was happening for everyone else was somehow beyond my grasp; this is confusing because music is so emotional and this place, where all



were feeling so present just wasn't a spot where I could fit in. I finally quit and still I don't have a real grasp of just what was happening in that room, I just couldn't hear it.



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