



Elswhere

by Arash Behzadi

New Age Composer/Pianist



Awakening

Awakening - to a new day, new beginnings, to awareness, to a sense of feeling renewed and refreshed. Awakening is an idea rich with meaning for us. Exciting yet challenging. Rich with possibility. And yes, daunting at times as we face the unknown. What will the new day bring? What discoveries await? What new paths will we forge?

We hear these feelings emerging in the single tentative notes of this composition, anchored by a moody cello and unfolding like a flower at dawn, then slowly blossoming to embrace the sun, shyly yet confidently revealing, as if frame by frame, more nuances of color, of texture and shape, petal by petal, note by note.

Like the fully opened flower confidently reaching to the sky, emboldened chords join forces with an increasingly enthusiastic cello, inviting us to pursue a more purposeful, considered direction. The exploration is gentle, open to possibility and discovery highlighted by moments of excitement and joy, and at its apex, exhilaration, gently resolving through complexity into a place of peace, strength and acceptance.

Awakening is reflective of Arash's own journey in his search for new perspectives and new awareness - inspired by the transformative impact of yoga, or as he describes the experience, "a re-awakening of the soul and a new deeper, more complex direction for my music."

Peace Within

In a series of recent visits to Bali Arash found an unexpected inner peace and tranquility in the timeless island's ancient sacred temples, in its gentle people, its peaceful and pristine waterfalls and emerald rice fields - gentle evocative images all captured in his music and in his video of the same name, *Peace Within*, a soothing, tranquil composition he created as a tribute to the Balinese people and their culture.

Heaven's Gate

Mournful cello sighs as the piece opens. A portent of things to come? Gentle inquisitive piano notes tiptoe into the melancholy, hesitantly, like lovers' first tentative touch, fingertips shyly meeting. Then suddenly, passion, bold and confident as piano and cello intertwine, like lovers challenging each other in a fierce tango before melting into a languorous embrace.

The inspiration for the piece evolved from a torrid romance between a woman Arash knew and an adventurer she met in Bali, a stuntman who lived for the thrill of performing increasingly

death-defying feats around the world. The romance, filled with family secrets, deceit and heartache ended tragically when he died executing one of his dramatic stunts.

Heartfelt

My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary.

Martin Luther

A sense of peace and serenity flows from the soothing opening notes of *Heartfelt*. Composed as “medicine for the body, soul and heart” the piece was inspired by Arash’s own personal journey towards healing and composed to encourage the healing of hearts, of relationships – between partners, between parents and children, between friends and between siblings. It’s a search for the heartfelt moment when long buried emotions can be released and people can come together and heal emotionally.

Through his compositions Arash is on a mission to share the healing powers of music which we see reflected in pieces such as the one, an intensely personal piece, peaceful yet powerful. There is a gentle vulnerability in its emotion but confidence in the execution.

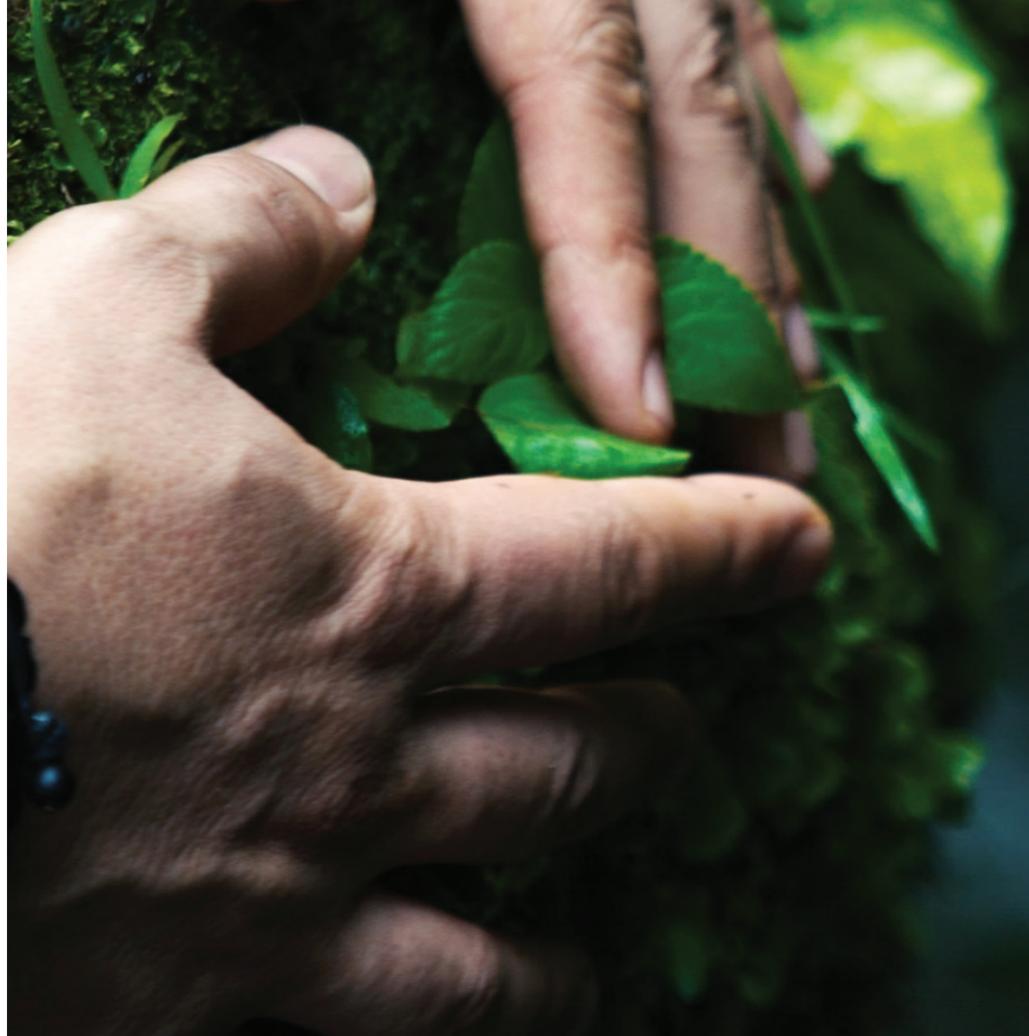
There is no human culture that does not have music. Music can make you laugh or cry, provoke shivers, or bring a sense of peace. It can touch your very soul. But it can go much further. It can actually heal.

Today science recognizes what the ancients have always known: music is life changing. It heals us mentally, physically and emotionally, connecting us through a wide range of neural activity. It can even create social change. It’s fundamental to who we are as humans. And it’s fundamental to the gift Arash wants to share with the world.

Lucid Dream

A “dream coming true” is a phrase we often use for the realization of something we longed for. It’s rarely a literal statement. Let alone a prediction. But sometimes there are forces outside ourselves laying a path unknown to us at the time.

Such was the case with Arash’s dream one night – a dream of a beautiful water palace surrounded by lush gardens. As he strolled through the enchanted grounds, the sculptures of lions and dragons and even the flowers and butterflies seemed to be speaking to him, welcoming him. He felt enveloped in an aura of peace.



Six months later, on a trip to Bali, among the places Arash visited was the Tirta Gangga water palace, a maze of pools and fountains, beautiful gardens and stone carvings. Everything was mysteriously familiar - as if he had walked these regal grounds before. Suddenly he remembered that he had. This was the very place he had envisioned in his dream. Bali would become a life-changing destination to which he would return again.

Togetherhness

The delicate melody in this sensuous yet ethereal visual piece unfurls with elements of a fugue - contrapuntal - within the music itself - as well as within the dynamic yet graceful play between piano and yogic performers. The couple, a man and a woman, bring balletic form to the music as their graceful bodies blend into muscular yet sensuous acrobatic yoga poses. The man, in a powerful handstand on the piano represents the strength of a tree trunk, the woman flowing around him, is symbolic of the branches reaching for the heavens, each part of the same life form. Human and nature. Human and divine.

The setting is the 300 year old temple at the Wu Wei Wisdom sanctuary in Bali.

As the singer is to the instrument, the camera is to the piano in the video version, enveloping both movement and melody, inviting all one's senses to participate, sweeping us into a mystical journey as it unobtrusively glides and soars, at one with the music, across treetops, through a veil of smoky incense reverently floating upwards to a stone Buddha's serene countenance, encircling the entwined yogic couple before dissolving into the seemingly heavenly rays of the setting sun, glowing through graceful fingers on the keys.

Composing togetherhness was Arash's subconscious reaction to the dispute between two friends in an effort to reunite them. He wanted the composition to be healing in nature. It worked. The feuding pair resolved their differences upon hearing the music.

He sees it as a therapeutic composition designed to bring together couples in love and peace. Other couples have told him that they fell in love again after listening to the magical piece.

Yearning

Searching; reaching; the opening notes are arresting. Then - nothing. Emptiness, followed by turmoil, confusion and desperation as the searching becomes more determined, persevering, ever fruitless, slowly, inexorably spiralling inward, a yearning never to be fulfilled.



The piece is based on the story of a young woman Arash once knew. She was new to Canada, older than her years, sophisticated, intelligent and creative, yet with a sense of profound sadness about her. She had never known her father, a wealthy man, who left the family when she was born. Is he the object of her search? Of her melancholy?

There is no happy ending. The young woman's father died leaving nothing for his family. She never knew him. She never will. Why did he abandon her? The answers will never come. He will forever remain a mystery to her, an emptiness in her soul.

Yearning resonates with those who are longing, searching to fill a void, struggling with forces beyond their control, seeking a place in a world into which they feel they do not fit.

Deep Down

Arash describes *Deep Down* as a meditative and healing journey to the deepest part of his soul. Performed live, it's rich with improvisational elements reaching out to his audience, sharing in, and connecting with, their energy and encouraging them to participate in the journey, individually and with each other.

It's an emotional and evocative piece with the power to heal inner wounds.

The healing power of music has been known for millennia; mystics and sages throughout the ages have contemplated this phenomenon. In ancient Egypt, chant therapies were seen as an important part of the healing process. Native Americans and Africans also used chanting and singing as part of their healing rituals. The great Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato extolled the emotional healing properties of music; Plato in particular was devoted to Apollo, the god of both healing and music. In fact, the Chinese character for medicine includes the character for music - healing and music, one and the same - inextricable energies creating a new path for Arash's latest compositions.

Mesmerized

*I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.
I lift my eyes and all is born again.*

Sylvia Plath

Eyes slowly blinking, awakening, discovering, becoming energized to the day, are reflected in the opening notes of this exploratory piece.

Mystical in feel it was inspired by Arash's vision of expressive human eyes and all the emotions they impart.



Eyes that observe, that smile, that fill with tears, that light up with delight, reflecting hopes, dreams, fears, joy and sorrow.

Windows to the soul.

Eyes that crinkle with mirth or with age. Eyes that search, peering into the unknown, enigmatic, all knowing. Eyes that wonder, that caress, that light up with delight. Eyes afire with passion. Empty stares. Loving glances. Flashes of rage.

Eyes that mesmerize.

Eyes that speak to what lies in our hearts.

Revelation

Indomitable chords burst forth and subside. Insistent single notes push them aside. There is an urgency to the piece, a determination tinged with rebellion and adrenaline - and just a hint of romanticized intention, a relentless, demanding rhythm.

Like a war within, the music reflects the endless struggle with the persistent challenges that bombard us, encouraging us to confront our demons head on, to feel the sadness and anger and to release them.

A sudden lull disorients us, momentarily, interrupted by a vibrant cello, orchestral in its execution, unleashing a sense of mounting excitement propelling the momentum forward. Letting go. Feeling the relief of release. The piece is powerful and focused, its revelation an inspiration to stay the course no matter the obstacles.

The Last Sigh

Mysterious determined chords underlaid with a gentle melody introduce *The Last Sigh*, maximizing the piano's intimacy before building to an edgy suspenseful crescendo enhanced by an anxious cello that powerfully underscores the enigma of the unknown. Hitchcockian suspense builds, climaxing in the final lingering release or a single chord. The relief of a sigh escaping from the taut grip of suspense.

COLLABORATORS



SAMUEL BISSON | CELLIST

Originally from Ottawa, cellist Samuel Bisson is quickly distinguishing himself in Canada as a versatile soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player. Currently based in Toronto, he performs frequently in the GTA and has performed and toured across Canada, the US, Austria and China. He has performed with renowned Canadian piano trio, the Gryphon Trio and performs regularly as part of the Passport Duo.

Samuel currently holds the position of principal cellist with the Sneak Peek Orchestra (Toronto) and the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra (Scarborough) and has appeared as principal and section cellist with the Toronto Concert Orchestra (Toronto), Ottawa Symphnoy Orchestra (Ottawa), Brantford Symphony Orchestra (Brantford), Ontario Philharmonic (Oshawa) and l'Orchestre de la Francophonie Canadienne (Montreal).

Over the years, Samuel has had the pleasure of working with many renowned cellists including Janos Starker, Roman Borys, Hans Jorgen Jensen, Paul Katz, Anthony Elliott, Paul Marleyn and Julian Armour. He has also had the privilege of playing with great chamber musicians and masters such as Pinchas Zuckerman, Mark Fewer, Jean Desmarais, Angela Hewitt and the St-Lawrence String Quartet.

Beyond the boundaries of classical performance, Samuel is an active studio session musician and performer/arranger in a variety of music genres. He has been involved with projects that stylistically range from jazz and Broadway to metal and electronica, and has worked and collaborated with artists such as Drake, Sarah Brightman and members of Barenaked Ladies and Our Lady Peace. samuelbisson.ca

DEE GIBNEY | WRITER

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