

## ELASTIC TIME

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Time is elastic. It expands and contracts in response to effort on our part. We stretch time and live a life in between the seconds quite different from that we live on standard clock time. Are you aware of this?

I certainly didn't always know this, and I did not know how to expand time at will and I did not learn it all at once. Like raindrops before a storm, I learned about the elasticity of time slowly at first, drop by drop, and only later in any quantity. There were many hints, but here is one story of how I discovered expanded time.

I had learned to play the guitar in the late 1950s and early 1960s, mostly folk guitar, learning Carter-Picking and what is called Travis-Picking, also called three-finger picking. There was a folk music circuit that extended from Berkeley to Madison to Chicago to Ann Arbor to New York City to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and back. I would hitchhike from Ann Arbor to New York City many times, sometimes with a well-known guitar instrumentalist by the name of Perry Lederman. I also hitchhiked with Bob Dylan in 1961, and with others. I was part of that scene.

Later, in the summer of 1965 (the same time the Grateful Dead started up out in San Francisco), my brother Dan and I started the Prime Movers Blues Band in Ann Arbor Michigan. We were probably the first hippie band in the Ann Arbor area as far as I know. A young Iggy Pop was our drummer. Anyway, I started to tell you how I learned about elastic time, and it involved music, so there you know something about my music background.

One night I was playing on an elevated stage. I could really look out at the audience in front of me. And I was having a very good night, musically, something that was not always true. Music, like everything else has its moments. It goes up and down in cycles.

So there I was up on that stage. I had just played some really good music. It was emotionally moving. I don't remember what song I was singing, but I was happy with it. I looked out at the crowd expecting perhaps to see their appreciation, to get some credit and what did I see?

No one was giving me a thumbs-up or the high-fives. Instead as I gazed down at the crowd they were all lost in concentration, obviously looking inward and completely absorbed in their mind. They were not looking at me. Hmmm, thought I, what is this? And then I got it.

The music had been so good that it affected the mood of the crowd. The effort I had put into singing and playing had somehow stretched time open in the mind so that everyone there was able to slip inside clock time and experience themselves in expanded time. The audience was

lost in personal reverie, having found the space and the kind of time in which to have essential thoughts that were perhaps waiting for a moment like this to arise. After all, eternity must be somewhere. It certainly is not something waiting for us at the end of linear time.

In that moment I began to realize that we can make time, expand time by the sheer effort of our creativity and mind. And in that expanded time we can do and create things, set life directions, etc. that cannot easily be done in world-time. This was news to me. I knew something about expanded time. I knew I could turn inward and find space, but I was not really aware that we could all do this together and that this was what music did for us, opened up the mind and gave us a little bit of expanded time, a piece of eternity right in the middle of our busy lives.

I am reminded of the old Bacharach song "Let the Music Play" by the Drifters (also later by Diana Ross)

By the Drifters:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PktuS-cW7U>

By Diana Ross:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXvOEZT\\_59s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXvOEZT_59s)

Make the music play  
Just a little slower  
Just a little slower  
Let me hear her tender sighs  
A little longer

Make the music play  
Keep this magic going  
Keep those trumpets blowing  
All through the night

Don't ever skip a beat  
For she may slip away  
And if we were parted  
I'd be broken hearted  
Till she's in my arms to stay  
Please let the music play

What I was learning that night was that the ritual of playing music perfectly had the effect of opening the mind, not just for me who was playing it, but for everyone present as well. This was something to learn. And by extrapolation I soon learned that any ritual we enact with heart and precision can do the same thing, whether it is poetry, painting, dance, or what-have-you?

Eventually I stumbled on the source of these rituals that expand time, which of course include

meditation and the various other mind-training exercises. This is the mother lode. By learning to meditate properly we can expand time and slip between the seconds and experience an awareness that somehow escapes us most of the ordinary time.

Years later I wrote this article called "Making Blues Time" about the great blues players and their ability to expand time.

<http://dharmagrooves.com/pdf/articles/Music/MAKING%20BLUES%20TIME.pdf>

[Here is a photo by Andy Sachs of me back in the Sixties playing at some outdoor gig. That is me on the right and that is my Epiphone Sheraton guitar being played by Jerry (don't remember his last name). I wish I had it now.

For those interested in hearing the Prime Movers Blues band and yours truly singing and playing amplified harmonica, here is a link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZO5bsagUqY>

