

Christine Rauh

c e l l i s t

Essays

About Myself - A Fictitious Interview

Ms. Rauh, you have been giving concerts since more than fifteen years. How did you find your way to music?

Music was already there and around from the very beginning of my life. Born into a music loving and music making family, my mother, a fine pianist and thoughtful music pedagogue, cautiously guided me and early on taught me her instrument which I still play today. She encouraged exploring music with all its facets and in its full breadth. This, no doubt, laid the foundation for my insatiable musical curiosity.

When did your love for the cello become manifest?

The desire to express myself on a stringed instrument awoke at the age of five, and the cello proved a natural choice. The first lessons devoted to its study already began forming a sound basis favourable to my technical development; they also opened up my musical activities for a whole diversity of fields. These, naturally, include improvising and composing in different styles, ranging from Ukrainian Folklore to Jazz, Pop and even Rock. My sister, the violinist Anne-Kathrin Rauh, and I spent hours and hours together discovering new qualities of sound. Jointly making music played a central role throughout my infancy, and it still does.

Was there any event spurring your desire to perform?

It was at my first appearance, having just turned eight – I contributed to a miscellaneous concert given in a packed Oxford college hall – that my inclination towards public performance came to the fore. This occasion let me experience vividly the emotional and mental interchange with an audience thanks to the music; it also marked the beginning of an intimate relationship between my cello and myself at the same time.

What led you to choose making music as a profession?

I always felt that my profession should embrace several aspects of life. Elizabeth Barrett rightly says: “Art is much, love alone is more.” Indeed, making music and living the life of a musician does not only require mastering an instrument, it involves psychological, philosophical and historical aspects as well. There are also parallels to literature, to the art of painting and to the sciences no less. In short: it’s all about life, it’s *the* story of life!

As far as I am concerned, the choice of a profession closely ties in with the search for one’s own vocation and sense of life. I believe that only the pursuit of what one has been born for can ensure a productive and full life. Hence, ultimately it comes down to finding out one’s personal identity and destiny. That’s why I invariably endeavour to fully utilize my mental and artistic

potential with the aim of developing a genuine profile of myself and, in this way, hopefully, make a beneficial input to society as well.

It has often been said that taking several aspects of life into account helps increase the sensitivity for making music. Would you agree?

Certainly. I enjoy life in its entire variety and therefore just can't stop wondering at the treasures it offers sometimes. I love the idea of exploring our amazing world. For instance, I gain appreciable zest from a breathtaking scenery stuffed of natural magic, be it that of rivers, mountains or woodlands, be it that of gleams of sunshine falling onto the ground through the shadow of twinkling leaves, or be it that of a crocus peeping out of the earth. I think it could be quite harmful concentrating on one aspect of life alone, as this might lead to a narrowing of sight. On the other hand, with all the influences and things that happen to you, life becomes more rewarding and enriched. I try getting to know as much as I can and strive to face everything that looks healthy for me.

Is it true that dedicating oneself to art renders life especially colourful?

Art is a member of the human race. Music, poetry, beauty, love – all these are things we live for!

You adhere to Zen ...

I am sure that we all benefit from spiritual treasures which seem eternal and which surpass death, holding each other united as long as we allow ourselves to live a sensuous life.

... and you also practise Zen. Are there links to music?

Both Zen and music, taken as two different forms of art, call upon surprisingly related frames of mind, demanding that preparatory and creative, technical and artistic, material and spiritual aspects blend without a seam. I could even go as far as to say: the nearest approach to these frames is attained when the technical and the sensitive are one and the same. Such a state permits art to be created out of the inspiration of the instant, music and musician fusing indiscernibly into a unity. It is beguiling, for at that very moment you stop trying to control, and yet get into a state of command without actually commanding; making music then takes on a life of its own.

How far would you consider that devotion to music also means contemplation of oneself?

Devotion to any form of art implies utmost physical-psychical culture and concentration day by day. It includes working hard on oneself in order to overcome possible neuroses or fears, and also to enjoy success – it has much to do with how one reacts to a particular situation or a given environment, and how this eventually shows up in the music.

Which kind of values should an artist represent?

One of the foremost vocations of an artist, in my view, is to preserve, create and extend values that last, which is why the artist's self needs shaping first, individually and creatively. Over and above, though, it is the truthful conveyance of music with its fascinating experience of touching the hearts of an audience through immediate contact, of enriching and, in turn, being enriched, of

exceeding the limits of every-day life, if only for a while, and of sowing the seed of fraternity worldwide.

Ms. Raub, this interview has given me tremendous pleasure. Thank you very much.

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