

Introduction

AS a final tribute from me to these great artists whom touched our lives (especially mine) in such profound ways, I decided to write some last words. I wrote about some of their accomplishments and tragedies. Many of my own excerpts was my own observations/feelings mixed with snippets from Wikipedia with the links under their portraits going straight to the Wikipedia page. These papers are saved in a PDF format, so you can use either Preview (For you Mac folks) or the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. There are lots of pictures and sometimes they do not load up as quickly. You can click again to reload the paper or wait a few seconds and the pictures should load up. Many do not understand the great lost in the arts either by death, cost cutting, or just a failure to begin in the first place. If you never had it, then you never miss it. But once you have had it, sadly we never really appreciate it until it is gone.

I was no different, but I began to take a different look at these performers and saw a totally different world. This world showed me what we truly lost and should appreciate even more. Today's generation do not have a clue of their favorite artists true beginnings nor the ones whom inspired them. With their high tech 10 seconds attention span, caring of what entertains them at the moment. It is the same stage like a manager looking to fill a position. They say he or she has only 10-15 seconds to look at a resume. So what are your odds in getting through to a child, young person, adult or even a manager for a job? To truly appreciate the artist, do a little research on how they came up with the music they did. What inspired them towards such music? Why they play the way they do? I encourage all to do this. You will be surprised to learn that it may even help you on your quest towards purpose in this world.

In reading these what I call last words, you may understand who I am as well. My life has been what I call, life. Many complain about life's difficulties and fail to understand that life itself was designed this way. From the first amino acid to the most complex being, it has been and shall always be a struggle. How you deal with those difficulties is what most religions direct that you will be judged on. To me more than that, your decision during those time will make your moral character and if it is of good will towards others, than you have achieved and can be of peace with yourself knowing that nothing can sway, tempt, coheres, trick, or force you to do what you feel is against your character.

Of course there is no magic way in doing this. It will take a long time of errors, mistakes and misdirection's before achieving this type of peace. In fact, it will take a lifetime. A friend of mind told me once to think of things you encounter like a chess player who is always thinking 2-3 moves ahead. It may not be significant in its (like I.T. folks call) "Current State". Maybe if thought is put towards a possible "Future State", things may become clearer. My grandmother use to tell me many times that tragedy was nothing but a blessing in disguise. I can only say I hope reading these thoughts of those who pushed the envelope in Jazz will inspire you in whatever your goals maybe, and along the journey, you will realize how important your worth in society is. Not only in what you see and hear, but within yourself as well.

Bill Sommerville