

# JONATHAN SARAGA

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## Artist Statement

While I have nearly 10 years of Conservatory training, 3 degrees in Music Performance, as well as nearly 2 decades of experience performing, recording, and competing on an international level while based in New York City, my interests, practices, and skill sets extend beyond music, and into the studies of ontology, philosophy, psychology, science/physics, spirituality, and health/wellness.

My interest in understanding the human condition, as well as my quest for truth and self-realization, is inherently at the core of my love of music. My dedication to refining my craft and various relationships formed from this pursuit, have led me to discovering altered states of consciousness/awareness as well as practices such as Yoga, Reiki, meditation, shadow-work, martial arts, and extra-sensory awareness. Over the years, they have helped guide me towards the confrontation and resolution of traumas, conditioned beliefs, mental constructs as well as the depths of who and what I am.

It is my belief that emotional and spiritual healing can profoundly and positively effect a person's quality of life. This type of healing can occur in many ways in many forms, whether a person is consciously allowing for it to occur or not. Music, I feel can serve as a direct vehicle for the transference of universal truth, which can break through the walls of ego and the ingrained/conditioned feelings of separateness and inform a person's receptivity to their own healing. In this way, I feel it is a special gift, privilege, and great responsibility to study and produce sound-based art.

Even on a more surface level, cognitive, physical, emotional, and social functions are all affected by sound. Sound, I believe is the one sensory-stimulate that is most effective in penetrating the subconscious, and it has been scientifically proven that individuals practicing careers in the sciences, medicines or athletics can enhance their performance with the inclusion of sound-based therapy. Sound is a powerful tool that can be used to help the mentally challenged, abused, or impoverished revitalize their mental and spiritual dispositions. These ideas not only constantly inspire me to continue in my pursuance of excellence in musical craft, but they also directly inform my choices in composition, improvisation as well as various other artistic concepts and approaches.

One of the most beautiful healing effects music can have, is that it can subconsciously re-unite people with their inner child and with source, stimulating emotions that may go otherwise untouched, amidst the trials and tribulations of adult life. While I enjoy creating art that amazes and dazzles people, I live for the opportunity to touch and help people connect and re-center with their true self. Music has the potential to reach deep into the depths of a person's psyche and remind them of the sacred nature of their existence, and it is my hope that through that process, they will be inspired to further their own pursuit of whatever it is that touches them, and that they believe in.

Over the years, I have found that my favorite music to play and my favorite collaborative situations to participate in, are ones where the heart is exposed, and there is a letting go of fear; or at least an opportunity to do so. This can occur in performance situations, but also through interaction with people in non-performance situations. Bringing a state of awareness which acknowledges the human connection and condition, is something I am constantly attempting to maintain as well as refine.

I am passionate about allowing music to speak for itself, and I am dedicated to refining my craft in order to further express myself and express truth in the sincerest way I can. I am continuously striving to remember my relationship with the infinite and to play music informed by this realization; a place of infinite possibility. I believe that music is a gateway to something unexplainable; to a place where we all come from, and where we all are moving toward.

It is a blessing and a miracle to have the opportunity be able to share that understanding with you, by exploring the phenomena of sound, and by expressing it through the beauty of human expression. As Hazrat Inayat Khan exclaims, "music seems to be the bridge over the gulf between form and the formless." Music truly seems to be a place that we, as a race, as spirit can go to reconnect with what it is that we really are, beyond the barrier of flesh. In collaboration with other musicians who have a common goal, I wish you to join us, as we carry the majesty of music through the familiar, and into the unknown.