



Kazoo Player And The Symphony, by Daniel Ingram

Imagine there is a great symphony orchestra in a great concert hall and in front of it, like an absurd comedy act, sits a clearly nervous kazoo player with no music score in front of him. The orchestral introduction begins, and the poor kazoo player, who has no idea what piece will be played, tries to give his best rendition of the orchestra's chosen symphony. He is about a half a second behind them, playing the notes just after he hears them. As he is a kazoo player, he can only play one note at a time, so his impression of the orchestra is a very crude one, hitting on selected highlights of the melody, making for a very small and very simple version of the rich and intricate multipart score of the symphony that this orchestra is playing beautifully in all its glory.

Now, imagine that certain audience members have been cursed to believe that they can only hear the symphony after the kazoo player plays his rendition of it. Beginning meditators are nearly all thusly cursed. We observe like the kazoo player, and eventually we get good at noticing, to hang on to the notes of the kazoo player, delighting in his performance, as crude, linear, and simple as it is.

However, at some point, some of us notice that we can also hear the symphony just as it is, just on its own, that the weave of sounds is coming in from the symphony also, and this is known without the kazoo player having to make a limited, absurd, out-of-time, delayed facsimile of it.

Soon, some of us concert-goers are going to begin to find the kazoo player silly, like some sort of joke that ruins the majesty of the symphony as it is.

Finally, imagine that someone suddenly puts the music in front of the kazoo player, such that he joins the symphony, becomes just one more part of the grand sweep of the melody, largely lost amidst the grandeur of the hundreds of other players all giving it their all. [Our awakening] is like that, in that we finally are just caught up in the performance, without having to feel like we need some poor kazoo player to interpret and imitate the symphony for us, and definitely without having to feel like we have to be up on stage being the kazoo player ourselves.