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Dear Dr. Zeitlin:

I met you some time ago regarding my aspirations as a musician, the vibes being my instrument.

At that time you referred me to Alludin. Obviously the man is a master of his craft and though I enjoyed meeting with him my path was to take another direction.

During the same period I had the good fortune of meeting Michael Smolens, a Bay Area jazz musician and teacher. Every Monday for 12 weeks I took a class with him that culminated in a performance. We worked on 4 tunes, singing base and melody notes, worked on scales and inner voice melodies. What I found most helpful was the weekly questions that Michael had us ask of ourselves regarding our relationship to our music.

Though this was a formalized ritual that I initially resisted, for it appeared to take away from our playing time, I gradually became more receptive and eventually intrigued with this psychological processing of our identity as musicians in the jazz genre.

As a result of my experience with my classmates and Michael I perhaps, for the first time, was able to establish a more secure identity as a player and performer at the level that I am proficient at. I learned as well what it means to feel content with my playing and overall musical experience. I am sharing this with you both as a psychologist, and aspiring musician-student, as I value the unique contribution that Michael Smolens is providing for people like myself. He has a gift for teaching, generating enthusiasm, and though he creates a fairly formal and rigorous medium he never violates the integrity of those he instructs. Michael has a keen ear, is lyrical in expression and has an uncanny ability to identify what each of his students need to grow. Michael tells me that Alludin is one of his mentors.

Fondly,

