

# Arthur Lee Jacobson

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September 2022

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This year's newsletter is shorter than last year's 6-page one. For 30 years I have issued newsletters—such as this. Readers who like them, return; readers who dislike them, don't. You are *welcome* to share your thoughts with me.

**My business** this year has way more clients for my services than I can handle. Next year, I *must* decline to work so much. Working too much means earning more money than needed, yet leaving too little time to do other things—anything else.

**Edible houseplants.** Part of my edible houseplants study and book writing is to get a plant, grow it, study it, taste it, then replace it to try another. At any given time some 50 or 60 different kinds of houseplants reside in my apartment. If forced to grow *only* ten, here are my favorites of my existing collection:

*Aloë vera*

Burn Plant

*Alternanthera* 'Sissoo Spinach'

Brazilian, Sissoo or Sabu Spinach. Samba Lettuce

*Begonia boliviensis*

Scarlet Begonia

*Curcuma longa*

Turmeric

*Medinilla Cumingii*

Malaysian Orchid

*Monolena primulælor*

Lemon Plant

*Parietaria judaica*

Pellitory-of-the-Wall

*Pilea peperomioides*

Chinese Money Plant. Chinese Missionary Plant.

Parasol Pilea. UFO Plant. Lollipop Plant.

Disc-leaved Plant. Water-lily Houseplant

*Saintpaulia ionantha* ssp. *rupicola*

Small-leaf African Violet

*Sauropus androgynus*

Katuk/Katook. Star Gooseberry. Sweetleaf Bush.

Tropical Asparagus. Multivitamin Green

**Hillebrandia sandwicensis** is the plant I most seek. It eluded my efforts. So, \$200 reward shall be paid to the first person who gets me a plant or viable seeds of it. It is a *Begonia*-like Hawaiian plant, of mountain rainforest valleys on Kauai, Maui, and Molokai. Since 121 *Begonia* species are reported eaten by people around the world, I desire to taste *Hillebrandia* and see how it does in a pot indoors @ 60% humidity.

Taha Ebrahimi is writing a book about selected **street-trees in Seattle**. Taha radiates abundant passion, energy, and talent, but relies on *unreliable* official City data. When I was learning trees, experts mentored and helped me. Accordingly, I help Taha so she can produce a more accurate, helpful book.

**Book news.** Just 129 copies remain of *Trees of Seattle*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. I won't reprint it or update it. *Wild Plants of Greater Seattle* has 459 copies, but will get reprinted. My *Edible Houseplants* book is still undone, after 12 years. It is neglected because I do so much client work; build community (133 visitors to my apartment since I moved here in Nov. 2018); learn about the *real* state of civilization and take "better safe than sorry" precautions to brace for a lean future. I cannot do a *Trees of Seattle*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition for these reasons: 1) too little time; 2) so many people now in the city, with so much traffic, that anyone who travels around trying to look at and catalog noteworthy trees, would have a trying job. What I *can* do is put on my website an *annotated list* of new kinds of trees present here that are *not* listed in the earlier editions. Eleven of these have been treated on my website already as Plant-of-the-month articles:

Ghost DOGWOOD

*Cornus Wilsoniana*

Jacqueline Hillier ELM

*Ulmus* 'Jacqueline Hillier'

Carolina HEMLOCK

*Tsuga caroliniana*

Puget Sound JUNIPER

*Juniperus maritima*

Chinese Money MAPLE

*Dipteronia sinensis*

White Chilean MYRTLE

*Luma Chequen*

Torrey PINE

*Pinus Torreyana*

PIPLI TREE

*Exbucklandia populnea*

Hemsley SNOWBELL-TREE

*Styrax Hemsleyanus*

SOAPBARK TREE

*Quillaja Saponaria*

'Golden Treasure' SWEETGUM

*Liquidambar Styraciflua* 'Golden Treasure'

I know of at least 20 others not cited in *Trees of Seattle*. If *you* know of new rare trees in the city limits, other than those found only at Washington Park Arboretum, *please* share details with me. Whether old specimens that I somehow missed, or new kinds that were not available or planted until more recent years—such as various hybrid elms.

**R.I.P.** Seattle horticulturist Gerard Vreeburg died in April. He had been for decades in charge of maintaining the UW Medicinal Herb Garden. I met him when I was around 20 years old. He died 97 years old.

**Homemade liqueurs.** In 2019, I made 5 home-made black currant liqueurs, and two elderberry liqueurs. In 2020, I made 18 blends. For 2021, I made 5 kinds. This year I am behind, but *intend* to make more . . .

## ALJ music taste : a stark contrast

Ever since teen years, I listen to diverse music. On the next two pages, are contrasted two extremes I like: classical and rock, separated by 150 years.

### 1) Liszt's *Faust* symphony (first performed in 1857). My CD: New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein; The Choral Arts Society; Charles Bressler tenor soloist.

Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (1811–1886) is famous for piano music—just like Michael Jordan is famous for basketball. Liszt's musical genius also expressed itself in an orchestral/choral work based on Goethe's *Faust*. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) has been called the greatest German. He was a Renaissance man, with broad and varied contributions to art and science, of global influence. His *Faust* poem/drama explored the dealings of Dr. Faustus with the Devil. Knowing the Faust story, a person will better appreciate Liszt's *Faust* symphony. As a teenager, I read both Goethe's *Faust* (in English translation) and listened to Liszt's *Faust* symphony. Both affected me. Here is my take on the music's three acts and its choral ending.

#### Act 1 **Faust** (about 27 minutes)

The longest, most complex, multifaceted act. Echoing the Faust character, its volume, pace and tone changes throughout from loud and stirring with brass to brooding, quiet and haunting. It portrays moods of anger, lust, humor, and so on. Dr. Faust was a middle-aged scholar, jaded, yearning, shrewd, lustful, selfish, and overall discontent. He behaved badly and exploited Gretchen. This act starts quiet and moody. It finishes ultimately with a subtle, almost invisible ending.

#### Act 2 **Gretchen (Margaret)** (about 20 minutes)

As needed to aptly reflect its character, act 2 is the quiet, intimate, introspective portion. Much charm, little excitement and no violence, in A-flat major. Smooth flowing, gentle and soothing. So quiet in parts that one strains to hear it. Solo viola and oboe plus murmuring strings; minimal brass; some harp whose deep tones serve as background to the higher pitched instruments. Its quiet expressions and themes are pure, in that they are virtually untainted with the strident act 1 and 3 themes—though both of those acts possess crucial moments of *its* feminine essence.

#### Act 3 **Mephistopheles (Devil)** (about 16 minutes)

Starts impishly like a bunny hopping. Quickly grows sinister, assertive, faster, louder, weighty, and even militaristic. Mostly restless, as if it was musical ADHD. At about halfway, it descends into a brief respite of slow, beautiful act 2 music, like gentle rain after a scorching hot day, then resumes bombastic in frenzied, discordant struggle again. The Devil *inverts* good, so in this act, the act 1 music is twisted and ruined. Right before the very end, returns the beautiful act 2 music, that seems to banish the Devil, as if its purity makes him slink away defeated like a vampire fleeing dawn. This uplifting ending, incidentally, recalls the *very* end of Richard

Wagner's (1813-1883) *Ring*. And echoes Goethe's *Faust* drama ending in that *good prevails over evil* in the end.

#### Choral finale (about 7 minutes)

An optional part that some people hate (for example, George Shangrow, my deceased college musical teacher). But I love this choral ending. To me, it is like a crown resting upon and elevating to royalty an otherwise ordinary head. It offers pleasing back and forth between chorus and soloist tenor. Accordingly, the volume varies from quiet to verily like that of a grand opera. The organ triumphant at the end is a stirring surprise and satisfying conclusion. Even without understanding the German vocabulary, I like it. Its *key* lines sung are

*Das Ewig Weibliche  
Zieht uns hinan*

Three English translations:

Women in all of us  
Shows us the way

The Eternal-Feminine  
Lures to perfection

The Eternal-Feminine  
Draws us aloft

In the *Faust* symphony, Liszt tried to portray musically “portraits” of three different characters. If you had to compose music suggestive of three individuals, could you? And not with just one instrument such as a piano. But to use an entire orchestra, harps and trombones included, plus singers, and an organ. I find Liszt's masterpiece admirable, and it pleases me deeply. I think Liszt nailed Goethe's key point of pious, innocent femininity transcending baser behavior. He did it without the precise, masterful deftness of the Wagner *leitmotif* (“theme”), a wonderful device also employed literally in the famous *Magic Mountain* novel by Thomas Mann (1875–1955).

I get much out of this music, partly due to also being familiar with the other artists and works I mention. Someone with zero such background may shrug with indifference. A lengthy piece of classical orchestral music usually requires its listener to “take his time” and be patient as the audible, nonverbal “story” is told. The quiet portions tempt one to turn up the volume. But that would counter the composer's goal to contrast quietness with the louder portions. Just like when eating, the diner naturally savors diverse food dishes during a 7-course meal—compared to a simple one-pot meal. In the *Faust* symphony, act 1 is the “norm” or basic level. Act 2 is the quiet, beautiful act. Act 3 is the restless, chaotic, discordant and devilish finale. Then comes the chorus and solo singer, like a concert encore, redeeming the whole work's unevenness with a simple, repeated, beautiful message. Like icing on a cake, like a bow on a wrapped present.

## 2) Lynyrd Skynyrd *Live from Freedom Hall, Louisville, Kentucky, June 15, 2007.*

An exceptional 2007 performance by this band is sold as a package of a musical CD plus a bonus DVD. This was produced and sold in 2010. It is remarkable in various ways. The band performing this concert, was not the original Lynyrd Skynyrd band that had been the most successful and popular southern USA rock group. It issued five studio albums, had platinum hits and was famous from 1973 (first album) to 1977 (last album, and disbanding).

The original group's best known hits were *Sweet Home Alabama* and *Free Bird*. But the death in a plane crash of some of its members, including its lead singer, ended things. The band recorded a live album in Atlanta in July 1976. At that time it came out on two records; a double LP. Its musical CD version is incomplete: 71 minutes, only 12 songs. It was titled *One more from the road*. In comparison, the 2010 musical CD titled *Live from Freedom Hall*, is longer (79 minutes) has more songs (15), and is I think superior. Let me share why.

The original Lynyrd Skynyrd band itself had players come and go. Key members were its lead singer Ronnie Van Zant, lead guitarist Gary Rossington, and keyboardist Billy Powell. Your usual basic rock band has a guitar and bass guitar, plus drummer. Skynyrd had always at least three guitarists, usually four, and keyboardist, harmonica player, and two or three women backup singers.

After 10 years of silence, in 1987, the band regrouped, with lead singer Johnny Van Zant—younger brother of the deceased Ronnie Van Zant. The intent of the 2007 Louisville live recording was to be a tribute to the 30 years since the original band ended with the tragic plane crash. The tribute concert band members of long standing were Ricky Midlocke, and keyboardist Billy Powell. By 2007, these were no longer young men. But they teamed up with various younger musicians, making a multigenerational band. All told, over the decades, at least 28 men played in the band at one time or another. The sum of their 2007 performance is stellar and polished.

Uneven sound from track to track is a weakness of many music recordings, including the 1976 live Skynyrd release. Many live recordings also have awkward artificial breaks in between songs. The 2007 Skynyrd production has flawless flow of even-paced sound, uniform energy level, and the DVD videography is perfect. It is a superb work. I applaud its energetic power; choice of songs; sequence of songs; the lead singer's remarks; the crowd's vocal enthusiasm and joining in.

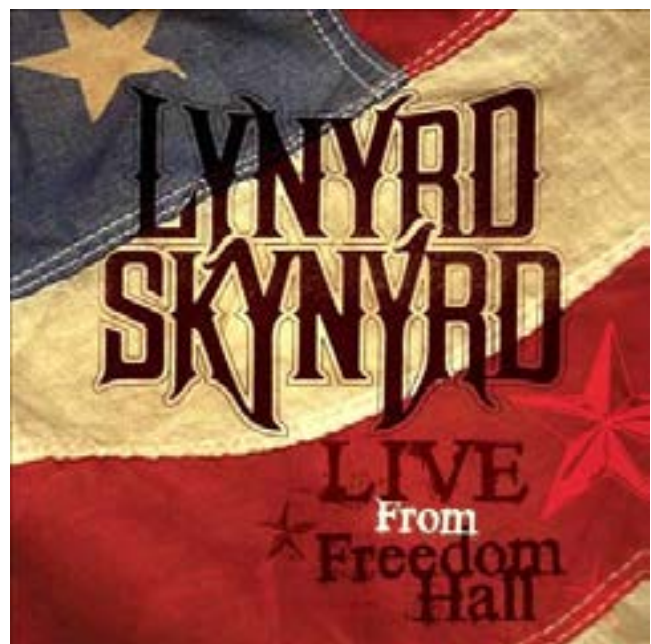
Watching the camera footage, I light up with joy, seeing polished experts performing in concert. Every band member, including the backup singers, gets coverage. Five cameras were employed. The pianist and drummer, are forced to stay put on the stage, but the lead singer and various guitarists stroll about and interact with each other and the audience. If I

had to cite imperfections, I'd mention that Johnny Van Zant's voice had lost its youthful pitch (at age 47; and that the extreme ending is abrupt due to the time constraints of any music CD. The original album version of *Free Bird* was 9 minutes long. This live version stretches to 12 minutes and concludes the concert. The audience gives a rousing ovation, but the music CD was unable to reflect as much, though the DVD shows it.

When you play the DVD, make sure you have good audio. The DVD has the entire show, unlike the CD, but also has inferior audio.

I admire that these people, rather than ending their music making after the plane crash, continued it, albeit in an altered format. I admire how Johnny Van Zant chose to more or less pay homage to, and replace his older brother, rather than insisting on carving out a unique career himself. I love how keyboardist Billy Powell (classically trained pianist), 54 years old, showed how masterful, essential and eloquent his contributions were. In the same way the Liszt's Gretchen music contrasted with the heated Faust and Devil acts, even so Powell's piano playing contrasts soprano-like with the raucous guitar blaring and frenetic drum beating. It is heartening how 57-year-old old Ricky Midlocke plays guitar side by side with the younger guys. Midlocke runs around dramatically, changes his guitars three times, and literally jumps with fun. Gary Rossington, 56 years old, is less active and sometimes stands still like a statue, but commands respect as having co-written six of the songs played, and having played in the band since high school.

Having heard all 6 of Lynyrd Skynyrd's studio albums, if forced to possess only one CD, it would be *this* one. If you like Lynyrd Skynyrd but have never heard/seen this one, do so. [The 25th anniversary deluxe, remastered edition of *One more from the road* released in 2001 has more songs, but I have yet to listen to it. It may please me more than this work.]



In conclusion, piano prodigy Liszt and genius Goethe hobnobbed among Europe's aristocrats and royalty. In contrast, the Skynyrd background was more or less being born "on the wrong side of the tracks" in rural, southern USA. Regardless of the many differences between these musicians and the 150 years, millions of appreciative listeners treasure and love their music. As I write this, most of us —myself and you readers—possess at our fingertips access to an astonishingly rich, diverse, global array of music. Since I do not use "cloud" music subscription services, and own only as many CDs as my shelves can contain, my collection is limited to about 450 CDs. I shared here with you, in black & white words, my thoughts on just *two* such.

Whether you share my taste or not, we both celebrate our uplifted spirits experienced when enjoying our favorite music.

## 📖 THE TEN COMMANDMENTS 📖

The Bible's ten commandments, written in stone, are:

- 1 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- 2 Six days shall *work* be done, but the seventh day shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of *rest* to the Lord. Remember the sabbath day, keep it holy.
- 3 Thou shalt not make any graven image, or any idols.
- 4 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord God in vain.
- 5 Honor thy father and thy mother.
- 6 Thou shalt not kill.
- 7 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- 8 Thou shalt not steal.
- 9 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- 10 Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's.

Most people including me, routinely fail to observe the sabbath, and take the name of the Lord God in vain (as in swearing "God damn it!"). To Jews, Saturday is sabbath; to most Christians Sunday is. If given a *choice* of a day of rest—a sabbath—is Monday okay? I work fewer Mondays than any other day of the week. In 2022 so far, I have only had 5 Sundays without gainful employment, and 13 Saturdays. No question, it'd be easy for me to choose to observe Monday. But if God prefers Saturday or Sunday, then I should defer to God, even if inconvenient for me. Just looking at a standard calendar, one sees plainly the first day is Sunday, on the left; the last (7<sup>th</sup>) day is Saturday, on the right. Looks like the Jews (and 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists) are proper to observe Saturday as the sabbath. According to the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists, "The change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday happened in the year 321 AD when Roman Emperor Constantine issued a decree that Christians were to observe Sunday." Shall we obey God, or Constantine?

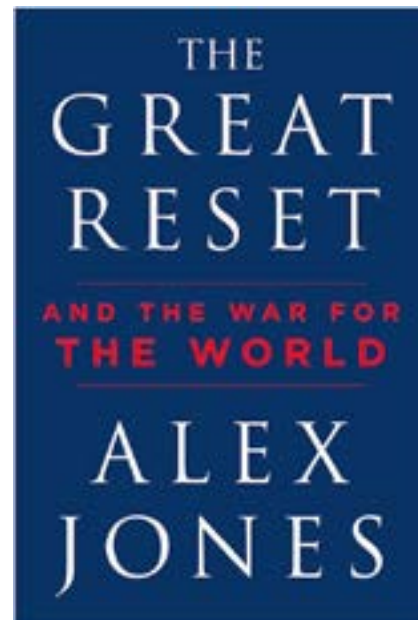
In respect to *honoring my parents*, both deceased, to their credit they modeled to their kids frugality, good cooking, generosity, inquisitiveness, pragmatism, free expression, volunteering, eclectic music taste—and the like. I *thank-you*, mom and dad!

**Plant tours.** This year, I led (or will have led) 7 public tours, as well as private ones. My last public tour of the season will be Saturday October 8<sup>th</sup> at the **Locks**. We will see rare plants, late flowers, early autumnal leaf color, and diverse fruits and seeds. Meet in front of the visitor center. 9:30–11:30; fee \$10. Limited to the first 15 people on my sign-up list. Afterward, anyone interested can join me for lunch at The Lockspot.

**Food notes.** My homemade rabbit jerky tasted so much like beef jerky that it ended up being an expensive bother. I desire to acquire duck and bison meat to make jerky. Also, I seek an Ethiopian to tutor me to make my own injera. I bought teff grain and have a mill to grind flour. But though my bread looks good, smells good, and tastes good, its *texture* is not perfect.

**Economic notes.** Warning clouds darken the air. Certainly 2023 will be worse off than 2022. Major

inflation means I must raise my rates to remain viable. Readers who heeded my suggestion to go *beyond* mainstream media sources to obtain news, will know what I mean. The whole global economy is *contracting*. The powers that be cheat, lie, and censor. And (like the Devil) *invert* good to cause trouble. If you seek a superb overview of the big picture problems people face, read the new book *The Great*



*Reset and the war for the world* by Alex Jones.

I own an autographed copy. Become aware, so you can resist the reset, as good resists evil.

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