



MISSIONARY OF SOUND



Film 1 - Welcome!

A modified transcription of
Welcome to the Missionary of Sound

My name is Steve Abley. I live in the United Kingdom in a city called Winchester, and have been a musician for most of my life. I've made some recordings, done some teaching and have taken some university degrees in teaching, composition as well as general music. Around about my late teenage years, I began to understand that music actually creates atmospheres. Not only that, but it creates situations for people.

I went once upon a time to a party in Wolverhampton where I was born and half of that party's music was 1970s Disco style and half of it was Heavy Metal. There was a toss of a coin to see which style of music would be for the first part of the party and the Heavy Metal crew won, so for an hour and a half we had heavy metal music and the whole nature of the room changed. There was nothing particularly dark about it you know, but it had a darkness to it which is part of its character and part of its pull for people I think. And so the dancing was different, the people who were dancing were dressed differently to those of us who were really into Disco at that time and there was a just a sort of a coldness and a harshness to the sound (in my opinion).

Then about half way through we changed to Disco and it was just standard you know, some of the classics that play as oldies now we're just being written then. And when it started, it was just as though the colour in the room came back. They put some lights on that you would normally have had in a Disco and then there was the Soul element - the Sound Of Unity and Love which is what Soul music was meant to epitomise, and the whole nature of the room changed. People were dancing with each other, there was no sort of mad waving of long hair which even though I had an afro I wouldn't have been able to do anyway and I just thought 'What on earth was that all about?'

I began to look at Composition much later after my first university experience, to see how you created what nowadays is Film Music - where you are actually providing a background for the action. And so the Missionary of Sound is really an experiment for you who are watching on how you can create sounds that actually change people's lives, sounds that change atmospheres. It not only gives examples of how you do this, but it teaches you the basic nuts and bolts of why this works, why some things don't and why some things do.

Learning theory in the old sense of the word (in the 'old days' as it were) I found quite dull, playing the piano, learning the notes, learning about phrasing, learning about this and that, and goodness knows why on earth all the terms had to be in Italian! But learning things that actually provide the backbone of what you're able to do on the piano or on the saxophone or violin or whatever - you know it gets hard. It doesn't really matter which instrument, but whichever instrument it is that becomes part of you and

when you know the theory is then able to express so much more musical vocabulary than if you didn't know the theory at all. So the Missionary of Sound project as it is, is to train people up who need some understanding.

You know, as Christian musicians or spiritual musicians we don't always get trained up. We sort of fall into it and then unfortunately six chords becomes the norm for many Christian styles, and if you're going to express the character of God in your music or if you're going to tackle through sound some trauma or a traumatic event or depression or something else in someone's life then you're gonna have to know more about God's character in sound that six chords!

When God spoke the earth into being, I don't believe it was a monotone - it wasn't just to speak it. Everything about Him came out of His mouth - His passions, His loves, His dedication, His amazing miraculous power - all of these things came out through His mouth. It wasn't just "oh let there be light then..." - it was a very vibrant sort of declaration from His own personality. And as we are mini Christs - that's what Christian means - or even as a spiritual people, then we can have the same principle that works in us - when we bring something to God sound wise, we can actually create something unique. We can create something with our own authenticity, with our our personality, our education, our history, our accent, our understanding, our passions, our loves, our hates - all these can all be forced out of either the mouth through singing or through playing a wind instrument or through our fingers if we're playing something using guitar, violin, percussion, piano or keyboard. It's just not enough to use just six chords or eight chords or even twenty chords without thinking about the impact they are having. The way you play and what you play comes from you so the Missionary of Sound is about creating things that actually create atmospheres, that create life-changing sounds that can see individuals or congregations or communities or towns or cities changed and actually resound with what God is bringing.

About eight years ago I was in Camden Market in London and I was in a quite a deep part - you know lots of steps down and I was at an Arabic coffee shop with my family, just drinking. It was a fairly spiritually alive place - there was nothing Christian there but you know crystals and various other rigmaroles and Islamic and Hindu stuff and whatever. I was sipping coffee and then I just heard this sound and I look round and I saw six saxophonists - six saxophone players - walking down one of the narrow alleyways and they were all playing this incredible tune they were each playing different parts to it but it fitted together perfectly. As they moved forward, the whole place lit up - it didn't stop being lit up when they moved on - it just lit up more and more of the whole of the market in different colours and vibrancy and moving lights. And they came nearer and nearer to me and I was looking around thinking 'Why isn't anybody else reacting to this?' and they got near to me. It was such a powerful sound that changed, just changed everything around and then the Lord said to me "Where are my musicians Steve? Where are they?" and with that I looked and this group of musicians just turned to sand and fell on the floor and I realised that it had been a vision. I understood God was saying 'Where are my musicians? Where are the musicians that don't necessarily sing songs but create atmospheres with what they sing or play out - the sounds that they produce with their mouths as well as the extension of themselves which is their instruments.

So I began to understand that music can actually represent and change what's going on in the world. So in the world of medicine, sound is actually being used as a remedy - it's being used as a tool to destroy certain types of cancers even in the United Kingdom this

is happening! How much more when you have the Holy Spirit to actually guide you and lead you into unknown territories as it were! We could see so many more things going on than just what happens on a Sunday morning or Sunday night or a Wednesday evening or whatever. I'm not necessarily talking about worship (though worship can be affected and changed by this) - I'm talking about sound that has godly properties about it to destroy enemy works, to destroy things that destroy people themselves and to actually build people up, to create communities who resound and enjoy what they sound like, and actually use it to build unity, to build families and all sorts of things like that.

So the Missionary of Sound programme not only gives a musical training from beginner level up to just underneath professional level, but it's also a spiritual training, so that the sounds that you learn to produce, the music you begin to create not only has a sound property but it also has a spiritual property, because much of the terminology and creativity that you produce in sound has a spiritual dimension. You'll learn not just how to create sounds but actually create situations and remedies, if you like, to use in a spiritual context.

If you're a beginner, then the films in the Missionary of Sound are for you. As long as you've been playing for around six weeks maybe, or you've come to terms with your instrument and you've started to make some sounds on it then you will learn as much musically from this program as from any other written or online source. If you're a professional and you know much of the theory (and some of it is fairly complex!) then you will also learn how to put this into an improvisatory nature. So there is no need to be able to read standard music notation, but there is a need to begin to understand how what you create is more of a composition than a performance in each film. What you create has spiritual implications for you and for those around you.

So each film has a concept, or several concepts - there are exercises at the end of each film - sometimes there are several throughout a film, and they will give you the opportunity not just musically but spiritually to put into practice what you've learnt in that particular section. And on top of that, every film has a set of PDF notes which expand on what the film has demonstrated or taught.

So there's nothing special particularly in what I do, I've just studied it for a very long time. I don't want to keep it to myself - I just don't! I want to see this whole movement of what they used to call minstrels in the Bible actually launched, so that people understand who they are and can train and see their own expertise growing.

You know King David when he played the harp actually saw the demonic flee from Saul but it says David was a skilled musician, as well as a warrior, and a lover of God. You can be a skilled musician when you begin to understand the instrument that's part of you, or your voice which is part of you, and you can begin to use it in all the detail you can put into assignments and into missions to see people set free, to see communities change and to see the world just become a little bit closer to what God is intending for it in these days.

So it's really great that you're joining us on this journey. It's really great that you in studying through this program become the experts. It's really great that you know in your communities, your nation, your city, your region you are able and you have the authority to begin to see change come from God, not just because you've played six

chords but because you've studied, you're skilled in knowing the sounds that change communities, the sounds that change the atmosphere across a whole region of people.

So I'm inviting you to become part of what is essentially a company of prophets, a company of musical prophets. So we're not just listening to music which we really enjoy and which we identify with, we're actually beginning to create it! We're beginning to create sounds that come from our own experience, from our own authenticity wherever that may be from, whichever part of the country or world that you live, and see Holy Spirit begin to change lives around you, through you releasing your sound with some study and with some expertise that will grow gradually as you look and investigate these films and begin to put the the knowledge and experience into practice in your own lives.

So let's get learning!

Let's begin to develop those skills and techniques that make you a musical prophet, and join me in the Missionary of Sound...

Steve Abley