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The Musician's Walk: An Ethical Labyrinth

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Reviews

*Reviews of books, videos, software and music
for the professional music teacher*

BOOKS

☞ **The Musician's Walk: An Ethical Labyrinth**, by James Jordan. GIA Publications, Inc. (7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638), 2006. 399 pp. \$38.95.

Punctuated by lush photography and insightful quotes, *The Musician's Walk: An Ethical Labyrinth*, articulates the ethical wanderings of the musical soul through the lens of the labyrinth.

Author James Jordan's advice to experience a real labyrinth is well taken—the portioning of physical space is akin to the intellectual and spiritual space this book requires. A bit abstruse, this book is anything but a traditional look at the musician's life. A healthy portion of it discusses the ethical dilemmas that musicians face in the 21st century, including how to treat each other and our art, how to protect the rights of those who create and publish music and how to uphold aspiration and excellence. It



also explores diverse topics such as Qi (vital energy), crystal bowls as healing objects and the role tones, such as those produced on a didgeridoo, play in healing the body and soul.

The Musician's Walk is the third in Jordan's trilogy about spiritual music making. The paradigm of the labyrinth is effective. It not only conveys the difficulty of our path but of the three stages of the journey. The first is the journey to the center, the path that at times arrives at a dead end or offers difficult turns to be negotiated. Jordan cautions we must be in the "right space" to take the walk. These pages are filled with anecdotes and findings about the human self and the musical self from the perspective of Jordan and his contributors—engaging descriptions of the differing ways they experience awareness, love and compassion in the modern world.

At the heart of the journey is the center of the labyrinth, the place where we find our centeredness and arrive at our definition of what it is to be ethical. Curiously, this section is devoted

primarily to the church musician, and a decidedly religious tone prevails throughout these four chapters. Regardless of one's thoughts about spirituality, these chapters are both maze and mirror.

Once settled in the center, one can begin the walk back out into the world, cultivating an authentic presence by maintaining a "state of constant awareness about both ourselves and our place in the world." Jordan provides tools for reflection, including "My Ethical Notebook"—copious blank pages for recording thoughts and completing guided journal entries and a space for creating a personal ethical statement, which he encourages we carry with us. If this book has any weakness, it is very minor and can be found in the inconsistency of voice and presentation of ideas inherent when differing authors share unique perspectives.

In any case, *The Musician's Walk* is a book that should be read, and read often. It is an important look at our walk through the ecology of life and a beautiful reminder that when we choose to tread ethically, we will leave behind footprints of love, compassion and brilliance. *Reviewed by Julianne Miranda, Greencastle, Indiana.*

☞ **Teaching Genius: Dorothy DeLay and the Making of a Musician**, by Barbara Lourie Sand. Amadeus Press, LLC. (512 Newark Pompton Tpke., Pompton Plains, NJ 07444), 2005. 240 pp. \$16.95.

☞ The items marked with this symbol can be ordered via the MTNA website through our affiliation with Amazon.com. Go to www.mtna.org, click on "Resources and Services" and scroll down to the Amazon.com section.