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experience, but that's what science can tell us. We're about to break the rhythmic code of DNA about which music does what to which part of the brain. That's just a few years away. So we're learning more and more about what part of the brain is activated by what rhythms, what amplitude. Music is really becoming quite a science in the field of neuroimaging, neurology and the motor diseases.

S.Z.: *Many people who live on the street are dealing with a mental health and/or addiction issues. Do you think that music therapy could be successfully applied to addiction or harm reduction therapy?*

M.H.: Of course. Music is a focus. Music is a tuning system, not just to bring people together to dance and make love, which are two of it's functions as a ritual. It brings the vibratory essence of the body together and it tunes it, like a tuning fork. That's what music does. It can make you happy, it can make you melancholy, it can energize you, it can put you to sleep. There are a lot of things that music can do that we don't know about yet. We've only been recording music for a little over a hundred years. Of course, we have been playing music since the beginning of time. Our earliest records show that as we became civilized, we used music as a way of expanding and developing our brains and coming together as a people. Every culture on the planet has music. There is not one culture that does not have music. That should say something to you.

S.Z.: *You have said that music "reconnects" the damaged mind. What then, is the impact on a vibrant mind?*

M.H.: It enhances. It exhausts the consciousness. When everything is working right and you add this to the mix, you have a great time, right? You're elated, you feel good. It's a healthy experience, a life-giving thing. That's what music is about. If you are doing great, music makes you even more powerful.

S.Z.: *Music programs in public schools continue to be on the chopping block in many schools' budgets across the nation. You have talked about music being a key component to learning. What was your experience, in your youth, with music in the educational system?*

M.H.: When you have a healthy organism, you learn. Music stimulates and focuses. Music also allows us to go into the spiritual

domain where the important things are to us.

I had a great music teacher in high school, which saved my life and guided me to where I am now. Back then there were a lot of music programs and it allowed me to be who I am. Unfortunately now they're being ripped away from the schools which is Draconian. It is like a throwback to a civilization that has forgotten what music does and is bankrupt basically. We've become morally and spiritually bankrupt.

Take Einstein. He was really a good musician, you know. He said that (music) was really his first love. He would play on his violin or piano and then run into his studio and write down a few formulas. Then back to the violin. He used the violin as a way into thinking about the theories, the BIG ones. The big mysterium tremendum: relativity, time-space, and the matter that we are embedded in. He used music.

S.Z.: *What are your thoughts about the effect that disappearing art and music programs in our schools has on the future of our collective musical consciousness?*

M.H.: Yeah. It's terrible. I mean, you're nurturing a society that doesn't really have a way of becoming spiritual and accessing those very important areas of humanity. Music is one of the only things that does it. Taking away music. Many studies show that music increases skill in math, science, technology, engineering, all kinds of skills. Music is an enhancer of that. You take music away, you lose the spiritual side and then you also lose everything else that music allows for which is higher learning, advancements in science. Also music stirs the imagination which is really an important thing for the development of any species. Without imagination, you just dry up and die. You become a thing of the past and you become irrelevant and eventually you will no longer be. So, if you're talking about a long range view of humanity, I see a very bleak future when you don't have the arts. Not just music, but all kinds of arts. Because we were given those arts to become human and stay human and advance as a species. This takes us back to the Stone Age.

S.Z.: *The Grateful Dead were part of the soundtrack to the '60s revolution - protests against an overseas lost war and the general disgust with the leadership and war machine overriding the best interest of the people. What do you think of the Occupy movement?*

M.H.: Yeah, well they're just crying out. They're screaming, just like we were

screaming. Screaming to understand what they stand for and people get desperate. It's another evolution in the protest. Power to the people. More power to them. If they ever got organized, they could be dangerous. I hope someday that more of those kind of

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things will happen.

S.Z.: *What did the '60s and early '70s teach this generation in terms of speaking out and changing establishment?*

M.H.: You always learn something from something that came before. That's why you preserve music, that's why you have history books. When people see other people doing what they might feel, it empowers them. Wow! There's more of us than I ever thought. That's the way it was for me in the '60s. Once I started seeing the crowds, I said, "Wow it's not just the five of us."

There are a whole bunch of people out there that are dancing to our music and believing in some of the things we were trying to say with our music. So it's important for other people to witness what happened before them and draw their own conclusions on a personal and group level.

S.Z.: *Who or what has influenced you most greatly as a musician?*

M.H.: I would have to say Pythagoras. About 400 B.C. he was the father of the science of music. He discovered the octave. And he also gave numerical notations to all

of the planets. He saw the planets and the whole universe as the world of sound. The world as a musical instrument. He called it the music of the spheres, or musica universalis. Which is music universe. I would have to say that would be the biggest influence, on a larger level. You know, I've had musicians who have influenced me, but Pythagoras is the biggie.

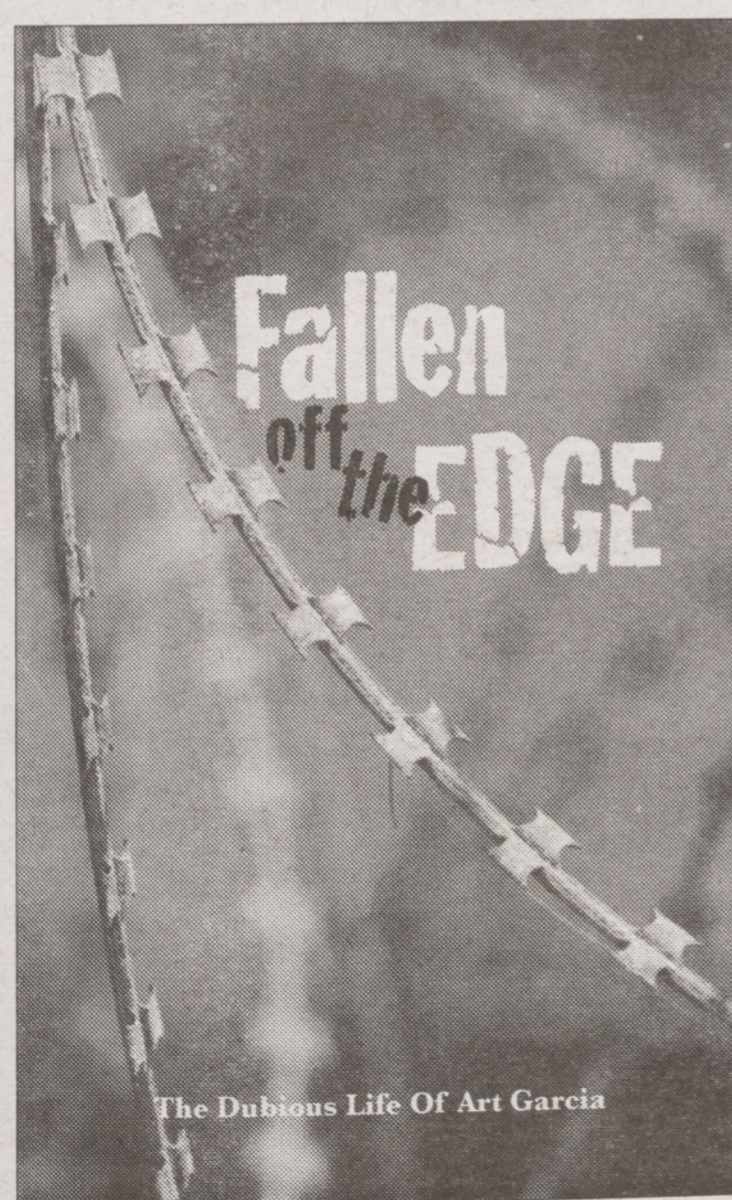
S.Z.: *Tell us about the work you have done for the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and more recently, with The Smithsonian Institution's nonprofit record label, Smithsonian Folkways.*

M.H.: There are precious recordings that are housed at the Library (of Congress) and the Smithsonian Folkways. These recordings are endangered. The discs and different mediums we have used to record sounds since 1890 are decomposing. They're rotting. So it's a race against time to get these collections and digitize them for the future, forever. This music is not just songs, they're histories of thousands of years of cultures. The next generation needs some body of work to start their musical career. Everybody to base their music on somebody that has come before them. In this case, bodies of work, whether it be the blues, punk, Led Zeppelin, Tibetan music, whatever it is. You base it on something that came before you and then eventually if you stay with it the rest for your life, your own skill becomes your own music.

S.Z.: *I've heard you say that you are "playing with the beginning of time and space now, dancing with the infinite, vibratory universe." What is that like?*

M.H.: You have the feeling that you know what that first vibration was, the thing that created it all. You know when it was and you know where it was. So it gives you a kind of spiritual connection to the whole chain of being, of life, of the universe. And that you're a part of it. And this is the sound that started it all. Some people might say I'm having a conversation with the creator. I'm having a conversation with a creation moment. If there is a god, its got to be a vibration. It's a very spiritual experience to be able to interact with the energies that created everything - everything. It's a very powerful thought, so you just ponder that for a while and you play with it. And somehow it brings you deeper into the heart of music.

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Fallen Off the Edge

A new book by Art Garcia

"Fallen Off the Edge" is a chronicle of one man's experiences after returning from the Vietnam War. Told through the eyes of Street Roots columnist Art Garcia, this book celebrates the major victories born from a series of questionable choices. Art's jocular storytelling takes the reader along with him in and out of the California prison system over the course of 10 years until he found the strength and courage to pull himself up from the fall.

The book is available online at www.blurb.com under searchword Art Garcia.

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