

# Creating my Music Within

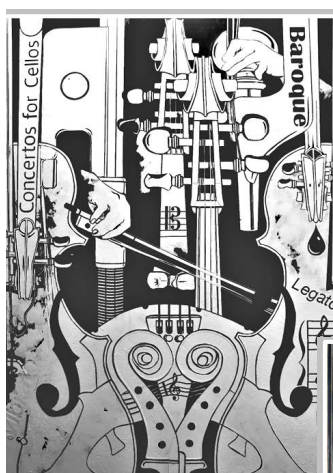
by Dennis K Smith



“The Music Within” Series is made up of paintings that combine the structural and working elements of the instrument along with the addition of the human component that is used to generate its unique sound and character. In my lifetime, I have learned to play several instruments. I played them well enough to learn a few chords and songs. These paintings of instruments are part of my series called “Music Within.” In fact, although I never mastered any one instrument, I still have the music within. My very first trumpet was the inspiration for what I now call my assemblage style paintings. I use this term because I disassemble my chosen instrument and reassemble it into something new while still retaining something of its original identity. My first trumpet was a well-used jazz trumpet that had a couple of broken welds. While playing my horn in the Harrow IGA Marching Band, I would do my best to march while blowing away and while holding it together. I didn’t know of duct tape back then.

Musical instruments are both visually and functional masterful works of art. Each part of these instruments can stand alone as a masterpiece. With this thought in mind, I take my subjects and disassemble them visually to allow the viewer to go beyond the beauty of its sound and look at the splendor of its creation. Following the process of innovative musicians who have transformed the sound of their

chosen instrument thus creating their own unique sound, I took the route of transforming the construction of my instruments to construct my own. For these compositions, I first cover my canvas with a coat of neutral grey acrylic, and then I roughly sketch out my compositions, which are most often derivatives from small thumbnail sketches. Once I am satisfied with the flow, I then apply multiple layers of gesso. These layers form a low relief underpainting. Once I am satisfied with the construction and compositional flow, I then add the applicable colour. The addition of my colour most often becomes my biggest challenge because it is what must further create the balance, movement, and energy of the piece. Along with the identifying colours of the instrument, I want to make sure I use colour that will best represent the sound and sentiment the instrument exudes.



*Concertos for Cellos, acrylic, 36"x48"*





*Temples, acrylic-gold leaf, 36"x48"*

This painting was also completed in the same manner and thought process as my musical works.



*The Congas, acrylic, 36"x48"*  
# 6 of the *Music Within* series

Arise and dance, let it be unbridled, and victorious. Dance with conviction and great resolve. Sing aloud and with joy. Dance!

Congas were used in sacred dance-drumming ceremonies associated with the descendants of slaves brought to Cuba from Central Africa. The conga on the lower right invites you to play along with the congueros, but I rather you dance.



*Three Piano's, acrylic, 36"x48"*  
# 5 of the *Music Within* series

The piano to me is an instrument with an expansive range. Its sound is honest and pure. For this reason, I chose tones of blue and black to give clarity. I chose to express three dialogues, classical, honky-tonk, and jazz which accounts for the addition of mauve.



*The Flute, acrylic, 36"x48"*  
# 2 of the *Music Within* series





*Blues Guitar*, acrylic, 36"x48"  
# 7 of the *Music Within* series



*The Saxophone*, acrylic, 36"x48"  
#4 of the *Music Within* series

Inspired in my teens by the music of rock legend Jimi Hendrix and blues master B.B. King, I endeavored to play the guitar, but never mastered either style; however, when things get rocky, I can still sing the blues.



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