

Luca Bonvini

Funeral Service

Saturday, September 13, 2014

Minister Girard Haven's Introduction

On this beautiful late summer afternoon, we gather here to honor and celebrate the life of our beloved friend, Luca Bonvini.

The light of the celestial firmament may be eclipsed for a time, but never extinguished. A star, climbing to its appointed height, cannot be obscured by death. And so with divine guidance, Luca's youthful spirit ascends above the mortal realm.

Let us stand and remember our friend Luca in silent presence.

(Silence)

Thank you, please be seated.

Each student, through their being and their efforts, forms a stem of our school's living tree. Each student raises our School, enriches our lives, and produces their true Selves.

Our Teacher has said, 'Ascending souls finish their roles very well prepared, having received the presence allotted to them in this lifetime.'

As Luca returns to the divine source, we too share the same passage; we too witness the greatest mystery of life.

Music: Concierto de Aranjuez by Rodrigo Michael M. and Justin

Reading: Catherine Lambert

Blow, trumpeter, free and clear – I follow thee,
While at thy liquid prelude, glad, serene,
The fretting world, the streets, the noisy hours of day, withdraw;
A holy calm descends, like dew, upon me,
I walk, in cool refreshing night, the walks of Paradise,
I scent the grass, the moist air, and the roses;
Thy song expands my numb'd, imbonded spirit –
thou freest, launchest me,
Floating and basking upon Heaven's lake.

Walt Whitman

Eulogy for Luca Bonvini - Eliza Tudor

On a sailing trip with students in the San Francisco Bay, as the boat stopped at a dock for lunch, Luca picked up his trumpet and played a few happy notes, welcoming the shore. Later, as the boat pushed off, he played again, wistfully this time, the thoughtful reticence of departure. Each time he played, it was spontaneous, signaling the state that he was experiencing, helping students around him share in it. Luca was a conjurer of music, and always generous with his gift.

Luca was born in 1960, in Milan. Musical from an early age, he started playing the trombone and by the age of 10, he was traveling across the city to his classes with his child-sized instrument. He and his three siblings were all encouraged to leave their home as soon they became adults - unusual for Italy. This taught him self-reliance, and when his profession required him to travel, and during his years in the school, he could travel easily between countries.

Music was a constant in Luca's life. He graduated in Trombone and Composition from the Milan Conservatory, began working for the major orchestras in Milan and Paris, travelling on professional tours around the world. But working as an orchestra musician was not for him, and he began to explore music through different venues, diverse instruments, styles, periods and cultures, developing himself through his art. He became highly accomplished in Classical music, Baroque music on original instruments, and Jazz. Later he mastered the Ancient Chinese Guqin, and the Nay Flute of the Sufis.

Luca joined the school in Milan, 1986. In his enigmatic way, he announced this event to his family by leaving a bundle of Work books on the kitchen table, tied with a ribbon and a small heart-shaped card, saying, 'From Luca to my family with Love'. From the moment he joined, the School became the golden thread of his life. His work was practical, bringing presence to the moment rather than deviating into theoretical ideas. He showed valuation for the school in a natural way, without seeking attention.

After living in the Milan and Paris centers, Luca stayed in Taipei for several months before moving to China to open the center in Beijing. Over the years, Luca played many roles in the Asia centers, bringing the school to China and Chinese culture to the school. Something he loved, China and the Chinese, embracing Chinese music, mastering the guqin. As a musician he never sought attention, rather that his music provide a door to the higher in himself, and other students.

And he was such an explorer! Such a good-natured, inquiring essence. A friend recalls bicycling around Beijing with him, where they befriended an old lady in the Forbidden City who lived in the same courtyard where the former emperor had lived after his abdication. Thanks to her, they could enter the city any time they wished. Her stories and anecdotes of the Imperial City and its secrets, all unknown to the regular tourist, all became a source of Presence and inspiration for Luca.

At the same time, life in China was harsh for his emotional, sensitive nature. He moved to Venice with his Chinese wife Xu-Hong and took up the duties of directing the center. As his co-director Angela remembers, Luca arrived like Marco Polo, full of inner wonders from his adventures, ready to share them. He brought profound moments of presence. His deep blue eyes, his smile, always ready for others, the intentional cadence of his steps: all were qualities of someone you could trust.

Luca was serious in his Work, firm in addressing the instinctive center, sincere in his second-line, sometimes even a little too direct. He was willing to take an extra burden of responsibility when it was required. For a while, he was the only center-director in Venice, a task he joyfully embraced, performing all the duties for the meetings, buying flowers, shopping for dinner, cooking, preparing and leading the meeting, and then helping with si-dos to prolong the emotional energy of the event.

Luca was wholly dedicated to the School. He loved to speak about the Work and on awakening; he did not enjoy unnecessary talk. He found ways to be with students, especially visitors, even when, because of his work as a musician, he travelled to other cities where there was no Center.

Luca returned to Paris, where, as it turned out, he was to spend the last years of his life. He was strong as a supporting student, ready to take responsibility for the center, providing an unfailing support for visitors, the unofficial greeter for students arriving at the Charles de Gaulle airport, active at organizing gatherings, enthused at finding excursions out of town to create presence. When Wayne and Corinne visited, Luca met them at Chartres, wearing a large, bulky trench-coat to hide their camera tripod from the guards.

His last trip was to Ravello and the Amalfi coast – *dulcis in fundo*, saving the best to last. When he surrendered to his illness, Luca decided to find care in Nice on the beautiful French Riviera, staying in touch with the sun and the sea. In his final months, Luca made many efforts to contact and attract friends and visitors from all over the world. In this most difficult time, his focus on the moment increased. Fighting his battle, a firm ambassador of the Sequence, faithful to his Work 'I's, he was an example of the Work to everyone around him.

Luca lived a rich and joyous life. His family was the Fellowship of Friends. He knew and was guided by the certainty of Influence C. He had a genuine desire to achieve what his Teacher relentlessly pursued. He had a natural joy, arising from his own efforts. He had a wealth of friendships throughout the School. He had a childlike and open heart.

At a certain point in his illness, he could no longer play his instruments. As he said, 'I don't need my music.' He said, 'I have played all my life, and now I have discovered how beautiful silence is.'

Music: Bach, Bist Du Bei Mir
Justin and Zoila

Reading: Geoffrey Rowland

**My eyes already touch the sunny hill.
going far ahead of the road I have begun.
So we are grasped by what we cannot grasp;
it has inner light, even from a distance**

**and changes us, even if we do not reach it,
into something else, which, hardly sensing it,
we already are; a gesture waves us on
answering our own wave...
but what we feel is the wind in our faces.**
Rilke

Minister Haven's Conclusion:

A king of ancient times said, 'I am only a child, yet without ceasing, day and night, I act in harmony with heaven.' Luca is now part of that beckoning light above us, a new succession in the celestial world, made lovelier still because he bore his part.

As Rodney Collin said, "I wish I could express the freedom, joy and richness that comes from a deep feeling of diversity in unity, of the true 'harmony of the planets'. My planet cannot sing the song of yours, nor yours of mine. But if several learn to sing their own ... harmony will result." Luca sang his

own song, “clear and full and tone-perfect.” And because he was satisfied AND grateful to sound his note in the great symphony of the School, he did so with the joy that comes from a life lived in harmony. By emulating Luca’s gift joyfully to be ourselves, as Influence C made us, we truly honor his memory.

Dear Luca, we thank thee.

Candle ceremony

“Our body is just a shell, our soul will continue.”

Extinguish and light the candles.

The urn is lifted and others are motioned to stand. Urn-bearer leads procession.

At the Cemetery:

Minister Haven’s Introduction

Here in this sacred place, consecrated by those here present and those whose bodies lie here, we release Luca to his and our true home, even as we return the remains of his body to the earth from where it sprung.

Reading: Graylin Ross

Now, trumpeter, for thy close,
Vouchsafe a higher strain than any yet;
Sing to my soul – renew its languishing faith and hope;
Rouse up my slow belief – give me some vision of the future;
Give me, for once, its prophecy and joy.
O glad, exulting, culminating song!
A vigor more than earth’s is in thy notes!
Marches of victory – man disentrall’d – the conqueror at last!
Hymns to the universal God, from universal Man – all joy!
A reborn race appears – a perfect World, all joy!
Women and Men, in wisdom, innocence and health – all joy!
Riotous, laughing bacchanals, fill’d with joy!
War, sorrow, suffering gone – The rank earth purged – nothing but joy left!
The ocean fill’d with joy – the atmosphere all joy!
Joy! Joy! in freedom, worship, love! Joy in the ecstasy of life!
Enough to merely be! Enough to breathe!
Joy! Joy! all over Joy!
Walt Whitman

Minister Haven

And so we return ashes of Luca’s physical presence to the ground. From earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, we look not down but upward toward eternal life.

Urn bearer puts urn in the grave.

Minister and family take rose petals and one by one, each put them into the grave. Family rises and withdraws.

Minister Haven's Conclusion

Rabia said, 'Love comes from eternity, and returns into eternity'. The inner divine flame returns to its divine source. The great sequence of the circle of life is complete.

We only part that we may meet again.

Let us bid a joyful farewell, and then withdraw to the Festival Hall, where we will celebrate the gift of life which is yet allotted to each of us with a toast.

Rose-petals offered to the assembly.