



FRANCESCA DE GRANDIS

When I make music, and am relaxed, I am plugged into the cosmos. I experience its enormous sweeps and patterns, yet am also embraced by whatever of the universe's gorgeous DETAILS are drawn out by the music I am playing. Music connects me with listeners or fellow players. Simultaneously, there is an inward movement, a full sensibility of self. Music creates connection, within and without, which helps us better respect self and others. This connection is a state of being present to the moment, a unique moment that is me, you, and the cosmos. Music transports us past the limits of our preconceived notions, emotional barriers, and physical pains, bringing us into the juicy fullness of here and now, with all its potential for joy, beauty, and societal change. Musical education should nurture musical ease, so that anyone can draw on the spiritual power of being a musician. Instead, lessons often squelch a student's spirit. I have a lot of technical training, but I began it in my thirties. I started playing clubs at age fourteen, before my musical education. No inept teacher had a chance to tell me I couldn't perform until I "*learned how*" or became "*good*." I am not naysaying highly developed musical skills; I worked hard for technical proficiency. However, music-making would be more accessible if early lessons, first and foremost, helped one find joy in the sheer attempt to create sound, instead of measuring "*good*" or "*bad*" technique and aesthetic. Otherwise, there may not be the chance for music-making to delight a student. Some technical virtuosos polish a piece of music, and then practice it without self-scrutiny. They work at leaving evaluation behind so that they can perform the piece with their heart instead of woodenly. Generally, this approach should be primary in music education at the start, or a student's interest in music can be crushed. An entry-level focus on musical technique or "*good*" aesthetic is not relevant to everyone's delight in singing or playing an instrument. Music is connectivity.



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**FRANCESCA DE GRANDIS, AUTHOR OF *"GODDESS INITIATION:
A PRACTICAL CELTIC PROGRAM FOR SOUL-HEALING, SELF-
FULFILLMENT & WILD WISDOM"***