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SP.757
December 2002

A tribute to the real superstars

What makes a superstar headlining at the Fleet Center a better musician than a fourteen year-old boy banging on buckets *outside* of the Fleet Center? The way I see it, not much. Street performers are in many cases, talented, underappreciated artists who add a lot of vitality and spirit to the streets. I see people who are willing to pay ninety dollars to sit in the far balcony of a vacuous Brittany Spears show, walk by a Jimi Hendrix-in-the-making guitarist on the street without thinking twice about sparing a buck or two. In this project, I want to pay homage to all those artists (I'm focusing on musicians) who don't get the lovin' they deserve.

I narrowed my selection of artists to three sets of performers that completely contrasted each other in style. The first performer is an emcee rapping on Ashbury Street in San Francisco. The second is a group of folk musicians playing at a Farmer's Market in Santa Cruz. The third and final performer is a young boy banging on a makeshift drum set outside of the Fleet Center in Boston. I was really in awe with each of these three performances. Musically, they far-excelled a lot of the nonsense you see on MTV or hear on the radio. Each had their own flair but through their differences, they all shared the same venue: the street. With completely different music styles, they talk to the same audience—the rich, the poor, the old, the young, the hip, the unhip. They don't discriminate with ridiculously high ticket-prices. Everyone is exposed to their music. With my project, I hope to get the idea across that the street-musician is a type of musician not dependent on musical style. Street-musicians share the same venue and audience, and they all do the same thing: they bring talent and life to the streets.

I began the project with the three original photographs that I took with my thirty-dollar camera. I used the Leafscan scanner to scan the negatives into the computer and then proceeded to enter the world of Photoshop to develop my final project. Once in Photoshop, I started out by adjusting the levels on the three photographs, making them all lighter. After adjusting the levels, I noticed that the buckets in the drummer photograph were extremely bright and I used the Photoshop burn tool to no avail. I solved my problem simply by using the paint tool and applying a shade of gray to darken the buckets:



BEFORE



AFTER

After adjusting each picture in a similar manner, I decided that I wanted to make the background of each performer look as if everything was in motion—as in, I wanted to make it look as if people were walking by without noticing the performers. I did this first, by using the magnetic lasso to select the performers. I then used the inverse selection tool so that everything *but* the performer was selected. After that, I employed the motion blur filter to achieve my goal:



BACKGROUND IN MOTION BLUR

Next, I set out to make my first project. I put the three pictures on one canvas and connected the three with blocks of black:



After looking at the final image for a while, I realized that it wasn't exactly what I was after. I wanted the three pictures to really become one. This would entail ridding the black blocks. I erased the blocks and tried to blur the three images together but it just didn't look realistic. It occurred to me that I'd have to blur the background of the three images as if they were just one image.

I went back to my original photographs (before the blurring) and put these all on one canvas. I flattened the layers so that they became one. Now I would have to select all three of the performances with the magnetic lasso tool (I like this tool a lot). I learned that you can use the shift key to make multiple selections and I did just that. Like before, I used the inverse selection tool to get the background selected. Again as previously, I used the motion blur filter to blur the background of the mega-image. I blurred the edges of the individual images more intensely to make them flow better. This was the result:



FINAL PROJECT

This was it. This was what I was after. All three images are interconnected through a traveling background—people in motion, not really giving much thought to the artists. In reality, each performer did have an audience but I'm trying to portray that the audience is transitory—in most cases, people are going to forget the street performer as soon as they walk away. But they shouldn't because these are the real superstars.