

**FROM DONALD EVANS**  
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Ms. Marina Zoueva, Choreographer,  
c/o Arctic Figure Skating Club,  
46615 Michigan Ave., Canton MI.

Dear Ms. Zoueva,

I was not able to find an email address for you, so I am sending you this appreciative essay by post. I do hope it gets to you.

When I saw Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir ice-dance to your choreography for the Mahler “Adagietto” I was not only thrilled but also surprised. In their previous dancing to Flamenco music I had been moved by their apparently boundless youthful energy, combined with their artistic subtlety and depth. In the Mahler their subtlety and depth continued and their youthful energy was still needed, but what grabbed my attention was the profundity and maturity of the theme which they conveyed right up to the very end.

It seemed to me that they were inviting us to live fully conscious of our mortality, savouring each transient, awesome moment. Some seniors in their nineties have learned how to live in this way! The success of Virtue and Moir in conveying this depends much on their amazing talent, but clearly the choreography was crucial.

My own experience of the “Adagietto” began when I saw the great art-movie “Death in Venice”, which conveyed the tragic-appreciative theme through its photography. In October, 2009 an extract from the “Adagietto” was the final piece in a session of meditation-and-music that I led in the seniors’ residence where I now live. I’ve included the whole session to provide a context, but you can skip to the last three pages, where I reflect concerning the “Adagietto” and old age.

# Notes for Meditation Friday October 16

## First Selection

**Brendel playing Mozart Piano Concerto 22, disc #2 track 2 (concluding movement) fade out at 3.23-26 (In Mozart The Great Concertos, Phillips 1994, 442 571-2)**

**Meditation: Focus on your breathing as a physical process, etc. Initially focus the energy of your attention on your inhalations. In the past you have repeated a mantra such as “peace” or “Jesus”. Instead, for this meditation smile yourself as you breathe in and breathe in a smile that you imagine, visualize, or remember.**

**Let the smile be childlike, playful, light-hearted, uninhibited, innocent, gay, even a little impish.**

**Breathe in the light-hearted, child-energy to your heart and then gradually to your whole body.**

**Breathe out whatever heaviness or seriousness or stress is in the way.**

**Eventually your whole body can smile.**

**As the music begins breathe the sounds in, receive them into your whole body, let your whole body resonate with them, let your whole body “SMILE”.**

## **Second Selection**

**Peggy Lee, “Sing Rainbow” track #15, ends at 2.26  
cd is Peggy Lee: A Natural Woman & Is That All There  
Is?, EMI bar-code: 7 24359 26572 8**

**Introduction to the Meditation and the Music:**

**The Mozart music has encouraged us to become more childlike in how we feel and are.**

**The next music is a song suitable for pre-schoolers as sung by Peggy Lee, a very versatile singer of popular music from the sixties.**

**Prior Meditation: focus your attention very lightly and vaguely on the variety of colours in front of you.**

**If your eyesight is restricted but you can see a blur of colours, that’s an advantage.**

**Otherwise, imagine a rainbow or a collage of rainbow colours.**

**When the music starts, close your eyes and see if any other colours and colour-combinations come to you.**

**And quietly hum along with Peggy Lee or let some of your own quiet sounds come out.**

**If you feel too shy to make any sound at all, let some sounds come into your mind.**

### **Third Selection**

**Annie Fischer plays Mozart Piano Concerto 21, cd #1 track 2, fade out at 3.58-4.00. Seraphim 7 24356 85292 1**

#### **Introductory Remarks Leading into the Meditation**

**This brief piece, like our fourth, final piece, was featured in an art-movie where the music and the visual scenes matched each other. The sounds and the colours seemed “made for each other”**

**In this piece by Mozart the nature scenes were like some impressionistic paintings where all the colours of the rainbow were intermingled and had a radiant “sheen” that conveyed how trees and earth and water and sunshine look to a young couple in LOVE.**

**Each of us has a very different personal history. Perhaps you were never in love with a romantic lover, but it’s unlikely that you never experienced something similar, perhaps suddenly feeling enchanted by a scene in nature, or perhaps thrilled by a presence as you prayed privately or worshipped in a church. And then the ordinary world seemed full of glory.**

**Before we go in to a meditate I invite you to take a few deep breaths and let them out with a sigh and then let your mind be open to remember a scene or to receive a scene, full of exhilarating colour.**

**The music will begin in a minute or so. When it does, be open to whatever it evokes in your body or in your imagination.**

## **Fourth Selection**

**Mahler, Symphony #5, movement entitled “Adagietto”, track 4, fade out at 3.57-4.00.**

**(In Mahler, The Symphonies, Concertgebouw conducted by Chailly, Decca: 0 28944 29606 8)**

### **Introduction to the Meditation:**

**A few days ago I was in a St. Hilda’s elevator and I asked a fellow-resident “How are you today?”**

**He heard my question as a real request for a real answer and he said, “I’m feeling FRAGILE today.”**

**All of us feel more fragile than we did 30 years ago, sometimes more fragile than yesterday:**

**We’re more vulnerable.**

**We have less energy**

**We move more slowly**

**As we age, we become more aware of the fragility, the transience, the impermanence of life. There’s so much change going on outside us and in our bodies and it’s beyond our control.**

**As we age, we have less control, but many of us have more appreciation of what each fragile moment brings.**

**We have less ability to change things, but many of us have more acceptance of things as they are.**

**We endure more suffering, but many of us have more serenity and equanimity and calm.**

**We are less active, but many of us are more able to savour and enjoy the simple pleasures in life, such as food and friends.**

**The increasing limitations on our lives brings a kind of sadness, but many of us can delight more in what remains, which becomes more precious than ever before.**

**We're more aware of the inevitability of dying, but many of us can live more and more in a rich and beautiful present rather than a worrisome future or a regretted past.**

**The music which we are about to listen to is very different from the very first piece, the Mozart that reminded us that we can be cheerful and even playful, like a child. The**

**music will remind us that our lives as elders are a mixture of sadness and delight.**

**It's not a sadness that involves despair or bitterness or a giving up on all activity. It's a sadness that is combined with a joyful appreciation of beauty.**

**Meditations:**

**(1) Eyes-open Buddhist meditation, previously learned, focusing gently on an area of carpet six feet out, following the exhalations as they dissolve out there.**

**After a couple of minutes or so, raise your eyes to appreciate the colours in the centre (fall colours).**

**(2) Close your eyes and imagine a very colourful autumn scene**

**Very soon the music will begin. Let the music gradually CHANGE the scene, the patterns of colour – all serene and beautiful.**