Excerpt from: The Tallest Island - A Treatise on Learning

I like to think of the ancient Hebrew book of **_Genesis_** as essentially a mythopoetic description of what human civilization looked like at a time historians call the late Bronze Age collapse. This mysterious moment in history sees virtually all of the great ancient near east civilizations completely (or near-completely) destroyed. No one knows why or how this devastation swept through the ancient world. Was it the invention of iron weaponry making the ubiquitous bronze technology obsolete by comparison? Could it have been a plague like the Black Death of the Middle Ages? Perhaps a natural disaster like the destruction of Pompeii by Vesuvious? Though there is no recognized historical consensus as to the reason for this civilizational collapse, there is universal agreement that civilizations that lasted for millennia had been radically transformed and/or destroyed altogether in a matter of a few short decades.

Given this cultural/historical context, I find it absolutely fascinating that a small tribe of nomadic people (called "Israelites" by the Late Bronze Egyptian monarchy) had enough insight as to the coming of a "great flood" that would destroy the world as it then existed. I'm not now arguing for the historical or spiritual truth of The Bible as much as I am suggesting that it reflects a kind of cultural-historical wisdom expressed as a story about an impending catastrophe which would forever alter the landscape of humanity. Many of us in our current time also believe that we may be at the brink of a similarly precarious transition to a new civilizational epoch- a moment of transcendent civilizational change without which humanity may descend into oblivion. Whether the ultimate cause is catastrophic climate change, rivalrous artificial intelligence, biochemical warfare, nuclear devastation, or ever-radicalized economic inequality, there seems to be no shortage of man-made doomsday scenarios awaiting their moment to unleash destruction. The question then becomes: Can we build an 'ark' to weather the coming chaos represented by these potential disasters? And, if so, can we use that ark to reach the tallest island upon which we can await the receding of the waters of chaos?

If this all seems unnecessarily dramatic (it might be), think of it this way: Let's say that automation will continue to grow and take over more and more currently held human activities like waste management, food service,

manufacturing, and even freight and transportation. If that happens, hundreds of millions or even billions of people will either be out of work, or economically displaced by this trend in ways for which we simply have no solution at the moment. I, along with many others who are concerned about this potential pending dystopic near future, propose a solution that involves a better fundamental understanding of how we learn.

Enter the concept of *Deep Code* Learning. Deep Code Learning is a developing educational meta framework that describes the most fundamental and universal processes that undergird all of human learning and development from a baby's first step, to a child's first babbling-turned-intelligible word, to the toddler's understanding the importance of playing reciprocally with friends and siblings, to the learning to throw a ball, ride a bike, play an instrument, drive a car, write machine code, sail a boat, etc. Put simply, it's a way of interacting with the basic learning process as it unfolds in all realms and categories of human learning. It's the path to our holy grail (to use another religious image) of learning- the embodied knowledge of playing and creating that constitutes what it is we're doing with our music education. In the following pages, I will outline the basic elements or stages that we can identify within the Deep Code Learning meta framework.

Before we proceed, here's a disclaimer: Much of the following content is compiled and integrated from the work of psychologists, cognitive scientists, philosophers, musicians, futurists, and smart, forward-thinking podcasters and internet content creators who are collectively and collaboratively working toward a future that transcends and solves humanity's current existential dilemmas. I do not claim to be the originator of the raw ideas presented here. Rather, I am seeking to organize and conceptualize some of the deepest insights into how we learn in a way that affords us a plausible way of applying them to our process of learning music. See my website for a complete list of links, books, podcasts, and educational resources for your further investigation.