

Sacred compromised

If you accept mediocrity, you deserve it. I did and feel violated. It's my own fault, I shouldn't bitch.

Certain things are not meant to be fucked with. Whatever it is for whomever it is, some things are not to be disrespected. It's sacrilegious and brings bad karma.

Besides moral issues, for me this also includes music and food. They're both languages I'm fluent in, and both communicate something without having to say anything. Making a statement *sans* words is a type of ultimate theater, and in turn, too precious to be taken lightly.

Excluding mimes. They annoy the hell out of me.

For instance, to me a bad meal is a wasted opportunity gone forever and causes me to pout, as if a child. The same goes for music. When you know the heights it can soar to, it's hard hearing it any other way.

I say this because both meals and music can (and do) go south on occasion, and when they crash and burn, we're back to the original premise of sacred compromised.

Recently I had the misfortune of having a less than stellar music gig. Usually, the best nights of my week, they're a chance to meet the muse. Not this time though, it was more train wreck than Olympus.

I was the engineer, but behaved like a passenger. In a situation like that you're bound to derail.

My regular piano player was unavailable for a few weeks so he subbed the gig out to an absolutely acceptable replacement, which in a perfect world is how it should be. At the very least, you send an equal, if not better. This is common and I have no problem with it. In fact, I've met some great players in this very manner. Ones that went on to make large contributions in my music because they were able to make it when someone else couldn't. Kismet.

Arrive at the gig, and spy an unfamiliar face setting up. Apparently, Mr. Sub from last week subbed himself out for this week. It will soon

be revealed that he sent a less than adequate player- in turn compromising the integrity of the evening. I'd have called someone I KNEW could cover it had I known, but I didn't.

Once again for the record, it's bad form to send a lesser player.

There was trouble from the first downbeat. Arbitrary, rubato, tinklings where lush chord voicings should've been. It was hard to tell if we were even playing the same song. I see the chart on the music stand, and I hear you playing, but what the hell are you doing? Are you aware there's a triplet pulse in this beautiful ballad, one you seem oblivious to... and by the way, you're in the wrong key as well.

"It's dark" you say. I know it's dark. You're in a nightclub Einstein. And I'm sorry your glasses are in your car and that you can't see the music in front of you. Rank amateur horseshit, this type of thing should never happen.

But it did, transporting me to a hell filled with singers with too much vibrato and guitarists with too many notes.

It was all I could do to remain civil and get through the evening. When it became apparent that he was a waste of space, I should have fired him on the spot. My betters would have. Coltrane, Miles, Betty Carter... They'd have never stood for it. They'd have cut their losses right there on the bandstand. Or feeling generous, at the first break.

I should have and regret not. Instead opting to accept something that compromised the integrity of my art- the very art I've devoted my life to while struggling to attain expertise with.

My soul is torn and flying out the window propelled by this weakest link at my side.

Am I hypersensitive? Critical? Yes. Should I be? Absolutely. You must have thick skin if you're putting your shit out on a stage, or from a kitchen for all to judge. You strive for excellence, first for you, but also because your audience deserves the best. You must be brutally honest with yourself to deliver your "A" game at all times. As my own worst critic, it's up to me to keep my standards high and not allow them to be diminished.

Only I know if I'm on fire or phoning it in.

Instead, I endured and tolerated something sacred being compromised. My fault entirely. One reason the greats are, is they don't stand for that shit, and shit is exactly what I felt like.

So dirty. Lesson learned.