

Art Lives - 2 - Greg Dudzienski.mp3

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SPEAKERS

Greg, Elizabeth DeLamater, Elizabeth, Greg Dudzienski



Elizabeth DeLamater 00:09

Hello. Welcome to Art Lives, a series of interviews with artists of all media. My name is Elizabeth DeLamater and I am a musician, which means that I study, play, and teach music in many different places, including concert halls and living rooms, classrooms, forests and beaches. Because every work of art is unique, and because our society enjoys and utilizes art in myriad ways, every artists life is unique. On this podcast we talk with artists one on one, about their art, their lives, and how they navigate the world. This is the first of two episodes featuring Greg Dudzienski, a saxophonist, composer, and educator based in Chicago. Greg is introspective and honest as he shares his experience as a musician, first a student, then with the Navy, and now as a freelancer. Greg and I first met in our undergrad music program, so what you are about to hear is actually just the latest entry in a three-decade long discussion. By the way, I accidentally say "Army" instead of "Navy" at one point in the interview, I truly apologize. I know that that distinction is very important to many people. Here is the first half of my conversation with Greg Dudzienski.



Greg Dudzienski 01:55

You were talking about the idea of becoming a part of your community...I was having a conversation with a friend of mine about this the other night. We were talking about it in the context of supporting each other as, as artists and musicians in Chicago. And he had mentioned that a lot of people contact him because he curates various series and Performance Series and things like that at different areas in Chicago. And people will

contact him looking for a date, like, "Hey, can I play on your, your series at Elastic Arts?" Or, "Can I play a new series at.." whatever?

E Elizabeth 02:32
Yeah.

G Greg 02:33
And, um, you know, he'll always say yes, and he'll always be supportive and all that, but it's like, "You know, I've never seen you at a at a performance."

E Elizabeth 02:47
Oh, right, So these people don't come to his other events.

G Greg Dudzienski 02:51
So yeah, some of them don't. And that, you know, I think it's, this is all by way of saying I think it's really important that we really making an effort to become members and citizens of our communities, you know, whatever that community is, whether it's the larger community of the city or the town that we live in, you know, whether it's an individual community of percussion players or musicians or artists or, you know, whatever that whatever that sub community is, I think we have to really work constantly it being a good and involved citizen of that community.

E Elizabeth 03:33
When we were both in school -we went to school, undergrad together-

G Greg 03:40
Yes, we did.

E Elizabeth 03:41
I remember being told things like, "You gotta hang out and you got to be present, but not in a creepy way."

G Greg 03:51
(snort) Right.

E Elizabeth 03:52
Or if I - or maybe it wasn't said in that way - I remember thinking, well, what's the balance? and I didn't process it at the time as "You gotta want to be part of the community."

G Greg 04:04
Right?

E Elizabeth 04:06
I remember instead thinking, "Well, this is just learning to schmooze without schmoozing." It didn't...I didn't think it as far or thoroughly through and maybe as humanely as you are.

G Greg 04:23
Well, it's, it's not, you know, it'd be very easy to pursue that as an what's the right word inauthentic, or unauthentic?

E Elizabeth 04:34
I don't know, this is where I say I'm a drummer! (laugh)

G Greg 04:39
A not-authentic way of saying, "Okay, I'm solely hanging to Yeah, to forward my own career or my own aspirations." But I think as you said, I don't think that's right. I think you know, in some sense and on some level you have to want to be a part of the community and you have to do it from a from a place of just wanting to contribute and not wanting to consume.

E Elizabeth 05:11
Right. And when I was really young, I just wanted to play and participate... and I just wanted to be a part of it. I think then maybe the training or maybe our necessary focus - the solo time that we must dedicate being alone- sometimes interferes. I think that's what

happened with me; I forgot to maybe go back out to the scene for a while.

G Greg 05:45
You know, someday there's going to be data available. (If there's not already I don't know, but) I'm convinced that someday there will be data available that shows that people like us, people who for their craft for the development of their work have to be apart from a social situation from other people, they have to be have to pursue their work in solitude,

E Elizabeth 06:11
Yeah.

G Greg 06:13
There's going to be data that shows that that contributes to social anxiety that contributes to not being able to relate to other humans in a normal way. (They laugh)
Because anytime and I think I'll bet you've had the same experience just hanging out with other musicians. It can be awkward, can be really socially awkward sometimes. (Laughing)

E Elizabeth 06:32
Yeah. (laughs)

G Greg 06:33
Because none of us know how to interact with each other because we're most comfortable by ourselves in a room, locked away with our instrument.

E Elizabeth 06:39
Or on stage?

G Greg 06:39
Sure!

E Elizabeth 06:39

I'm fine. If 100 people are on stage and playing together.

G Greg 06:43
Yeah, but like sitting at the bar afterwards, starting to have a drink and just chat...

E Elizabeth 06:46
Ugh!

G Greg 06:47
I was driving to a gig last night with a friend of mine and easy. We're both very, you know, we're very good friends and we're driving along, we're in the car, it's like, "Put on the Cubs game?" " Yes, please!" (Laughing) Well, then I wonder what the data is going to show about the what comes first? The chicken or the egg? Right, right. Or people with those kinds of tendencies, social anxiety tendencies, are they more drawn to a life in the arts or life in music? Or does a life in the arts contribute to that? I don't know.


E Elizabeth 07:08
Right. And I have had some students where I've said, "You have to become more comfortable being alone. You're forgetting about the time you [must be] spending alone." And I saw a great lecture by a colleague, to his students; he saw that as a general problem one year.


G Greg 07:20
You know, I never struggled with, solitude. That was never a problem for me. I don't know if it was for you.


E Elizabeth 07:26
No.

G Greg 07:26
But, the the parts of our development, the parts of our work that we continue to do that require that kind of solitude, that's a welcome friend to me, that I do not mind that one


bit. The harder part is just interacting with the other humans, which, which you know, is as musicians is a big part of what we have to do. And, and just the, the business of presenting our art requires that on so many different levels, too.


 Elizabeth 07:43
Right?


 Greg 07:46
Yeah.

 Elizabeth 07:48
Okay, so I told you that you could talk about whatever you want... but I do have a direct question that relates to that. So with all of that in mind, you last year, moved to a new country, country you lived in before but a new country, a new city, and all of a sudden, a new community. And you had to deal with new people.

 Greg 08:57
mmm-hmm

 Elizabeth 08:57
Gross?

 Greg 09:00
(laugh)

 Elizabeth 09:00
Because you did want to play with those people?

 Greg 09:02
Absolutely.

E Elizabeth 09:04
So you've done that before... But did you have new anxiety about it? Or were you already prepared?

G Greg 09:14
Oh, let me give a little context about that first, just something for 23 years, up until actually, like almost a year ago, today, it's very, very close to being a year... (Sorry, I'll get closer [to the mic])...For 23 years, I was a saxophonist with the with the Navy Music Program, US Navy Music Program. And I traveled all over the world as a saxophone player. And later as more of an administrator in that organization. And the, the reality of that job was motion, constant movement. Every two or three years, you're moving to a new place, you're inserting yourself into a new community, you're meeting new people, which when, I guess when you ask was something I had thought about or prepared for, that piece of that life kind of prepares you for that.

E Elizabeth 10:08
Right.

G Greg 10:08
Just having to pull up your roots, move to a new place, set down roots again, establish new contacts, establish new relationships; that was something that I was used to. But the big change that you're speaking about last year was I left that life. I left that community. I left that infrastructure that surrounds that. And in the Navy, or in Service Bands, or there there are probably lots of organizations that you could draw this parallel to, there's a built in infrastructure around it.

E Elizabeth 10:48
Yes. For when you move to the new place.`

G Greg 10:51
Right. There's all sorts of support available to you. There's almost a ready made community of friends and people that you're going to meet who all have that shared experience, because they all do the same thing.

E Elizabeth 11:05
Right.

G Greg 11:07
So that was a little bit different for me is is moving into a world where fewer people have that shared experience.

E Elizabeth 11:16
Okay. Yeah. Yes.

G Greg 11:19
And I guess the, to get to your your question, yes, it did trigger a lot of anxieties for me. And it's it's still something I'm I'm wrestling with a lot. And the way it kind of manifests itself is... it's almost a... I hate to use clinical terms, because I don't know what they mean. But it's almost this this strange kind of "manic" thing where I'll go for weeks and weeks and weeks of being very, very social. And, you know, out every night either playing or supporting others who are playing or whatever. And then I'll retreat into my, into my shell for weeks at a time after that. So that's something I'm working on trying to balance right now.

E Elizabeth 12:07
Well, that makes complete sense, because you didn't have a choice. Well, you may have had some choice, but you didn't have much of a choice on many of your activities while you were in the Navy.

G Greg 12:19
Sure. Yeah, your schedule is designed for you, your gigs are gotten for you, your tours are all set up for you, you pretty much. I mean, this is a, you know, an exaggeration how easy it is. But there's a there's an aspect where you pretty much just have to show up, look at the call board and say, "Okay, this is what I'm doing tomorrow," and there's nothing else you have to do to facilitate that job happening.

E Elizabeth 12:48

Right?

G

Greg 12:49

Where as you know, as we know, in the in the world that I'm living in now, in the world that you've lived in, you know, your whole life, you as the artist to present your work you have do everything: you have to make the contacts with the venue, you have to make all the logistical arrangements for your colleagues...all those things that you have to do. Just the the project you're doing with this podcast; the logistics you have to handle. You know, it's, it's a lot.

E

Elizabeth 13:18

True. Has anything been a surprise in the last year?

G

Greg 13:23

Umm, the thing that surprised me the most, and I still kind of pinch myself about it. And I like to think of myself as an optimistic person, but I'm not entirely sure I am, because I'm always looking for the other shoe to drop for, you know, okay, now the 'Real Stuff' is going to start to happen and everything's going to spin out of control or whatever. No, but the thing that I've been surprised at the most, and pleasantly so, is how quickly and how fully the people that I've begun to meet and work with in Chicago have embraced me, for lack of a better word. I'm playing with some of the best musicians in the world right now. And every morning I wake up, it's, you know again, I'm pinching myself and waiting for the other shoe to drop and waiting for them to realize, Oh, you know, we made a mistake with this guy. (They laugh) But the community in Chicago is very warm, very welcoming, very open. And that was.. I hate to say I'm surprised by it but I was just I expected things that take longer. I expected it to take longer to be able to begin to work on any kind of a meaningful level. In a community that's as strong as the community in Chicago would be.

E

Elizabeth 14:47

Yeah. Well, that's, I mean, that's pretty awesome. But I think that you've been a musician for quite a lo ng time. And you, I mean you talk about the Army as just pointing you towards a direction and you just doing it like a good soldier, but you always had side projects.

G Greg 15:11
Yes.

E Elizabeth 15:12
And you did your own album while you were in the Navy.

G Greg 15:16
That's right.

E Elizabeth 15:17
You also went back to school, to graduate school. So, I mean, I'm not in the Chicago jazz scene. But I would say to me, you earned it. (They laugh)

G Greg 15:35
I appreciate that. It's it's not the way I like to think about it, though. I don't feel any more or less deserving.

E Elizabeth 15:47
Sure.

G Greg 15:48
Of anything than anybody else. I just...

E Elizabeth 15:54
Do you think that the way you're feeling is a little healthy? Or do you think it's maybe bordering on imposter syndrome that some other people I won't mention *myself* have at times?

G Greg 16:08
(Laugh) I suspect there's a good bit of it there. And I think if you would have talked to an old therapist of mine, she would tell you that there's a lot of it there. (they laugh) Yeah, I

think that that's, I think that's a part of it. But I mean, that's just that is a part of the way my brain works. You know, that's, for better for worse, that noise and that inner dialogue that contributes to things like imposter syndrome, and contributes to the you know, social anxiety and all the stuff that we're talking about. That's just, that's, that's part of my, that's part of my neurological makeup. And I can learn to deal with it, I can learn to manage it, and I can learn to live with it. But I've kept I don't know, maybe this is premature for me to say, but I've kind of given up on I'm trying to cure it.

E Elizabeth 16:25
Yeah. Oh, gosh yeah...

G Greg 16:58
You know, I don't think that that outcome exists. I think it's just something we we learn to accept that this is part of us. And it's only part of us, it's just this one little thing that makes up the what's the word, the Gestalt of, of all of everything that we are?

E Elizabeth 17:17
So how do you manage it?

G Greg 17:22
Meditation helps a lot.

E Elizabeth 17:23
Yeah, yeah.

G Greg 17:25
I think before we before we clicked on, we were talking about something and you'd mentioned, it was a very Buddhist way to look at things. I'm uncomfortable calling myself a Buddhist, just because there are so many cultural things that go along with, with making a declaration like that.

E Elizabeth 17:41
Yeah.

G Greg 17:42
But, um, I maintain a meditation practice pretty regularly that helps a lot with things like that. And I talked to some people, both sort of in the clinical world and in kind of what you would call the spiritual world, maybe? Who have shared some ideas and shared some thoughts about what has worked for them.

E Elizabeth 18:07
Yeah.

G Greg 18:07
And I'm trying to adopt those things. And it's helped a lot. It's helped a lot.

E Elizabeth 18:13
You're also very disciplined with your music.

G Greg 18:15
Yeah. And, you know, music and practice for me is as much a meditation as sitting on the cushion for you know, 40 minutes a day. I think I want to say it's the saxophonist Chris Potter, but I'm not sure about that. It was an interview with a saxophonist, and let's just say was Chris Potter (I'm not certain it was, but) he talks about practicing. And he was talking with someone at NYU, one of the one of the coordinators of the program at NYU. And for whatever reason, Chris was like, Chris was looking for a place to practice for a couple hours.

E Elizabeth 18:15
Sure.

G Greg 18:16
And he asked this guy, "Hey, is there a space, I can use a practice room or whatever, that I could, I could just practice for a couple hours?" And the administrator said, "Chris Potter still has to practice?" It kind of led to this whole conversation where Chris talks about, you

know, practicing the saxophone, you know, aside from just the mechanics and everything we have to do to keep the machine oiled. It's, it's the way that his mind is set, right? To be able to deal with just being in the world.

E Elizabeth 19:39
Right,

G Greg 19:39
it sounded a lot like people who meditate or people who have some kind of spiritual practice or whatever. The same, the same kind of language with the same kind of subtext.

E Elizabeth 19:49
Yes.

G Greg 19:50
It was in the statement that Chris made. And, you know, after hearing that, and thinking about it, you know, I'm kind of the same way. I mean, I need to practice a lot more than Chris Potter does as far as just keeping the machine going. But at the same time, I understand what he's talking about, of just just the the act of practicing is, it's a meditation for me, it helps quiet things, it helps me just deal with the world in a better way. And when I don't do it for, you know, a block of time, I really begin to feel it. Not only in just, you know, stiffness or execution, but just in the way that I'm... the way that I move through life is different when I'm not practicing.

E Elizabeth 19:50
Uh huh. You're married...

G Greg 20:09
Yes.

E Elizabeth 20:37
Does it is. I'm sure you probably talked about this. But with your wife, does she notice it? If , without you talking about it, if you two are traveling, and you haven't practiced -

G Greg 20:49
I, I suspect she does. We...There's so much between Stephanie and I (Stephanie's my wife) that is, at this point in our relationship has just become nonverbal.

E Elizabeth 21:01
Yeah.

G Greg 21:02
But I do remember, I do remember one, one incident that happened. This was a number of years ago. It's when we were living in Italy for the first time while I was still in the in the Navy Band. And the band in Italy that I was in, it was primarily a touring group.

E Elizabeth 21:24
Right.

G Greg 21:26
At that time, it was a big band jazz ensemble, that would just essentially tour throughout Europe and North Africa, doing what the easiest way to describe it would be like USO shows. And there was a period of time that because of some some unrest that was going on, at a couple different places in Europe, I think it was like in Kosovo and Bosnia at the time, there was some stuff happening, tha` t curtailed a lot of our tour in the country, curtailed a lot of our ability to go out and do the things that we would typically be doing. And I do remember Stephanie, saying she noticed it then how that was when I had gone from point of being on the road a lot and playing a lot, to sort of sitting around and not doing anything. Said it did. It was a little bit harder to live with me during that period of time.

E Elizabeth 22:22
(Laughs)

G Greg 22:23

Kind of taken the thinking of it as the... Are you familiar with the film "Apocalypse Now?"

E Elizabeth 22:27
Yes.

G Greg 22:27
Like the first 10 minutes of the movie where Martin Sheen is just in the hotel room? I mean, it's not that dramatic. Yeah, that, you know, that's the way that's the way my brain starts to feel after a while!

E Elizabeth 22:40
Yeah. I think that some people who first get into relationships with an artist, and are surprised when they see how much time the artist spends either practicing or doing or thinking about the art... Maybe what they don't know, is what happens when when they the artist can't do it? And how much worse things can get.

G Greg 23:12
Yeah. But I mean, it's so important that, you know, the, the people we we choose, and I hate to say chooses partners, because that sounds very calculated, but like the people that end up being our partners, for for whether, as you know, our close circle of friends or our husbands wives, significant others, whatever. It's so important that there's there's an understanding there.

E Elizabeth 23:44
Right.

G Greg 23:45
And it's not something I don't believe anyway, I don't believe it's something that you can fabricate. I think that that understanding you can you can cultivate it,

E Elizabeth 23:54
Right,

G Greg 23:55
but it's not something that you can, you know, conjure from nothing. Does that make any sense?

E Elizabeth 24:04
Yeah, I've tried to explain it. I've seen people try to explain it. Because you could take it very personally: "I can't be there for your birthday."

G Greg 24:16
Mmmhmm. I don't think you ever stopped feeling bad about it. Like when you have to, when you have to make that kind of a choice or whatever. And regardless of how understanding the person on the other side of the table is from you, when you're having that conversation. At least, I never stopped, you know, just feeling the little twinge of pain right in my heart when I have to do things like that. But, you know, thankfully, we've got people that understand that.

E Elizabeth 24:51
Right. Did your Navy job give you more or less security to be able to be with your family?

G Greg 25:08
I think security is a really good word for it. I think that if I had to choose one thing, that the military music and the Navy band job or any of those kinds of job, Army Band, Air Force Band, you know, whatever, all those those kinds of jobs. One thing that it provides is security in a way that I'll speak specifically about musicians, I know we're talking about artists in general but I'll speak specifically about musicians right now; It gives a level of security that most professional musicians will never enjoy in their career.

E Elizabeth 25:45
Yeah.

G Greg 25:46
Unless you're lucky enough to have, like, a top-tier Symphony job or something along those lines. B`ecause one of the things that military music offers is the entire kind of

traditional package that you would think of about having a "job," in that you're salaried, you have health care. All of these things that, you know, seem like, when I talk to my father about it, he's "Well of course, I mean, that's having a job; you have a job, you have a salary, you have healthcare, all that that's part of having a job." But I mean, that's not the reality of being a musician or being an artist, you know?

E Elizabeth 26:24
Right.

G Greg 26:24
So in that sense, yes, the security that those that those jobs provide, it allowed me and I've seen that allow a lot of my friends and colleagues, the ability to be a lot more, a lot more open to pursuing their own projects in a way where their first thought didn't have to be, you know, survival. The first one didn't have to be some kind of a fiscal question, about how am I going to monetize this? How am I going to be able to, you know, live?

E Elizabeth 27:07
Yeah.

G Greg 27:08
And it continues to be that way, because what another positive thing, and I don't want to make this into a whole, like, recruiting thing. But another positive thing about it is that if you, if you do the job for 20 years, you're eligible to, quote unquote, retire with, again, a very traditional way of looking at that, and they have a pension, you maintain health care, etc, etc, etc.

E Elizabeth 27:32
Amazing.

G Greg 27:33
It really is and if it weren't for that, I would not be able to be doing what I'm doing now. And, so every day, that's something I'm incredibly thankful for. And, I know that I wouldn't, you know, both in a, in a very practical way of all the stuff that we're talking about, and in a way of just galvanizing my own aesthetic, I wouldn't be able to be doing what I'm doing

right now, if I had not had the incredibly fortunate opportunity of working with with Navy band for that long.

E

Elizabeth 28:15

When you went into the Navy, decades ago, I was really young, and I, I thought, "That's so strange. He's a jazz musician." And I had this immature understanding of what that meant, and I remember thinking that because you were a jazz musician, that meant that everything about your life had to be independent, and individual. And the idea of you going into a huge organization with strict rules was bizarre to me. And I had a very difficult time at first understanding how this could possibly work. And I thought, "Oh, you're not going to last."

G

Greg 29:05

(laugh) There were days I thought that too. (laughing) And, you know, and I, you know, if I'm going to be honest, there, there are challenges like that those kinds of specific things that you're talking about, those are challenges. And they are challenges that I struggled with, throughout the time I was I was in that in that band.

E

Elizabeth 29:23

But when I was, also though, when I was 20, I didn't understand how the music and that the actual music that you made aren't necessarily everything about you.

G

Greg 29:35

Sure.

E

Elizabeth 29:36

And I also didn't understand how, how the actual music can change. And in the end, the art you make is the same no matter what the label is, right? Anyway...

G

Greg 29:51

And that's the thing. I mean, if we go through our whole lives, either, you know, either talking about our artistic life or just our life, thinking that we're going to to be the same person that we are when we're 20 or 21, when we're beginning, beginning of our adult life. I don't know, I think that would be sad. I think that would be sad. If If you'd never

developed beyond your limited aesthetic, and world view that you have when you're 20 or 21. I think that would be unfortunate.

E Elizabeth 30:27
Yeah.

G Greg 30:29
I mean, a lot of the things that at 20 and 21, I could enumerate a list of things that I did not care about at all.

E Elizabeth 30:39
Right!

G Greg 30:40
That now I care about. It's, it's an interesting idea. You know, I was, I was very, and you'll probably remember this from when we shared a house in school. I was very hyper-focused on, you know, a very small sliver of music.

E Elizabeth 31:05
Yup!

G Greg 31:06
You know, I was very, very focused on very specific things. And, you know, I didn't have any time for things that were outside of that world. In fact, I, you know, looking back at some at the way I thought about it, and and probably the way I spoke about it, I probably was probably, you know, a little bit of a jerk about it. But the funny part now is a lot of the things that I get great joy from listening to, and performing, are things that I would have just completely dismissed at 20 or 21.

E Elizabeth 31:44
Right.

G Greg 31:46
You know, it's a funny thing, because I think what we've learned, and the I don't want to speak for you, or for anybody else, but I think I guess, I guess what I think I learned is that anything that takes you outside of your comfort zone has value.

E Elizabeth 32:04
Yes.

G Greg 32:05
Whether or not it's within a particular aesthetic that you claim to work in, or that you want to limit yourself to, or whatever...A perfect example is "jobbing."

E Elizabeth 32:21
Jobbing. Can you explain?

G Greg 32:23
Yeah, it's kind of a regional term that exists here. It's things like corporate gigs, wedding gigs, etc, you know, these are the types of things that, you know, are not maybe not as artistically fulfilling as, as other things could be in what we do. They're very, it's commerce, it's not art, I suppose.

E Elizabeth 32:48
That's, that's great. mmhmm.

G Greg 32:49
Yeah. And, you know, it's something that a lot of us do, to, you know, varying extents, and, you know, a lot of us, you know, kind of, sometimes you might roll our eyes at a little bit or whatever. But here's the thing, if I can keep myself in a in an objective place, and think about, "Okay, there's, there's something on this particular date that's going to force me outside of my comfort zone, artistically." And it could be something as simple as, I don't know, an articulation or something. I mean, it can be like an incredibly miniscule thing.

E Elizabeth 33:29
Okay.

G Greg 33:30
But there's going to be something that I can find in having to do this work that I can't do.

E Elizabeth 33:40
Okay.

G Greg 33:41
And, okay, so there's something that I can take from this, this gig that I might roll my eyes at. But at the same time, "Well, you're not making it on this level, and that you're not playing that articulation correctly. Or you're not playing this style exactly right." Or, you know, "You're not playing with the right kind of timbre for this style of music" or whatever. You know, it'd be very easy to just blow that off and say, "Oh, it's just a jobbing date it doesn't matter." But at the same time, to really force yourself artistically out of your comfort zone and say, "Okay, you know, this is something I can't do."

E Elizabeth 34:18
Yeah!

G Greg 34:19
And, "how can I, how can I move to a point where I can do that?" and I still struggle with it, you know, it's something I have to remind myself of a lot in those types of situations. Otherwise, it's, it's very easy to just get dismissive of things like that.

E Elizabeth 34:35
Right.

G Greg 34:36
Um, I'll share one other story. It's kind of along these same lines. And this was something that happened when I was when I was in service. We were doing, and it's really funny how

closely service bands and jobbing bands mirror each other and the kinds of things that they do and the kinds of work that they do and everything. But we were playing for something and it was a wind ensemble performance. And for whatever reason, we were doing "Pomp and Circumstance," I think it was for like a military graduation ceremony or something like that. And it's the, the the trio section of the Elgar, what we all know as "the graduation song."

E Elizabeth 35:19
Okay, can I interrupt?

G Greg 35:20
Yes.

E Elizabeth 35:22
For anybody who has never played this piece; People who do play this piece have played it many, many, many times.

G Greg 35:30
Yes. And the the part I was playing the time was, it was nothing but the quarter notes. Just the motor: Bup, bup, bup. And, 15 minutes have gone by, it's just constantly over and over and over again. And, I figured you know, at that particular moment,1 it was a pretty important moment for me because this happened in real time as I was playing and in this situation. It's like I could go one of two ways with this. I could get really really dark, or I can say, "Alright, what can I learn from this?"

E Elizabeth 36:09
Yeah.

G Greg 36:10
You know, what can I learn? I'm here. I'm in this situation. I can't get up and leave- you know, this what I'm doing. "What can I take away from this?" So I began to get really hyper-focused on, "Okay, can I make the taper exactly the same on each one of those quarter notes? How precise can I make this?" And you know, it made the day go a little bit better, but at the same time it turned something that could have been a very, very

mundane gig into a situation where, "Okay, I'm stepping out of my comfort zone and I'm going to try to use this to develop my own work."



Elizabeth 37:01

You have been listening to the Art Lives podcast. Thanks to Greg Dudzienski for talking to me. For the next episode of our lives will be the second part of my talk with Greg. You can find Greg's work online at gregorydudzienski.com, which is G R E G O R Y D U D Z I E N S K I. You can also find his work on band camp or Amazon. Right now, we're listening to a tune called "Mr. Bridge" from Greg's album, La Luna. I posted Greg's links to the Art Lives page of my website, which is elizabethdelamater.com. While you're there, please subscribe to the RSS feed. Or go to Apple Podcasts and subscribe there. And please rate us also - that would be super helpful! My deep gratitude to Bill Sallak, and special thanks to composer Nicholas Meyers for the use of the opening music. And thank you so much for listening to Art Lives.