

Improvisation

- Innate or Learned? (Nature vs. Nurture)
- New and original or reprocessed?
- Spontaneous composition or pre-determined?
- All of the above, that is, improvisation can be perceived as the organization of materials (e.g., melodic, harmonic, & rhythmic), learned and internalized, producing a new presentation of these materials that are unique and creatively intertwined with one another.

Developmental Levels of Improvisation

- **Exploration:** student tries different sounds in a loosely structured context (awareness)
- **Process-Oriented:** student produces cohesive patterns (imitation)
- **Product-Oriented:** student is aware of structural principles (key & rhythm) (internalization)
- **Fluidity:** student manipulates instrument in more automatic/relaxed manner (mastery)
- **Structural:** student is aware of overall structure and develops a repertoire of strategies for shaping an improvisation (assimilation)
- **Stylistic:** student improvises skillfully within the given context (emulation)
- **Personal:** musician transcends recognized styles to develop a new style (innovation)

Beginning Solo Development: Goals

- Develop an aural awareness of the characteristic sound of a chosen note over a given chord quality.
- Develop an awareness of the composition's formal structure via its melodic and harmonic make-up.
- Develop an awareness of idiomatic rhythms and style used in jazz.
- Develop an awareness of idiomatic melodic patterns and phrases used in jazz.
- Develop facility of melodic manipulation and organization in jazz improvisation.

10 Steps for Practicing

- **Developing technical facility and aural awareness with scales**
- **Scale patterns with idiomatic jazz rhythms**
- **Developing technical facility and aural awareness with arpeggios**
- **Chord patterns with idiomatic jazz rhythms**
- **Combining scale and chord patterns**
- **Combining scale and/or chord exercises with the melody**
- **Combining scale and chord exercises with melodic materials from a transcribed solo**
- **Rearranging melodic materials from the solo transcription**
- **“Trading fours” with the solo transcription**
- **Combine melodic material from other solos**

Clark Terry Quote:

“Imitate. Assimilate. Innovate.”

Renowned jazz trumpeter Clark Terry comments on improvisation.

The Performance: Programming the Music

- Variety of styles
- “Theme” concerts
- Balance
- The first tune, last tune, and those in between
- Length (no more than 70 minutes)
- Brass player logistics
- Do not over conduct
- Longer solos in at least one tune
- Short announcements
- Attire?

The Performance: Check list

- Program info should be ready two weeks in advance
- PR 2–4 weeks in advance
- Inventory equipment needed (e.g., chairs, stands, mics, risers, shells, percussion, piano tuned)
- Dress rehearsal in the hall
- Ushers and stage crew
- Play program in order and all the way through
- Avoid conflicts in community calendar
- Program length and intermission?

The Performance: Sound Reinforcement

- Try not to overdo mics
- Create an acoustical sound
- 3 mics on saxophone and placed to the right of the bell, but close
- Trombones usually ok, but max 2 mics
- Piano can use 2 mics and 1/2 stick
- Soloist mic near rhythm section (also to be used to speak)
- Placement of mics in relation to monitors and speakers, and placement of monitors
- Microphones: wireless vs with wires; omni vs unidirectional
- Brands: AKG, Shure, Sennheiser

The Performance: Festivals

- Pros & cons
- Competitive vs non-competitive
- Obtaining and contacting guests
- Mailing lists for audience development
- Balance festival with performances, clinics, and guest performances
- Purpose?