

Eliminating Fear and Unleashing Creativity: Incorporating Improvisation into
Performance Practice and Education

by

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ABSTRACT

This research project was written simultaneously with a composition for double bass and piano that centers around improvisational concepts. The composition is intended for intermediate to advanced musicians to have an opportunity to practice improvisational performance and, hopefully, further their understanding and improve their ability to make convincing and creative musical decisions.

Improvisation, an aspect of music that has a deep tradition in Western Classical music, is often feared by classical musicians. The lack of improvisation in classical music, the idea that it is a specialized skill, and the lack of encouragement from studio teachers contributes greatly to this fear. In addition, teachers themselves often fear teaching and utilizing improvisation in performance for these same reasons. The introduction of improvisation into both the student's and the teacher's studies and daily practice can be beneficial in the development of meaningful performance and understanding music theory concepts.

This paper will introduce improvisation into daily practice that will educate both the student and the teacher and cement the understanding of theoretical concepts and standard repertoire. Various improvisation games (creating new material and improvising from traditional classical music) will be introduced. This study will begin with a brief survey of the tradition of improvisation in Western classical music from the Middle Ages to the present.

DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to the memory of my beautiful sister, Cara Joy, who greatly inspired and influenced me to become the person and musician I am today.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Improvisation has a long-standing tradition in every culture of the world, but in Western classical music, this tradition moved away from its original purpose. It was intended to be an important aspect of how the music was made and an educational tool to help teach concepts of music theory, composition, and performance. Although improvisation still exists in classical music today, it is no longer a common practice in performance or education.

Today, because music students primarily learn technical aspects of playing their instrument from their private instructor, and learn music theory concepts in a classroom through lectures, they rarely get to create on their own using composition, or improvisation. In fact, when the word “improvisation” is mentioned to a classical music student, most probably misunderstand, and relate the word to jazz. However, what they may not realize is that they are already master improvisers when it comes to language and human interactions. If one is comfortable improvising in their native tongue, why do musicians fear improvisation? Is music not a language?

The majority of students who study the language of music, primarily learn to only read the score that has been predetermined for them. Reading is only one part of learning a language and does not lead to being a fluent speaker. When a child learns a language, there are steps of exploration and experimentation before they can construct a meaningful sentence. If so many consider music a language, there should be a similar process in learning concepts of music theory and performance techniques. It is rare for developing

young musicians to learn to create and express themselves, while simultaneously learning technique and score reading.¹

This paper discusses the benefits of incorporating improvisation into music theory classes, weekly lessons, and ensembles. In addition, the seven stages of improvisation created by John Kratus are explained along with improvisational exercises in which both students and teachers can participate by improvising freely, alone or in groups, and learning to improvise on standard repertoire, which deepens the ability to understand harmony and form. Before these are introduced, it is important to be familiar with some of the history of improvisation in Western Classical music.

¹ Bill Dobbins, "Improvisation: An Essential Element of Musical Proficiency." *Music Educator's Journal* 66 (1980): 37.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF IMPROVISATION IN WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC

Aside from a small selection of modern music, a classical musician is limited in repertoire that utilizes improvisation even though many of the composers and original performers of this music were master improvisers. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt are a few commonly studied composers that focused heavily on their compositions as well as virtuosity as performers. Although their skills are revered, there is no mention of their reputation as improvisers.²

Improvisation was a normal aspect of music for thousands of years. Music was taught aurally and passed down through generations in both Eastern and Western music cultures. As music was disseminated, individuals would embellish and improvise their own versions of traditional songs.³ In the Middle Ages, music for dancing and processions was frequently improvised and singers would often improvise poetry along with instrumental accompaniment.⁴ In addition, medieval organum, a form of chant usually accompanied by a second voice, also had many improvisatory elements. The accompanying voice would harmonize in parallel motion to the main melodic line. This harmonization would take place a perfect fourth below the main line.⁵ However, the

² Jeffrey Agrell, *Improvisation Games for Classical Musicians: 500+ Non-jazz Games for Performers, Educators, and Everyone Else* (Chicago: GIA Publication, 2008) 1-2.

³ Dobbins, "Improvisation," 39-40.

⁴ Roland Jackson, "Improvisation," in *Performance Practice: A Dictionary-Guide for Musicians* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 195-197.

⁵ Ibid.

singer could also sing at either the octave or the eleventh above, which created several improvisational options.⁶ In melismatic organum, in the eleventh century, the upper voice would fill out a melody by improvising from a “basic intervallic framework of consonances.”⁷

This freedom of ornamentation is also seen into the Baroque era. Composers of the Baroque often wrote music with the intention of having the performer improvise ornaments to fill out the shell of the music presented.⁸ It is known that in the repeated sections of compositions from this period, the performer would add embellishments and ornamentations the second time on the repeat.⁹ Johann Sebastian Bach, in some of his own compositions, including the Sarabande from his English Suite No. 3, actually writes out embellishments.¹⁰ While he does write embellishments for the performer, these are not the only valid options and Bach only included them as examples.¹¹ Lionel Salter, a Baroque music harpsichordist and period ensemble director, speaks with Derek Bailey of the expectations of Baroque composers:

When it came to slow movements particularly, of course, you find that the notes written down represent a very bare outline, and people who try and play . . . let’s say Handel sonatas, strictly according to the text, end up with something at which Handel would probably have laughed uproariously, because he never expected it to be played cold-bloodedly like that.¹²

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Derek Bailey, *Improvisation: It’s Nature and Practice in Music* (Ashbourne: Moorland Publishing, 1980) 31-32.

⁹ David Dolan, “Back to the Future: Towards the Revival of Extemporization in Classical Music Performance,” in *The Reflective Conservatoire: Studies in Music Education*, ed. Nicholas Bannon, and George Odam (London: Ashgate, 2005): 117.

¹⁰ Dobbins, “Improvisation,” 40.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Bailey, *Improvisation*, 31-32.

In addition, Salter discusses the viewpoint on notation and how it was considered a kind of “memory jogger.” The notated music was a mere shell of what was to be played, and musicians were expected to improvise. Continuo instrumentalists were not only expected to outline the harmony based on the figured bass symbols, but were also considered the “conductor” of an ensemble and had to “provide a rhythmic spur” for the members of the ensemble.¹³ Continuo instruments included keyboard instruments, plucked strings such as the lute, harp, or guitar, and bowed string instruments such as the violoncello and the bass viol.¹⁴ The performers of these instruments would “freely fill out the harmonies for recitational songs and spoken poems.”¹⁵ These harmonic improvisations would be notated using figured bass notation, providing only the bass notes and figures placed below the staff that notated only the intervals above the root.¹⁶ These shorthand numbers are now the “basis for teaching composition and analysis” and would have been read in a similar way to the chord symbols jazz musicians read today.¹⁷

Figure 1
Example of Figured Bass Notation



¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Grove Music Online*, “Continuo,” by David Ledbetter, and Peter Williams, accessed March 9, 2017,

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06353>.

¹⁵ Roland Jackson, “Continuo Instruments,” in *Performance Practice: A Dictionary-Guide for Musicians*, (New York: Routledge, 2005) 103.

¹⁶ *Grove Music Online*, “Figured Bass,” by David Ledbetter, and Peter Williams, accessed, March 9, 2017.

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09623>.

¹⁷ *Grove Music Online*, “Fantasia,” by Christopher D.S. Field, et al, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40048>.

As we move into the Classical era, we start seeing stricter use of notation for the duration of a composition but we also see the emergence of the classical cadenza and the fantasy or fantasia.¹⁸ Both the cadenza and fantasy are freer forms of improvisation that show off musical ability and virtuosity.¹⁹

Today the cadenza is an element of performance with which most people are familiar. Many concertos of classical music contain cadenzas and we also hear them frequently in jazz ballads or the end of a pop song. Cadenzas in Western music started out in the early Classical era as an “extempore embellishment created according to the fancy and pleasure of the performer.”²⁰ While we rarely see or perform an improvised cadenza ourselves, the majority of cadenzas in the early eighteenth-century were improvised.²¹

While the cadenza was considered a free form of improvisation, musicians, over the years, set guidelines that assisted performers in constructing their own cadenzas. Johann Joachim Quantz, a flautist, composer, and writer on music, stated that the cadenza should fit the mood of a composition, and that the performers should use the main themes of the piece.²² Also, in an allegro movement, Quantz stated that it was acceptable for the

¹⁸ Dobbins, “Improvisation,” 38.

¹⁹ *Grove Music Online*, “Fantasia,” by Christopher D.S. Field, et al, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40048>.

²⁰ Roland Jackson, “Cadenza,” in *Performance Practice: A Dictionary-Guide for Musicians* (New York: Routledge, 2005) 61-63.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Grove Music Online*, “Cadenza,” by Eva Badura-Skoda, et al, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43023>; Jackson, “Cadenza,” 61-63.

musician to use large leaps and trills, and in slow movements, the performer should use smaller leaps and dissonances.²³

Daniel Gottlob Türk, in an effort to help reduce “inordinately lengthy cadences that often had little to do with the piece they were meant to embellish,” created a list of ten rules for cadenzas:

1. The cadenza should reinforce the impression made by the composition by providing a brief summary of it; this may be achieved by weaving some of the important ideas from the piece into the cadenza.
2. The cadenza should not be difficult for its own sake, but rather contain thoughts that are suited to the main character of the compositions.
3. The cadenza should be avoided or used only in passing, and should never stray beyond the main keys established in the piece.
4. Modulations should be avoided or used only in passing, and should never stray beyond the main keys established in the piece.
5. The cadenza, in addition to expressing a unified sentiment, must have some musical variety to maintain the listener’s interest.
6. Ideas should not be repeated, either in the same key or different keys.
7. Dissonances, even in single-voiced cadenzas, must be properly resolved.
8. A cadenza need not be learnt, but should show ‘novelty, wit and an abundance of ideas.’
9. In a cadenza, the performer should not stay in one tempo or metre too long, but should give the impression of ‘ordered disorder.’ A cadenza may be usefully compared to a dream, in which events that have been compressed into the space of a few minutes make an impression, yet lack coherence and clear consciousness.”
10. A cadenza should be performed as though it had just occurred to the performer. Nevertheless, it is risky to improvise a cadenza on the spot, and much safer to write down or at least sketch it in advance.²⁴

Eva and Paul Badura-Skoda, a musicologist and pianist respectively, created guidelines in writing cadenzas for Mozart’s compositions that do not already include them, based on his own composed models:

²³ Jackson, “Cadenza,” 61-63.

²⁴ *Grove Music Online*, “Cadenza,” by Eva Badura-Skoda, et al, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/43023>.

1) at I 6/4, make use of a main or concluding (pre-cadenza) theme or else of free figuration; 2) at I 5/3, draw upon a second (cantabile) theme leading into modulatory passages; and 3) at the more modulatory conclusion (e.g., to V of V or to a diminished 7th of IV), introduce free (and especially virtuoso) passagework.²⁵

Improvisation was encouraged in the Classical era cadenza up through Brahms who, like Beethoven, wrote out cadenzas for his own pieces but was comfortable with performers improvising or using their own composed cadenzas.²⁶ After 1880, composers began almost exclusively composing their own cadenzas.²⁷

The improvised classical fantasy was also expected of Classical era performers. This virtuosic form provided the performer with improvisatory freedom and stressed the importance of musical invention.²⁸ Since it was commonly thought of as an improvisatory form, there was not necessarily a specific form with which it was associated.²⁹ However, this does not mean that there was no form to these improvisations; performers would often draw upon common forms of the time, like dance movements, theme and variations, and sonata form. While fantasies were at times written out, some musicians of the time thought, to be considered a fantasy, it should be entirely

²⁵ Jackson, "Cadenza," 61-63.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *Grove Music Online*, "Fantasia," by Christopher D.S. Field, et al, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40048>.

²⁹ David Dolan, "The Classical Style," *Classical Piano Magazine*, November/December 1996, 13-14; *Grove Music Online*, "Fantasia," by Christopher D.S. Field, et al, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40048>.

improvised.³⁰ Kollman, in 1796, wrote that the fantasy lost its “true fire of imagination” when it had to be composed as a pedagogical piece.³¹

As the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries moved forward, improvisation became increasingly less prevalent. There are many factors that could be the cause of this decline, but the obsession of music notation and the ability to record exactly, on paper, what the composer intended were arguably the most influential. This move to strict notation, especially with the cadenza, in addition to large Romantic orchestras, assisted in the decline of improvisation and began the separation of composer and performer.³²

Improvisation continued to decline leading into the twentieth century, however, new types of improvisation emerged. Jazz was born of a melding of West African rhythms and Western Classical harmony which emerged from a combination of slave songs, minstrelsy, ragtime piano, and the brass bands of New Orleans.³³

Early jazz utilized a combination of improvisational approaches including call and response, collective improvisation, and melodic improvisation based on a piece’s own melody and chord progression.³⁴ In modern jazz, musicians generally play off a lead sheet, which is a piece of music that shows both the melody and a set of chord changes that correlate to the melodic notes.³⁵ These chord changes, while labeled differently for jazz, are a similar concept to figured bass of the Baroque era.

³⁰ Dobbins, “Improvisation,” 38.

³¹ *Grove Music Online*, “Fantasia,” by Christopher D.S. Field, et al, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40048>.

³² Agrell, *Improvisation*, 1-3; Dobbins, “Improvisation,” 37-39.

³³ Henry Martin and Keith Waters, *Jazz: The First 100 Years*, 3rd ed., (New York: Artists Rights Society, 2016), 12-81.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Figure 2
 Example of Jazz Lead Sheet Notation Showing Both Chords and Melody



Aside from jazz, throughout the twentieth-century new waves of music centered around the idea of improvisation emerged. Composers like John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen composed with elements of indeterminacy, which led to new performances of the same composition each time.³⁶ For example, Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI*, No. 7 (1957), consisted of nineteen melodic fragments that the performers could play in any order. The performer was instructed to glance briefly at the score and play whatever fragment happened to catch their eye.³⁷

Around the same time as Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI*, No 7, free improvisation in many forms emerged. Artist such as Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane started experimenting with free jazz, and improvisation groups comprised of educated composers and performers such as Musica Elettronica Viva emerged, creating music using any means available, including instruments, electronics, brainwave amplifiers or

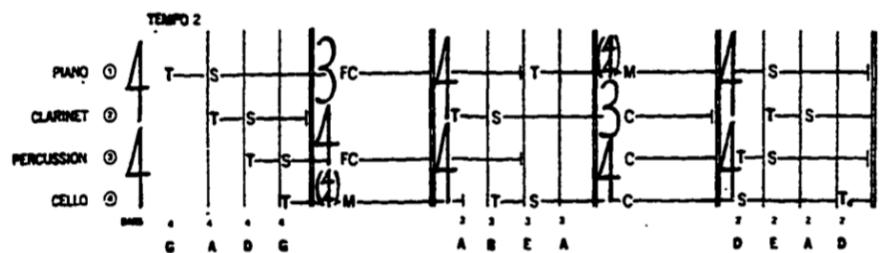
³⁶ David Cope, "Improvisation," in *New Directions in Music*, 7th ed. (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 2001): 85-86.

³⁷ Ibid.

everyday items such as door bells and coat racks.³⁸ Despite this new surge of interest for improvisation, there was still a lack of enthusiasm for its use as an educational tool.

Lukas Foss was the first to create an ensemble directed at bringing the performer and composer together through improvisation.³⁹ At UCLA in 1957, Lukas Foss formed the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble, made up of composers who played piano, clarinet, cello, and percussion.⁴⁰ The ensemble would perform improvised compositions based on charts that only showed the initial ideas for the music.

Figure 3
Score for “Fantasy and Fugue,”
Written by Lukas Foss for the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble⁴¹



While each performance was improvised, this was a more polished form of improvisation than that of completely free music due to the nature of the music and number of rehearsals.⁴² This group performed successfully, including an appearance with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Leonard Bernstein. The ensemble performed their improvisations as interludes to Foss’s composition, *Time Cycle for*

³⁸ Cope, “improvisation,” 7th ed, 85-86; “Spontaneous Music of Musica Elettronica Viva.” Accessed March 9, 2017 <http://www.dramaonline.org/albums/mev-40-1967-2007/notes>.

³⁹ Mary Elizabeth Shea, “The Middle Period of Lukas Foss-A Study of Twenty Three Avant Garde Works,” (PhD diss., Kent State University, 1997): 56-57.

⁴⁰ Shea, “The Middle Period,” 56-57; Cope, “Improvisation,” 7th ed, 78-79.

⁴¹ Shea, “The Middle Period,” 60.

⁴² Cope, “Improvisation,” 7th ed., 78-79.

Soprano and Orchestra. He describes the ensemble's approach in great detail in the original program notes for this performance:

These episodes, as I conceive them, belong to the category of serial or chance music: A specific musical vision is reduced to an abstract order set up in advance and notated in terms of symbols and graphs. Much so-called "chance" music is notated in this manner but there the composer puts his trust into the "order." In improvised chamber music, I put my trust in the performing musicians who do not passively translate the order into sound, but listen critically as the sounds emerge and play accordingly; their task is to find the appropriate note and rhythm on their instrument at a moment's notice. They control chance, rather than surrender to chance.⁴³

Lukas Foss opened the door to improvisational groups in music education across the United States. It is common to find courses or ensembles in schools directed at this kind of improvisation. However, improvisation is still not valued as an important educational tool by most private lesson or theory instructors.

⁴³ *Program Notes*, (New York Philharmonic), <http://archives.nyphil.org/index.php/artifact/438cb876-49b9-42dd-b63d-8838b244ffcc/fullview#page/1/mode/2up>.

CHAPTER 3

MUSICAL UNDERSTANDING AND DEPTH THROUGH IMPROVISATION

It is undeniable that there has been a resurgence of improvisation in Western Classical music that can be attributed to not only the influence of jazz, but an increased interest in free improvisation and period practice. However, improvisation is still neglected in private lessons and academic institutions. Many academic institutions utilize a standard approach to learning music which includes music theory courses that are largely information based and focus on analysis and compositions of Western Classical music, and, in performance, focus on interpretive performance and technical skills.⁴⁴ The importance of learning these skills is crucial to our success as musicians, however, in the modern world, we need a more diverse set of skills upon which to draw. Learning through improvisation has many benefits beyond simply presenting new opportunities. There is also evidence to show it can strengthen understanding of music theory and improve performance skills such as sight reading, memorization, and interpretation.

Learning Music Theory Through Improvisation

Music theory, to many music students, is arguably the least interesting subject to study in music school. It is difficult for some aspiring performers to understand how music theory relates to their area of study. This is partially due to the separation of musical disciplines in schools.⁴⁵ Music analysis alone is not enough to reinforce concepts of music theory. A creative approach is needed to engage students and gives them a

⁴⁴ Edward Sarath, "Preface," in *Music Theory Through Improvisation: A New Approach to Musicianship Training* (New York: Routledge, 2010): xii.

⁴⁵ Agrell, "Improvisation," 1-3.

“hands-on” way of learning music theory through playing their own instruments.⁴⁶ This creative approach to music theory will not only spark more interest, it will also help solidify concepts taught due to the connection made from the application of theory to practice.⁴⁷

Students who are able to connect theory and improvisation are more likely to embrace music theory and improvisation, and both students and their teachers will see improvements in other related areas. Improvisation improves ear training and helps the student go beyond just reading the notes on the page; they will begin to have a deeper understanding of what they are hearing and how elements of music fit together.⁴⁸ In addition, this improvement in aural skills will enhance pattern recognition, and the student will be able to recognize whether they are creating the sound they intend to create.⁴⁹

Steve Larson discusses an integrated learning approach to music theory while incorporating improvisation. This approach to learning and teaching, combines different ways of learning and understanding. He points out that in teaching or learning, “In order to know *this* you first have to know *that* . . . but in order to know *that*, you first have to

⁴⁶ Agrell, “Improvisation,” 1-3; Sarath, “Preface,” xii.

⁴⁷ Joy Morin, “3 Benefits of Incorporating Improvisation|Part 6 of the Series,” *Color in my Piano* (blog), February 10, 2010, <http://colorinmypiano.com/2010/02/11/3-benefits-of-incorporating-improvisation-part-6-of-the-series/>.

⁴⁸ Dolan, “Back to the Future,” 117-120.

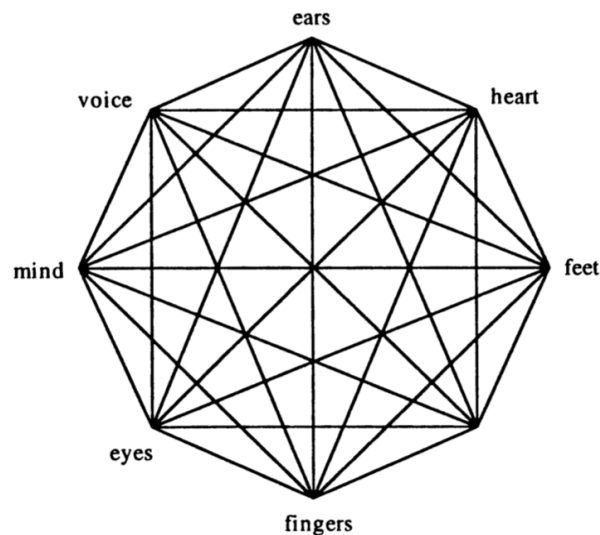
⁴⁹ Jennifer Patterson, “8 Surprising Benefits of Music Improvisation,” *Lifhack*(blog). <http://www.lifhack.org/455451/8-surprising-benefits-of-music-improvisation>.

know *this*.”⁵⁰ This essentially means that to “learn something, you must already know it.”⁵¹ Larson expands on this idea:

... someone may know intellectually that the fourth and seventh scale degrees are active tones that (in the right context) tend to resolve, respectively, to the third and eighth scale degrees. And the same person may have heard the resolution enough times to recognize it aurally as a familiar tonal event. But until that person associates that knowing-with-the-mind with that knowing-with-the-ears, he or she hasn't integrated the learning of that resolution in a way that would allow him or her to identify that resolution. Learning is thus a kind of association.⁵²

To visually represent this, Larson has created an eight-pointed star that shows the different ways of “knowing” theoretical concepts and relationships. The point that is left blank represents all other possible ways of knowing.

Figure 4
Steve Larson's Eight-Pointed Star of “Knowing”⁵³



⁵⁰ Steve Larson, “‘Integrated Music Learning’ and Improvisation: Teaching Musicianship Theory through ‘Menus, Maps, and Models,’” *International Journal of Music Education* 35 (1995): 76-78.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Larson, “Integrated Music,” 77.

Composers often learned music theory through integrated learning with the use of improvisation. For early composers, this began with the study of figured bass, which not only teaches harmony, but also voice-leading through improvisation. In addition, this type of study connects the intellectual with the musical from the very beginning.⁵⁴

In Joy Morin's blog "Color in My Piano," she cites a specific student she calls "K," who is a seven-year-old beginning piano student, and shows the progress she makes through improvisation. In this case, the student, with the freedom to improvise and explore, is discovering how to learn songs by ear. This leads her to learn musical concepts on her own, like the need for key signatures, and the importance of the black keys on the piano when transposing a song to a different key. Her ear is developing and recognizing basic sounds like the interval of a third when she sees it on a page. In addition to these self-discoveries, "K" also composed a short piece, seen in Figure 5, which demonstrates her knowledge of key and, despite only being unison octaves, outlines basic harmony as well. These discoveries found through exploration and improvisation are examples of different ways of knowing and learning and directly relate to Steve Larson's integrated learning model through cognitive and musical learning.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Larson, "Integrated Music Learning," 80.

⁵⁵ Joy Morin, "Improvisation Yields Creativity and Musical Understanding," *Color in My Piano* (blog), July 9, 2010, <http://colorinmypiano.com/2010/07/09/improvisation-yields-creativity-and-musical-understanding/>.

Figure 5
Composition by Student “K”⁵⁶



Learning music theory through improvisation can effectively keep students of all ages actively engaged in the learning process and can foster creative thinking that leads to new ways of listening, observing musical text, and may even lead to composition. In addition to improving ability to apply music theory concepts, improvisation in daily lessons and personal practice can have a direct and positive impact on a musician’s performance skills.

Performance Skills Gained Through Improvisation

Aside from being able to expand the capabilities of a musician, improvisation can also enhance the performance of standard repertoire. To achieve a higher level of expression in performance, one must master the musical language.⁵⁷ It is important to recognize that musicians and performers, trained in what is considered the “traditional sense,” primarily learn to reproduce sounds graphed on a page and interpret music as

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Dobbins, “Improvisation,” 36-37.

dictated to them.⁵⁸ This approach to learning does not allow musicians to overcome technique to become truly connected to the music, and to perform the music as it effects themselves in the moment. Learning to be creative and improvise with existing musical knowledge, will allow the musician to move past certain boundaries that may be holding them back in performance. Thinking about and teaching music as if it is a primary language, or “mother tongue,” will help musicians express themselves more effectively, in all musical performance practices.⁵⁹ Performing composed literature can be compared to storytelling; Great story tellers are improvisers, and while they may be telling the same story, they can make it new and exciting every time.⁶⁰

To become an effective story teller, one must know the order of events in order to effectively re-connect events. In music, the same is true regarding elements like harmony, rhythm, and melodic tendencies. Anticipating these aspects of music can help produce a performance that will move both the performer and the audience. If the approach to these elements is too academic, the emotional aspect and the ability to “play musically” is lost.⁶¹ Edmund Gordon created a term for the anticipation of hearing called “audiation.”⁶²

Audiation, is when musicians are “mentally hearing and comprehending music even when no physical sound is present.”⁶³ This ability can be considered the equivalent

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Rebecca Shanthi Kossen, “An Investigation of the Benefits of Improvisation for Classical Musicians,” (Thesis, Edith Cowen University: 15-16.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Dobbins, “Improvisation,” 38.

⁶² Kossen, “An Investigation,” 17-18.

⁶³ Ibid.

of thinking when speaking a language.⁶⁴ When improvising, a musician must audiate or hear before they play. Therefore, to perform composed music most effectively, a musician must be able to anticipate harmony, rhythm, and melody. This allows the musician to leave the reproduction phase, and enter a phase of self-expression.⁶⁵

In addition to becoming a more effective and expressive performer, learning to improvise can give a musician more confidence on stage, increase their ability to memorize repertoire, and can be an effective tool when recovering from a memory slip.⁶⁶ David Dolan states that improvisation and developing an improvisatory attitude not only give his students a “stronger sense of active listening” but also gives them a “better sense of ‘possessing’ the text.”⁶⁷ One student thought the improvisatory training gave them a better sense of flow when performing: “This work had a tremendous effect on the way in which I have opened my perceptions of what is going on around me and in the music. In my mind the word control was replaced with the word flexibility.”⁶⁸

While these situations seem to relate more to solo performance, there are also many benefits to being an improviser in an ensemble. Listening is one of the most valuable skills that is improved through improvisational practices and is crucial to the success of an ensemble. Being aware of what other ensemble musicians are playing, or not playing, in either a traditional or improvisation ensemble is necessary. Whether

⁶⁴ Christopher D. Azzara, “Improvisation,” in *New Handbook of Research Music Teaching and Learning*, ed. Richard Colwell, and Carol Robinson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): 174.

⁶⁵ Kratus, “A Developmental Approach,” 27-30; “Improvising – Fun and Benefits,” Step Up Music Vallejo, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.stepupmusicvallejo.com/ARTICLES/page81/>.

⁶⁶ Joy Morin, “3 Benefits | Part 6” *Color in My Piano* (blog).

⁶⁷ Dolan, “Back to the Future,” 120.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

performing members of a group are resting or playing, for example, can greatly affect how a musician reacts. If a leader is assigned, this can also improve visual awareness while watching the leader for cues or cut-offs.⁶⁹

With experiences in group improvisation, musicians can learn to listen, and be more aware of leaders and other members of an ensemble including the conductor, concert master, or principals of other sections.⁷⁰ In addition to improving ensemble performance, improvisation can also promote a stronger sense of trust between ensemble members, inside and outside rehearsals, which contributes directly to the success of a group.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Patterson, “8 Surprising Benefits,” *Lifehack* (blog)

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Patterson, “8 Surprising Benefits,” *Lifehack* (blog); Azzara, “Improvisation,” 172-173.

CHAPTER 4

STAGES OF IMPROVISATION DEVELOPMENT

The idea of teaching improvisation in private lessons, to many teachers, can be intimidating. Lack of confidence can come from a number of places including: (1) limits on time, (2) little to no experience, (3) lack of resources, and, (4) some may consider improvisation a natural talent that cannot be taught.⁷² To ease the concerns, teachers must remember that improvisation is (1) worth the time spent, as evidenced in the previous chapter; (2) there is no need for extensive personal experience to encourage and participate in improvisations with your student, (3) improvisation has seen a surge of interest in recent years and there are many resources, (4) anyone can learn to improvise. It's never too late to start.

To begin teaching improvisation, at any age or level, treating this new experience as learning a “mother tongue” would be most beneficial.⁷³ Musicians often approach or are encouraged to learn improvisation as they would learn a foreign language. However, through this method, musicians primarily learn from text books instead of mastering the musical language in stages like when a child learns to speak. To simulate this type of learning and development, John Kratus has created seven stages to improvisational development: (1) exploration, (2) process-oriented improvisation, (3) product-oriented improvisation, (4) fluid improvisation, (5) structural improvisation, (6) stylistic

⁷² Joy Morin, “Top 3 Obstacles when Teaching Improvisation | Part 2 of the Series,” *Color in My Piano* (blog), December 16, 2009, <http://colorinmypiano.com/2009/12/16/top-3-obstacles-when-teaching-improvisation/>; Dolan, “Back to the Future,” 110-111.

⁷³ Dolan, “Back to the Future,” 112.

improvisation, (7) personal improvisation.⁷⁴ It is important to realize that while these steps cannot be skipped, an improviser may move backwards. For example, someone who may be at the “fluid improvisation” stage could, if they wanted, revisit exploration if they are seeking new sounds.⁷⁵

Beginning improvisers need to start at the beginning. Using chord symbols and associating a specific style might be too difficult for a beginner improviser and skips many steps.⁷⁶ Kratus’s exploration stage is crucial in discovering the possibilities of sound and how one might manipulate their instrument to achieve those sounds.⁷⁷ Kratus does not consider this actual improvisation since the student is simply searching for sound possibilities. To truly improvise, a musician must be able to audiate, or hear before they play, to consider the final product improvisation. In this stage, organization is not a concern and Kratus considers this stage synonymous with “verbal babble” in children learning languages.⁷⁸ This step is crucial in learning how a student’s actions affect the sounds created by the instrument.⁷⁹

Stage two, process-oriented improvisation, is when students begin to “make connections between motor movements on a voice or instrument and the resulting sounds.”⁸⁰ In this stage, an improviser may begin to notice repeated patterns in their own or their student’s improvisations, which shows that the student is now beginning to

⁷⁴ Kratus, “A Developmental Approach,” 30-32.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Micah Volz, “Improvisation Begins with Exploration,” *Music Educators Journal* 92 (2005): 50.

⁷⁷ Volz, “Improvisation,” 50.

⁷⁸ Kratus, “A Developmental Approach,” 30-32.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Kratus, “A Developmental Approach,” 32-33

audiate. It is important for teachers to point out these patterns to their students and explain the relationships of the patterns used.⁸¹

A higher sense of musical awareness is achieved in product-oriented improvisation, the third stage. This heightened musical sense leads to creating improvisations with a little more structure. Structured improvisations allows others to derive meaning from the music, which shows the student that he or she can effectively share their music with others.⁸² As a teacher, this is the stage where the standard aspects of music including meter, tempo, key centers, and harmonic movement should be introduced to the improvisations.⁸³ These new elements do not need to happen simultaneously; a student can improvise in a free tempo and stay in one key center, or they can stay in a specific meter but create something that isn't necessarily tonal.

The fourth stage is fluid improvisation, where the student is more relaxed and starts to have more command over the different elements introduced in the previous level. Throughout this level, the teacher should emphasize the importance of the student's technique so they do not form bad habits.⁸⁴ Fluid improvisation segues into the fifth stage, structured improvisation. The mastery of tempo, meter, key, and harmonic movement happens here and leads to more structured improvisations. This means that the improviser begins to hear tension and release, and creates a flow through their improvisations.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Kratus, "A Developmental Approach," 33-34.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Kratus, "A Developmental Approach," 34-35.

⁸⁵ Ibid

Stylistic improvisation is the mastery of specific styles through the introduction of idiomatic rhythms, melody, and harmony.⁸⁶ Most musicians do not surpass the stylistic improvisation stage. To reach the seventh stage, personal improvisation, the musician must transcend common style and create their own.⁸⁷ This level is difficult to teach because no limitations can be set on a student. Kratus suggests encouraging the student to become accustomed to a wide range of styles so something new may emerge through a combination of differing styles.⁸⁸

Being aware of these steps can help teachers themselves learn to improvise, and help guide their own student's improvisational development through the recognition and acknowledgement of certain features of each stage as a student progresses. In addition to being aware of these developmental steps, it is important to incorporate different exercises and games into teaching improvisation.

⁸⁶ Kratus, "A Developmental Approach," 35-36.

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

EXERCISES FOR GROUP IMPROVISATION

Jeffrey Agrell, a classical hornist who has performed in professional symphonies and is now the horn professor at the University of Iowa, has always been interested in improvisation. Despite loving jazz, Agrell had no aspirations to play jazz horn. He began learning improvisation with a piano student. Together they created a course called “Introduction to Improvisation,” geared towards non-jazz musicians.⁸⁹ Since the creation of this course, Agrell has comprised over 500 exercises and games for classical musicians to help them begin to improvise. The games are organized into two smaller collections that musicians can carry around in their cases, one focusing on duet improvisations, and the other aimed at solo improvisations.

Beginning improvisers, novice or advanced technically, often fear even the mention of the word “improvisation.” Introducing improvisation in a collaborative group settings can help diminish the fear of being a “soloist” and encourages interaction, depending on the exercise, between musicians in the classroom.⁹⁰ In addition to group improvisations, exercises that enforce aspects of music theory or ideas and concepts from weekly lessons can be useful and effective.

Ronald Berk and Rosalind Trieber have written seven “Principles of Improvisation,” that assist the teacher in creating a friendly and safe creative

⁸⁹ Agrell, *Improvisation Games*, xv-xviii.

⁹⁰ Azzara, “Improvisation,” 172-173.

environment. Some of these principles are “guidelines,” and some are observed outcomes of group improvisations.

1. Trust – The players in the ensemble must trust one another.
2. Acceptance – Considered the “golden rule” of improvisation, each player must be open to new ideas to be able to explore new possibilities and discover new ideas. Each player should contribute and introduce new ideas.
3. Attentive Listening – Players must listen attentively to understand what others are saying in their improvisations. This will help in the success of each improvisation session.
4. Spontaneity – Players do not get the chance to revise their improvisations. Spontaneity “allows players to initiate words and actions, building trust with the other players.”
5. Story Telling – Players develop narratives together that makes the process more memorable by means of a story.
6. Nonverbal communication – Players should use facial expressions and body language for communication.
7. Warm-ups – Warm-ups provide safe environments for students explore without any set guidelines or content. These warm-ups “focus on transitioning individuals into an improvisational mode.”⁹¹

In Jeffrey Agrell’s *Improv Duets for Classical Musicians*, exercises and games are organized into different categories including warm-up games, rhythm games, melody games, harmony games, aural games, accompaniment games, depiction games, style games, technique games, and miscellaneous games.⁹² Below I will introduce a few games from Agrell’s book that are effective starting points for learning improvisation. It could be noted that, while these are written as duets, many, if not all, of these games will work with a larger group.

⁹¹ Ronald A. Berk and Rosalind H. Trieber, “Whose Line is it Anyway?: Improvisation as a Teaching Tool,” *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching* 20 (2009): 31-33.

⁹² Jeffrey Agrell, *Improv Duets for Classical Musicians: A Concise Collection of Musical Games for Two Players* (Chicago: GIA Publication, 2013).

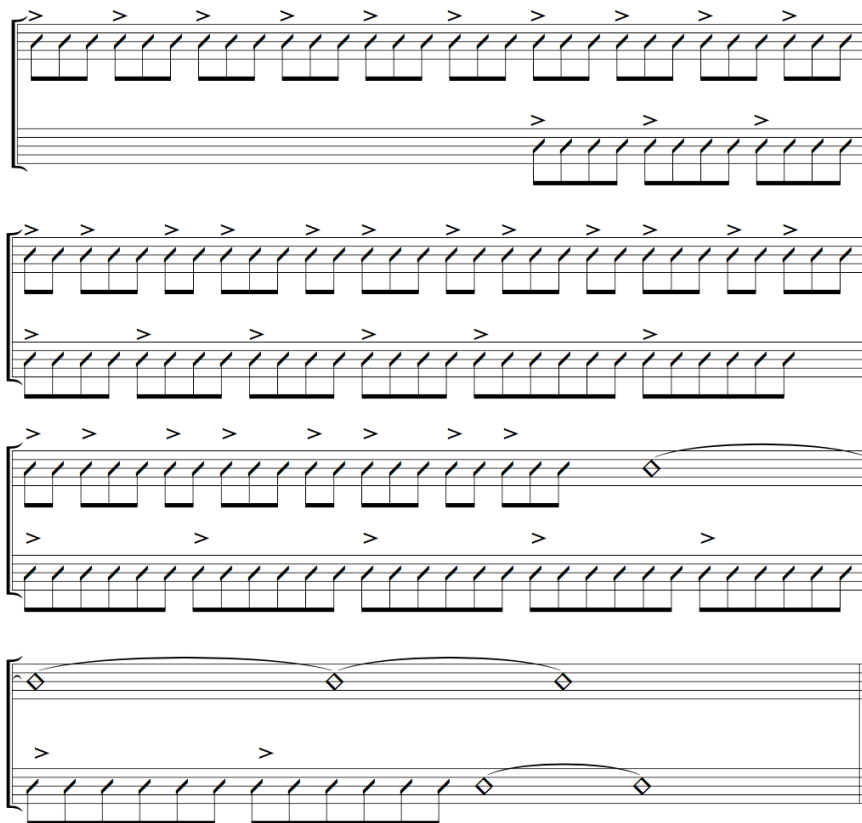
Exercise One – Warm-Up Long Tones

The first exercises that may be the simplest and most effective for beginning improvisers are warm-up games. Long tones are good warm-up exercises for any instrument, as they have relaxing meditative qualities. When using long tones in group improvisation settings, Agrell recommends that each musician play a group of notes that are different lengths, varying the pitch choice and length of notes while incorporating crescendos and decrescendos. The player is also allowed to leave as much space as they desire. If it is a larger group, this is essential. The musicians are free to respond in any way they desire, echoing or contrasting the other players notes, dynamics, and range choices. They may choose to be dissonant against the other pitch, or play independently of the other players.

Exercise Two – Ostinato

For this rhythm game, a player begins with a rhythmic ostinato, the second player then enters with a complimentary ostinato. Once the two ostinatos are established, the first player will then change, and then player two will create another complimentary ostinato. Player one will then signal the end with a held note. It is important to emphasize that a common eighth note pulse is needed, but a common meter is not.

Figure 6
Example of “Ostinato”



Exercise Three – Gregorian Chance

Exercise three is a melody game that is best played in a very resonant room like a church or a concert hall. For “Gregorian Chance,” a player chooses a note to play as a drone. Once the drone is established, player two chooses a mode. Agrell recommends Dorian, Phrygian, or Aeolian, but any mode can work. Utilizing the chosen mode, the second player creates a chant-like melody over the drone. This exercise can last as long as desired, allowing each player to occupy both roles.

Figure 7
Example of “Gregorian Chance”



Exercise Four – Arpeggio Accompaniments

“Arpeggio Accompaniments” begins with each player learning the melody of a familiar tune, something with no more than three chords, like “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” or “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Once each player has the melody of the song mastered, one player will play the melody, and one will play the roots of the chords. They will then switch roles. Once each player learns both parts, the accompanying player will create an arpeggiated accompaniment pattern while the other plays the melody. Throughout this exercise, the melody player is encouraged to embellish the melody each time through, rhythmically, or with melodic embellishments or fillers. At the same time, the player accompanying should search for new ways of using the arpeggio, by moving faster or slower, or using more or fewer notes of the arpeggio.

Figure 8
Example of “Arpeggiated Accompaniment”



Exercise Five – Call and Response

The final group exercise is one that is commonly used for ear training and improvisation. “Call and Response” helps musicians achieve the ability to audiate, which, as was discussed in the previous chapter, is necessary for true improvisation. This exercise begins with a player improvising one measure of music and the second player, or group, plays the measure back exactly. As the exercise progresses, the “caller” should make the material more difficult, but if the responding musician or musicians cannot play it back, they should simplify the material. This game should be played in all keys, major and minor.

CHAPTER 6

EXERCISES FOR INDIVIDUAL IMPROVISATION

Once musicians begin to become comfortable improvising in a group setting, encouraging individual improvisation is the next suggested step. If a musician becomes comfortable improvising as a solo musician, or as a soloist, a whole host of opportunities arise. Agrell provides many exercises for individual improvisation in *Improv Games for One Player*.

Exercise One – Warm-up Interval Piece

“Warm-up Interval Piece” is similar to the exercise, “Warm-up Long Tones,” for multiple musicians. This exercise is based around long tones and two to four different intervals. The player creates a slow-moving piece from the intervals chosen at a pulse of sixty beats-per-minute (bpm). The minimum note length is a halfnote and the player is encouraged to create dynamics, and rest when desired.

Exercise Two – Poet Lariat

While there are many rhythm games that can be effective, I found Jeffrey’s “Poet Lariat” game particularly intriguing due to its direct connection to language and spoken word. In this exercise, a player can use a poem of their choice as the basis of rhythm for their own improvisation. The player simply finds the rhythm of the poem and improvise to the meter of the poem. I recommend reading the poem repeatedly to discover and internalize the poem’s rhythm. Agrell suggests a small set of pitches at first, like a pentatonic scale.

Figure 9
 Example of “Poet Lariat” Rhythmic Outline Using
 William Butler Yeats’s “The Fiddler of Dooney”



Exercise Three – Familiar Tune

This engaging exercise does not directly involve improvisation but it is something that every musician would benefit from doing daily. It is appropriate for all students, particularly young students. In “Familiar Tune,” the player chooses a tune with which they are extremely familiar, such as a pop song or holiday song, and play it by ear. Start in an easier key and then move it around to all twelve keys. Once the player has mastered the original key, they should then try and play the tune in the opposite mode (major to minor, minor to major). I have created a variation on this which involves watching TV and learning a commercial jingle by ear and proceeding to play that jingle in all twelve keys. This is a more advanced version, as it requires learning a potentially unfamiliar tune on the first listen. Also, this is the only time I would recommend watching TV while practicing.

Exercise Four – Car Karaoke

It is important for musicians to be able to sing what they hear just as much as it is to replicate music on their instrument. Singing encourages audiation and can strengthen aural skills. “Car Karaoke” is something that many of us do daily driving to work or

school. In “Car Karaoke,” the player puts on a record that has “tuneful music,” most popular music will work well, and then invents harmonies by singing them along with the track; Practicing harmonies above and below the melody will be the most effective.

These exercises, among many others, while they cannot all be used in individual lessons can certainly be encouraged by private instructors. There are many possibilities to training someone’s ear or pushing their performance and creative boundaries. Some of these exercises may even motivate a player to begin composing music.

CHAPTER 7

APPLYING IMPROVISATION TO STANDARD REPERTOIRE

Composers and performers typically studied in our theory and history courses were all great improvisers. In fact, some were just as popular, if not more so, in their time for their improvisation skills than their compositions.⁹³ Frederick Chopin rarely played a composition the same way twice and both Chopin's and Franz Liszt's improvisations were often the high point of their performances.⁹⁴ For this reason, the application of improvisation in practice and, when appropriate, in the performance of our standard repertoire should be explored. This application can take many different forms. One application that is prevalent, in private study is the embellishment of Baroque music in repeated sections.

This approach is traditionally employed in the Sarabande movements in Baroque music, and occasionally in other slow movements.⁹⁵ Figures 10a and 10b show examples of the *Grave* movement of the Henry Eccles *Sonata in G minor*; 10a showing the original text, and 10b shows an example of embellishments that might be performed on the repeat.

⁹³ Agrell, *Improvisation*, 1-3.

⁹⁴ Dolan, "Back to The Future," 92.

⁹⁵ Dolan, "Back to The Future," 117-120.

Figure 10a

Henry Eccles *Sonata in G Minor*, Measures 1-8, in Original Full Score

This musical score for Figure 10a consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a single bass staff (treble clef) and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The second system includes a single bass staff and a grand staff. The music is in G minor (one flat) and 4/4 time. The first system shows measures 1-4, and the second system shows measures 5-8. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as *tr* (trills) and *tr* (trills) with wavy lines above notes.

Figure 10b

Henry Eccles *Sonata in G Minor*, Measures 1-8,
with Melodic Embellishments on the Repeat

This musical score for Figure 10b consists of two systems of staves, identical in layout to Figure 10a. The first system includes a single bass staff and a grand staff. The second system includes a single bass staff and a grand staff. The music is in G minor (one flat) and 4/4 time. The first system shows measures 1-4, and the second system shows measures 5-8. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as *tr* (trills) and *tr* (trills) with wavy lines above notes. The score is annotated with melodic embellishments, indicated by wavy lines above notes in the first system.

Chopin was known to embellish his pieces differently in each performance and also encouraged his students to improvise on his completed compositions. In his *Nocturne* Op. 9, No 2, Chopin shows us a clear example of the improvisational approach he took to certain passages of his compositions.⁹⁶ Figure 11a shows Chopin’s “. . . ‘written down’ extemporized figuration based on the inner line indicated by dotted lines.” Figure 11b shows a variation of the embellishments in a passage consisting of the same harmonic progression and inner melodic line.⁹⁷

Figure 11a
Frederick Chopin *Nocturne*, Op. 9, No. 2, Measures 7-14,
Showing One Version of Chopin’s Extemporizations⁹⁸

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Chopin's Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2, measures 7-14. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The first system (measures 7-10) shows a melodic line in the treble clef with various ornaments and trills, and a harmonic accompaniment in the bass clef. Dotted lines indicate the underlying inner melodic line. The second system (measures 11-14) shows a variation of the embellishments, maintaining the same harmonic progression and inner melodic line as the first system.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Figure 11b
Frederick Chopin, *Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2*, Measures 26-33, Different Extemporizations,
Similar Harmonic Structure and Inner Melodic Line⁹⁹

The image displays a musical score for measures 26-33 of Chopin's Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2. It is presented in three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The top system (measures 26-27) shows the original melody with a long slur and a dashed line above it indicating an extemporized version. The middle system (measures 28-29) shows the original melody with a slur and a dashed line above it, and the bass line with a slur and a dashed line below it. The bottom system (measures 30-31) shows the original melody with a slur and a dashed line above it, and the bass line with a slur and a dashed line below it. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

In addition to period practice, David Dolan emphasizes the importance of improvising both tonally and over stylistic forms to clarify the “flow” of a composition. To apply this type of improvisation, Dolan suggests using a reduction of the repertoire. Practicing in pairs or groups while using the composed melody and bass line can assist the student in feeling the “large scale motion of the whole text while performing the

⁹⁹ Ibid.

reduction, and, conversely, to hear in one's inner ear the reduction while the full text is being performed."¹⁰⁰

Figure 12

Henry Eccles *Sonata in G Minor*, Measures 1-8, Showing an Example of What Dolan Calls the "Shell" of a Composition



Dolan also suggests that this can be effective when applied to chamber music.

With this exercise, each member creates a reduction of their part and the ensemble proceeds to perform the movement in its entirety with these reductions. In a quartet, for example, one member will perform using the reduction while the other three members of the group play the full text. The member playing the reduction is encouraged to improvise, “using passing tones, appoggiaturas or suspensions – according to his or her personal narrative: intentions of phrasing, directions and points of tension and release.”¹⁰¹

This exercise, in some cases, can also help the musicians to memorize the work.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Dolan, “Back to the Future,” 117-120.

¹⁰² Ibid.

In addition to affecting an ensemble's performance profoundly, performing music in an improvisatory style can also help an audience be more attentive throughout a performance. In 2013, a study was done to discover how an improvisatory style performance of standard repertoire by a chamber group would affect its audience. The study involved a professional chamber trio consisting of flute, violin, and harp. The performers took improvisation classes, both individually and in groups over the course of four years and were trained in historical and modern improvisation practices.¹⁰³

During the trial performance, which had an audience comprised of a mixture of students and staff, the trio performed five pieces. Each was performed twice, once with an improvisatory approach, and once in a standard approach. The audience then had the chance to rate each version, without knowing which performance was improvised, based on five categories: (1) Improvisatory Character, (2) innovative in approach, (3) emotionally engaging, (4) musically convincing, and, (5) risk taking. The final results showed that the audience rated the improvisatory performances higher than the prepared performance in every category.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ David Dolan, John Sloboda, Henrik Jeldtoft Jensen, Björn Crüts, and Eugen Feygelson, "The Improvisatory Approach to Classical Music Performance: An Empirical Investigation into its Characteristics and Practice," *Music Performance Journal* 6 (2013): 6-9, accessed March 5, 2017,
[http://www.mpr-online.net/Issues/Volume%206%20\[2013\]/MPR0073.pdf](http://www.mpr-online.net/Issues/Volume%206%20[2013]/MPR0073.pdf).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

With such a strong tradition of improvisation in classical music and the increasing number of studies showing the benefits of improvisation on performance and the connections made between text and sound through the solidifying of theoretical concepts, it is becoming apparent that improvisation can elevate all aspects of a musician's ability. This leads to a better understanding and more meaningful performances for both the performer and audience. The primary hurdle teachers and students face is the fear of diving into unfamiliar territory. However, if improvisation is incorporated into individual and group learning experiences, teachers can learn alongside their students, through a variety of improvisation exercises and games. Teachers can build a safe and trusting environment by expressing to their students that they are also experimenting and learning.

Once a musician embraces creativity and the uncertain outcome, they will find a deeper understanding of music and a vast array of new musical experiences. Being an improviser can inspire composition, present opportunities for performing in pop ensembles or period ensembles, and can elevate the performance of their own chamber and solo repertoire. In addition, improvising with other musicians can deepen musical understanding, heighten musical awareness, and can strengthen relationships inside and outside of the musical setting.

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APPENDIX A

ACCOMPANYING COMPOSITION *Lila* (PLAY OF THE COSMOS) FOR DOUBLE
BASS AND PIANO

Lîla

(Play of the Cosmos) For Double Bass and Piano

Benjamin Hedquist

Composed 2017

Mvt. I - Play of Creation $\text{♩} = 120$

Double Bass

mp

Piano

p

5

D.B.

Pno.

9

D.B.

f

mf

Pno.

13

D.B.

f

Pno.

f

©

Lila 2

17

D.B. *f*

Pno. *f*

21

D.B. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

25

D.B.

Pno.

29

3x Bass ad lib.
In Tempo or Independent Tempo

D.B.

Pno. *f*

34 3x Bass Continues on same ideas
Tacet 3rd time

D.B.

Pno.

decresc. each time

37 Bass ad lib.

D.B.

mp

Pno.

p

D.B.

Pno.

45

D.B.

mf

Pno.

Lila 4

49

D.B.

Pno.

f *cresc.*

53

Vamp and dismantle into quiet chaos

D.B.

Pno.

Piano fade while bass continues

57

D.B.

Pno.

Mvt. II - Play of Destruction
Emerging from the Chaos

58

$\text{♩} = 60-70$ *Mysterious*

D.B.

Pno.

pp

Bass fade out completely
re-enter at G

Piano move to G when bass enters with melody

Piano enter quietly while bass improvises

62 Bass embellish throughout

D.B. *p*

Pno. *pp*

66

70 Bass fill into next measure

D.B. *p*

Pno.

75

Lila 6

79

D.B.

Pno.

83

D.B.

Pno. *mf*

87

D.B.

rit. *Ad lib.* *Cadenza*

Pno. *f*

91

D.B.

Segue to Movement 3 *In 3rd mvt Tempo*

Pno.

Mvt. III - Play of Re-creation


96 ♩=150 Bright, Rhythmic, Grooving

D.B. 
Pno. 

D.B. 
Pno. 

104 104 *Improvise on pitches given*

D.B. 
Pno. 

D.B. 
Pno. 

Lila 8

114 More Rhythmic
Bb Minor

Rhythmic Fill

112

D.B.

Pno.

118

D.B.

Pno.

121

D.B.

Pno.

125

D.B.

Pno.

130 Vamp Approx. 30 seconds
G minor

D.B.

Pno.

137 Vamp Approx. 30 seconds
Bb minor

D.B.

Pno.

144 **2x**

D.B.

Pno.

150

D.B.

Pno.

Lila 10

154

D.B.

Pno.

cresc.

Slight Ad lib.
rit.

158

D.B.

Pno.

ff