

## A B S T R A C T S

Thursday 17.7.

Paper session 1A (11:00 – 12:30)

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

TeatroJason Robinson**Improvisation and Telematics: Toward an Understanding of Latency and Interactivity in Networked Performance.**

In recent years, an increasing number of performances take place that involve musicians distributed across two or more sites linked in real time using specialized audio and video networking technologies on the Internet. Such performances go by several names—telematics, networked music, distributed performance, net music—and strike a revealing balance between remarkable new aesthetic and technological possibilities and the “believable,” that is, the boundaries at which certain technical limitations push against deeply held assumptions about musical performance (and, by extension, improvisation). One such limitation is latency, a kind of time delay intrinsic to all networked communication. Research suggests that the presence of more than fifty milliseconds of latency between two or more performers limits their ability to play in synchronous time together, a threshold often crossed in telematic performance.

The use of improvisation in telematics, however, further complicates the impact of latency on performance and accentuates the complicated distinctions and similarities between co-located, traditional performance and networked performance. Drawing examples from Virtual Tour 2013 (a multi-site networked performance involving musicians in California, Massachusetts, and New York, in the United States, and Zurich, Switzerland), I illustrate the impact of latency on two distinct forms of improvisation used in networked performance: “open” improvisation (in a rubato tempo without a predetermined synchronous “beat” or time structure) and “groove-oriented” improvisation (with a synchronous “beat” or time structure). I bring together two different temporal frameworks from traditional co-located performance—microtiming (via Vijay Iyer) and participatory discrepancies (via Charles Keil and Steven Feld)—to examine the

impact of latency on telematic improvisation. My conclusion is rather surprising: both the aesthetic strategies and the “believable” in telematic improvisation recast perspectives derived from traditional co-located performance, thus reflecting larger, more deeply held assumptions about embodiment, communication, and interactivity in improvisation.

A saxophonist, composer, and scholar, **Jason Robinson** (PhD, UC San Diego) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Music at Amherst College (with affiliations in Black Studies and Film & Media Studies). His teaching and research focuses on jazz, improvised music, African diasporic music, and interactive music technologies. His current book project, “(Re)Sounding the African Diaspora,” investigates the role of improvisation in collaborations involving African American and continental African musicians.

Ian Mikyska**Lines and Sounds: Hermeneutics of Multimedia Improvisation**

In this presentation, I propose an immediate interpretive approach to multimedia improvisation, specifically involving sonic and visual media, based on Nicholas Cook’s work on theory of multimedia and Lawrence Kramer’s approach to interpretation. The presentation takes the form of a lecture-performance of approximately 45 minutes, with approximately half the time being occupied by improvised performances by Stratocluster, a Prague-based improvising sextet.

I take as a basic starting point Cook’s use of metaphorical mapping as a basic process in multimedia. He describes the relationships in which different media can exist, and I extend his thinking to the relationship between the subjectivities of the individual improvisers.

Jean Jacques Nattiez describes analysis of music as pertaining to either the poietic, neutral or esthetic level, and I propose a model of multimedia improvisation which treats every improviser as a poietic force, the end result therefore being a combination of more than two continua which can – but don't have to – enter into the relationships described by Cook. I also expand on how this model might prove useful for forms of interpretation and analysis that don't prioritise the composer above all else, as it engenders a way of thinking about interpretation of multi-poietic productions that could be extended to traditionally notated music.

**Ian Mikyska** is a composer, improviser and writer with Czech roots, currently living and working between London and Prague. His main interests, both artistic and academic, lie in the connection between music and meaning, other media, and relational aspects of artistic and non-artistic practice. As might be expected, he has worked in a variety of media, from pure music (commissions from the Ostrava Days festival, CoMA Summer Music and Strings of Autumn Festival among others), through theatrical performances (productions with Blood, Love & Rhetoric Theatre, Akanda Theatre and others, as both composer, author and director) to purely text or graphic based work (graphical and musical poems set to be published in *Psí vino* and *VLAK*). In 2014, he co-founded the inter-arts collective *hra94* (*game94*), which takes as the basis of its program intermedia and collective improvisation, as well as serving a platform that endorses smaller and more specifically oriented projects or collectives such as *Stratocluster*. *Hra94* is currently working on editing its first feature-length film, shot at an all-night participative performance evening that took place in Prague in June 2014. He studies with James Weeks at the Guildhall School of Music, and is currently spending a year in Prague working on theatrical projects and several commissions. He is generously supported by the Guildhall Trust and the Strings of Autumn Music Festival.

### Christopher Williams

**Long-Term Improvisation, Groundwave Rondo, and The Barcelona Chronicles**

Musical improvisation, according to conventional wisdom, is about the moment: the spontaneous, realtime, and unforeseen in the course of performance. However as research by Benson (2003), Lash (2011), and Peters (forthcoming) has shown, improvisation can also occur throughout processes of "preparation" in instrumental practice, group rehearsal, and even organization and presentation. In my experience as a composer-performer, the connection between these "out-of-time" constraints and "in-time" creation can be more radical still. Offstage and onstage improvisation may not only be analogous but continuous – woven together in a long-term improvisation that comprises many performances, pieces, and/ or life itself. The presentation will explore this notion by way of two examples:

My solo *Groundwave Rondo* is a series of pieces for contrabass and "tape," each version of which is made (as often as possible) on the way to the gig. While in the train, I improvise for 15 minutes

with an AM radio and record it. The radio signal is obliterated by interferences from the train motor, overhead cable, and onboard electronics, turning my receiver into a sort of synthesizer which can be modulated by turning the frequency dial. The recording is played back unedited in the concert — without my having heard it — and we perform a duet together.

Derek Bailey's *The Barcelona Chronicles*, a series of recordings made in 2005, documents the legendary guitarist's "new approach to his instrument, whilst dealing with the complex and progressive limitations caused by Motor Neurone disease." As muscular degeneration reduced his left-hand mobility and made holding a plectrum impossible, Bailey developed a new, sparser way of playing using his thumb. "Here was someone for whom obstacles were occasions for necessary creativity."

**Christopher Williams** is a wayfarer on the body-mind continuum. His medium is music. As a contrabassist, Williams has collaborated with Derek Bailey, Justin Bennett, Compagnie Ouïe/Dire, Charles Curtis, LaMonte Young's Theatre of Eternal Music, Robin Hayward (Reidemeister Move), Hans W. Koch, and dancer Martin Sonderkamp; and with composers such as Chris Adler, Benjamin Carson, Charlie Morrow, Ana-Maria Rodriguez, Marc Sabat, and Erik Ulman. As a curator, he organized over 70 concerts of contemporary and experimental music in Barcelona between 2003-2009 with *Associació Musical l'Embut*. He currently co-curates *Certain Sundays*, a monthly salon in Berlin, and participates in the Berlin Improvisation Research Group.

### Reinhard Gagel

**OHO! - Offhandopera - a model for creating musical forms in the course of performance.**

OHO! Offhandopera is the name of a format for singers and instrumentalists to invent and perform an opera offhand without preparation and rehearsals. It took place during the last two years in university of music and performing arts, vienna and especially in exploratorium berlin, center for improvised music and creative music pedagogics in berlin. The most interesting thing is that it is a way to create improvised music in the sense of an artistic production, not only as a jam session. The participants, professional artists and laymen are not chosen or casted, they decide to come to the performance and join the production. It works under special conditions, these are:

- » there is a libretto or text given, selected and arranged by myself in order to organize the musical course. The texts are short plays, poems, extracts from theatre pieces and short stories. Especially dadaistic, surrealist and soundart poetry is used;
- » no musical notes and styles are prescribed, all will be invented during the session;
- » I function as conductor or rather as animator, to create the atmosphere and concentration of the performance;

- » I do this by hand signals, by body gesture, by words, spoken during the performance, and operate the formal things: i.e. who and how long s.o. will sing or play or in which mood and dynamics. I do this to support the singers and instrumentalists not to work out my own expectations;
- » the main thing is the creation of music by the participants of the opera and the emerging of ideas during the about 1.5 hours lasting performance.

In my opinion OHO! Offhandopera is a model for collective creation and an artistical production of an actual music theatre between the styles and a functioning collaboration between professional and non-professional musicians. In each performance there are 10 to 15 participants, but the final performance of an OHO! opera in Vienna is joined by more than 30 students.

I will speak about the organization, the arrangement and the technique to support people in creating their own improvised music and will show some recordings and videos. I take the OHO! as a model of cultural participation across the borders between musicians

and so called nonprofessional-musicians, and laymen. The latter are authentic and obsessed by music and often their way of singing/playing is unusual and fresh. In exploratorium berlin, an artistic lab for improvisation, we offer a lot of open stages and other forms of improvised music production to foster creative music production.

**Reinhard Gagel**, Ph.D., can look back on long engagement with free improvisation, an engagement which reached a high point in his dissertation «The Complex Creative Moment: Improvisation as a social art». Gagel is a professional improvisation musician active in artistic improvisation, leading several own ensembles, working with well-known international improvisation musicians (among others Malcolm Goldstein (Canada), Burkhard Stangl (Austria), Mirio Cosottini (Italy)) and publishing broadcast and cd-recordings with his own production company (Ensemble Foliafolie Cologne). He is also an artistic educationalist with broad experience in leadership of improvisation ensembles and as a lecturer for musical communication at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. He is working in art-based research at the exploratorium berlin, an institute for performing, educating and researching improvised music and art.

## Thursday 17.7.

Paper session 1B (11:00 — 12:30)

Chaired by David Rothenberg

### Video NoD

#### **Michael Gardiner**

**Spectral Fizz and the Image of extended Perceptions:  
Theory qua Improvisation.**

The haze of a thousand dying cicadas; coiling summer winds; half-tints of a Miles solo from Kind of Blue looped and played backwards atop the stoic opening of Bartok's first string quartet; pulse-trains of scattered crickets, each attempting to pinpoint a quadrant of the landscape, but all locations become masked by the cloud of virtually endless information in the atmospheric swarm of accumulating noise; a 60 hertz electrical buzz; the effervescent spectral fizz of ginger ale and the perceiving/unperceiving mind discerning the event—sound itself is transversal, omnidirectional, overlapped. It bleeds and blends locations and distances.

When information loses its body, the "autonomous subject is up for grabs" (Hayles, 1999). When musical analysis loses its body

(the autonomous musical object), it assumes a multisensible, improvisational gesture. At this point, a suborganizational, interconnected, participative pattern or "tic-system" wins out over any specific material expression. [In *Fanged Noumena* (2011), Nick Land describes tic-systems, or assemblies of functionally interconnected microstimulus as, "systems entirely intractable to subject/object segregation, or to rigid disciplinary typologies."] The sound of the dying cicada loses its epistemological shell.

Theory qua improvisation counteracts the temptation toward reduction—suppressing the spectrum of ideas too quickly when approaching a topic—and replaces it with a desire for heterogeneous considerations. In this paper I use the phrase, "the field of music theory" quite literally to mean an ambient surface or screen (of the kind that might organize a Rauschenberg "combine", for example); the simultaneous preparation and perception of an abstract assemblage and its role in the sketching of a theoretical territory. A screen

become the image of thought, and a field its horizon.

Such a position holds onto a detailed hearing of sonic environments without succumbing to reductionist tendencies, thereby directing our counter-materialist qualia toward a space of design, a space that explores the exploded, orthographic view of the gap (the interference pattern, the noise) that exists between a sound wave and the mind's perception of a sound. For there is a crucial distinction to be made between "raw" acoustic data (which already includes a psychophysical layer of remove, insofar as an individual brain always filters data) and "what we are aware of" in the perception of that data. Or, more simply, what we are aware of in perception, which A.N. Whitehead defined as nature. Isabelle Stengers, in her discussion of Whitehead's Concept of Nature, elaborates; "A contrast insinuates itself [blocking the pedagogical series of explanations], between the words immediately available for saying 'what' we perceive, and the question, open for its part, of what we are aware of 'in perception'" In my theoretical model, perception becomes largely a matter of open attention and discernment within an indefinite, transfinite constellation; an "arbitrary distribution in the midst of what we are aware of".

**Michael Gardiner** is Assistant Professor of Music Theory at the University of Mississippi. His research interests include timbral morphology, the intersections of theological and musical space, Japanese noh drama, and challenges to the musical work. His articles have been published in *Current Musicology*, *Asian Music*, and *Sonus*. He is currently writing an analytic monograph on the *Ordo Virtutum* of Hildegard von Bingen.

### Cat Hope

**Scoring for Music Improvisation - The potential of digital graphic notations for improvising ensembles.**

This paper examines the range of improvisation possibilities in animated, graphic and text scores that are made, presented and interpreted on a computer. Computing offers new ways to communicate different types of musical ideas, facilitating a new variety of starting points and guides for improvisation. Moving away from paper pages to a computer screen or projected image enables scores that can easily feature wide range of colour, movement, aleatoric components, the co-ordination of multiple parts and control of electronics. The idea of 'improvising from a score' has been developed - and challenged - considerably by the potential of computers, and is examined through different approaches.

It is well known that improvisatory techniques for musicians can span from completely free and spontaneous performances to guided structures. This paper focuses on the different ways notation as a way to guide improvisation, including the way it can be made or adapted on a computer, examining trends in animated and graphic notation, as well as the impact and ongoing development of text for the communication of musical ideas. Further, a range of techniques

for the presentation and interpretation of scores for works with a large component of improvisation will be discussed. This includes the potential for networking multiple computers and techniques that enable improvising electronic artists to share score interpretation with acoustic instruments.

The paper examines works and processes that range from the authors town to a wide variety of other composers across different musical styles that include jazz, concrete poetry, pop and noise. Exemplar works that have been developed in conjunction with ensembles such as The London Improvisers Orchestra (UK), Slátur (Iceland) the Chicago Modern Orchestra (USA) and the authors own Decibel New Music group (Australia) demonstrate a range of techniques as applied to different ensemble scale and improvisatory expertise.

**Cat Hope** is a composer, sound artist and musician based in Western Australia. Cat's composition and performance practices engage elements of low frequency sound, drone, noise, graphic notation and improvisation. She has been a songwriter with some 6 albums to her credit, playing in pop bands in Germany, Italy and Australia in the 1990s. In 2013 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to study digital graphic music notations internationally as well undertake residencies at the Visby International Composers Centre, Sweden, Civitella, Italy and the Peggy Glanville Hicks House in Sydney in 2014. She is the director of the award winning new music ensemble Decibel who have toured internationally and released her compositions, and is an academic at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.

### Marcel Cobussen

**Technology as an Actant in the Field of Musical Improvisation**

- I. Central in my thinking on improvisation are two concepts: complexity and singularity.
- II. Improvisation is, in my opinion, a complex event in which many actants (the term is coined by Bruno Latour), many actors, factors, and vectors, both human and non-human, converge and interact. It is this interaction which will take center stage in this presentation. Examining improvisation as a complex system shifts the focus from an overriding concern with isolated actants to changing relationships between these actants. Besides human-human interactions improvisation also implies interactions with or between audience, instruments, the performance space, technology, acoustics, aesthetic and cultural backgrounds, etc. Taking into account all these levels of musical, social, historical, acoustical, and technological engagement gives a more complete picture of the practice of improvisation.
- III. Although it is my point of departure that improvisation takes place in all musicking, not all of the actants mentioned above determine every improvisation to the same extent; in certain situations (periods, styles, cultures as well as more singular circumstances), some are more prominent and active than others. Therefore, I don't want to deal with improvisation "in general". Instead I emphasize singularity: each improvisation will yield a different network of actants and inte-

reactions. In other words, I would like to present a radical empiricism, a focus on particular and individual cases.

**IV.** One of these specific cases is a piece by the young Belgium composer Paul Craenen, called *tubes*. It is by analyzing this piece that I will reflect on the question whether technology is improvising. Somehow it seems obvious and often taken for granted that only humans (or, perhaps, living beings) are able to improvise. However, by analyzing *tubes* I will defend the claim that it is specifically the technology used here that creates a situation of experimentation and creativity. Performers and audience are invited, even forced, to share a space of surprises, discoveries, and unexpected sonic results; in short, they encounter the un-fore-seen (im-pro-vised).

**Marcel Cobussen** studied jazz piano at the Conservatory of Rotterdam and Art and Cultural Studies at Erasmus University, Rotterdam (the Netherlands). He currently teaches Music Philosophy and Auditory Culture at Leiden University (the Netherlands) and the Orpheus Institute in Ghent (Belgium). Cobussen is author of the book *Thresholds. Rethinking Spirituality Through Music* (Ashgate, 2008), editor of *Resonanties. Verkenningen tussen kunsten en wetenschappen* (LUP, 2011) and co-author of *Music and Ethics* (Ashgate, 2012) and *Dionysos danst weer. Essays over hedendaagse muziekbeleving* (Kok Agora, 1996). He is editor-in-chief of the open access online *Journal of Sonic Studies* ([www.sonicstudies.org](http://www.sonicstudies.org)). His Ph.D. dissertation *Deconstruction in Music* (2002) was presented as an online website located at [www.deconstruction-in-music.com](http://www.deconstruction-in-music.com).

### Felipe Castellani and Rogerio Costa

**Orquestra Errante: preparing an environment propitious to the practice of free cross cultural improvisation**

This proposal contains a reflection on the process of creating the performance *Espelho* (Mirror) which incorporates ideas of composition, improvisation and live electronic interaction. In this performance, act and interact two musicians (one playing the saxophone and another operating the electronics devices). From a "roadmap" previously prepared at a stage of collective composition, are pre-established the electronic processing environments to be used successively during the performance and the types of sound materials most suitable for each of these environments, as well as the transitions between them.

Our intention is to discuss what are the issues involved in the use of hybrid systems and to what extent this type of environment favors or hinders the sound immersion, the syntactic consistency of sound flow and the performance of the musicians (especially from the point of view of physicality).

Improvisation is the basic behavior for the saxophonist who, from the pre-established sound materials creates, in real-time, his intervention. The general aspect of the flow of the performance results from the sum of the sounds created by the saxophonist and the changes that are processed in real time by the other musician in an intense interactive process of mutual influences.

Apparently, the performance depends entirely on the sound of the saxophone, as the musician who operates the electronic devices performs processing the sounds that are produced by the acoustic instrument. However, the preparation of the environment also includes sound samples pre-recorded and prepared prior to the performance, which gives the other musician, to some extent, the possibility of acting «physically», manipulating and emitting sounds, as if they came from his «digital instrument.»

The use of a single sound source, the saxophone, aims to ensure a morphological 'familiarity' to the various environmental settings. But beyond the pre-recorded sound materials, analyzed, categorized and processed, there are other elements present in the complex environment of collective creation that guarantee the consistency of the proposal. As most of environments prepared for live electronic interaction, the one used here brings implicit compositional ideas, for example, the idea of 'immediate extension' (delay and granulation) and distortion (pitch-shifters) of sonic material produced by the acoustic instrument. Finally, emerges the idea of an artistic collective creation, shaped as a pathway, full of irreversibilities. Although this pathway can not be set globally, it sets up occasionally erratically, in the manner of a processual mobile, where traditional musical parameters give rise to others such as energy, gesture and direction.

Felipe Merker Castellani is a Ph.D. student in the Music Graduate Program of University of Campinas in the research area 'Music, language, Sonology', under the supervision of Pr. Dr. Silvio Ferraz and with financial support of the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP). He also has a degree in Musical Composition from Santa Marcelina College (2009) and a Master degree in Musical Creative Processes from University of Campinas (2010). Between 2013-2014, he conducted a research internship at the Centre for Research in Computer Science and Music Creation of the University Paris 8 in the commune of Saint-Denis, north of Paris, under the supervision of Pr. Dr. Anne Sèdes.

As a composer **Rogerio Costa** has written compositions for various formations including octets, quartets, trios, duos, solo pieces for saxophone and piano. His compositions have been played by leading artists in Brazil and Europe such as Abstrai of Rio de Janeiro, Camerata Aberta of São Paulo and Pierrot Luneire Ensemble of Vienna. As a researcher Prof. Costa currently develops a research project on improvisation and its connections with other areas of study. He has extensive bibliographic production on improvisation published in journals, conference proceedings and books. Two of the most important current projects under his supervision, related to his research are the groups of free improvisation *Musicafacta* and *Orquestra Errante* where he also acts as a saxophonist. He is currently doing his pos-doc research in Paris, France at the Université Paris 8, under supervision of Professor Makis Solomos.

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 2A (14:00 – 15:30)

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

### Teatro

#### Lucie Vítková

**Composing Situations: Improvisation in the Music of Christian Wolff**

Non-idiomatic improvisation has become strong musical expression to simulate the sounds of the environment. Every improviser develops own musical language based on his or her instrument (acoustic or electronic), which they use certain way to interact musically to each other or to the audience. This musical interaction has often been compared to the social communication in everyday life through our spoken language.

Music, I propose, is always a social action. Society, for example, creates a collective sound, which can be perceived or ignored as a chaotic structure. When we start to train our perception to pay attention to the surrounding sounds, we can actually distinguish the actions according to our ears and start to understand them. There is lots of improvisation and composition on the streets. The person asking about the right direction is improvising with a stranger; the tram is making music in the groove of its track. We can gradually discover the meanings of the music and sound around while re-examining these situations.

In the musical world, composition or improvisation, we have established various social situations (solo, duo, ensemble, orchestra), which we tend to not perceive as distinct from music.

My research is on the music of Christian Wolff, a composer exemplary in realising social aspects as important compositional parameters, constructing musical works in which the decisions of and interactions between the players are balanced delicately with preconceived frameworks. His compositions are at once restrictive and liberating: the rules of composition never absent, the idioms of improvisation always close at hand. In this paper, I wish to introduce preliminary findings of my doctoral research, which explores Wolff's handling of diverse strategies for musical and social interaction. Understanding Wolff's 'composed situations' I suggest may help us

understand the nature of the relationship between 'fixed' and 'free' as we encounter them in today's music.

**Lucie Vítková** is a composer, performer and improviser of accordion, harmonica, voice and dance from the Czech Republic. She graduated in accordion performance at Brno Conservatory in 2010 and composition at Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno (CZ) in 2013. During her Master Degree, she studied at Royal Conservatory in The Hague (NL) and at California Institute of the Arts in Valencia (USA). She has studied with Martin Smolka, Jaroslav Št'astný, Martijn Padding, Gillius van Bergijk and Michael Pisaro. Along with her study of music she used to teach tap dance at the Faculty of Theatre of JAMU. She is member of the Ensemble Marijan, Dunami, Brno Improvising Unit, Dust in the Groove and Prague Improvisation Orchestra. Vítková's work pursues two lines of enquiry: in the compositions she focuses on sonification (compositions based on abstract models derived from physical objects), while her improvisation practice explores characteristics of discrete spaces through the interaction between sound and movement.

#### Emmanuel Nnamani

**Improvisation, Catharsis and Creativity On the Beat and In Tune: Perspectives on Structures, Images, and the Message in Fela's Afrobeat Music**

What does improvisation mean in a typical Afrobeat music composition and performance? What effect does it have on the performers and members of the audience alike? What is its place in the creative-cathartic fabric and musical structuring in the Afrobeat brand? What aesthetic creative interpretation informs the improvisation structures in Fela's Afrobeat? Many works have been done on the Afrobeat genre, created by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, the famous Nigerian musician and activist. Regarded as a rebel by his detractors

but recognized as an icon by his fans, Fela lived and died as a great multi-instrumentalist and musical giant in his Afrobeat music. His fame stands out strongly in his dexterity and craftsmanship showcased profoundly in his improvisatory skills. The artistic-aesthetic discussion of these essential aspects of Fela's art has not been given the needed scholarly attention. This paper attempts to fill this gap.

The paper presents some detailed examination of Fela's works (using multi-sited data) with a view to showing the germinal nature of the improvisation structures in the artist's composition style. In his Afrobeat music, Fela evokes some of the most thrilling moments of his art and creative brilliance in his improvisations. Such performative scenarios showcase his mastery, transcendence of the bounds of sonic-aesthetic and cathartic spaces and colorful ways of getting from chorus to chorus, transforming the cadences and passages and evading and/or uniting the harmonic structure of the theme to create a musical space that bonds his aesthetic philosophy with the echo of aesthetic-thirst of his audience and enthusiast alike. It is in such an artistic groove that Afrobeat's message and Fela's art resonate with the Afro-centric aesthetics of creative freedom which is fundamental in African traditional, contemporary art and popular music practice – symbiotically projected and professed in the improvisations in Fela's works.

### Andrew Wilson

**Musical Prose, Dada, and Jazz: A Case Study of Erwin Schulhoff's Improvisationspraxis**

Since Ernest T. Ferand's pioneering study *Die Improvisation in der Musik* (1938), our understanding of the role and importance of improvisation in music has increased exponentially. Yet despite numerous and thorough studies on improvisation in late nineteenth-century and post-World War II art music, little research has been done on improvisation in classical music of the first decades of the early twentieth century. Our knowledge of improvisation in this area remains surprisingly scant and essentially reflects Ferand's views, which suggest that *Improvisationspraxis* in early twentieth-century art music ceased to exist.

In my paper I will shed light on the role and importance of improvisation in the work of composer and pianist Erwin Schulhoff (1894–1942). I will argue that his attraction to improvisation and improvisational practices was shaped by his musical training and artistic interests as well as by his contact with contemporary avant-garde artists. I will first trace concepts of improvisation and improvisational characteristics found in Schulhoff's artistic environment and show how they affected his early creative activities. I will then analyse three of his works, *Fünf Pittoresken* (1919), *Bassnachtigall* (1922), and the piano duo *Mitternachtsgespenster* (1933) and discuss different concepts of improvisation found in these pieces. Finally, I will also briefly address the reception of this music as well as other

works with improvisatory qualities in this period.

My paper is based on unpublished materials housed in such archives as the Archiv des Museums der tschechischen Musik (Prague) and the Paul-Sacher Stiftung (Basel) and scholarship by Bek, Berghaus, Feisst, Ferand, Gilliam, John, Netti, Lewis, and Solis. This research paper will contribute to a better understanding of some of the concepts and modes of improvisation found in the early twentieth century and in Schulhoff's work.

After initial studies in computer sciences at the University of Neuchâtel and training as a classical and jazz pianist, **Andrew Wilson** worked as an English teacher and translator (2001–2014). He was also active until 2009 as a pianist: concerts, solo performances and as a member of various jazz and pop-rock groups. In 2004, he had returned to university studies and in 2010 obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English and Musicology at the universities of Neuchâtel and Geneva. In October 2012, he received a Master of Arts in Musicology at the University of Basel, with honours (*insigni cum laude*). Since then, Andrew Wilson has been researching his PhD topic 'Concepts of improvisation and their impact on early twentieth century art music'. In April 2014, this project was officially accepted as a research program at the Musikwissenschaft Seminar der Universität Basel and is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF).

### Kevin McNeilly

**Possibility Abstracts: Taylor Ho Bynum, Nathaniel Mackey and Discrepancy**

Released in November 2013, the multi-format set of recordings of Taylor Ho Bynum's innovative composition for improvising sextet, *Navigation*, both culminates and continues his fascination with the interfaces between the extemporaneous and the written, the scripted and the performative. Separate LP and compact disc versions of the work are paired with different fragments of text from African-American poet Nathaniel Mackey's experimental epistolary novel *Bass Cathedral*, a book that Ho Bynum has recently said, for him, is probably the best writing about music he has encountered. Earlier compositions by Bynum, such as his suite *Madeleine Dreams*, have not only used prose fiction as libretto, but more tellingly have striven to address sonically and structurally the complex and often fraught relationships between the musical and the diegetic, between sound and sense.

*Navigation* takes up Mackey's own address to this interface, sounding what Mackey understands as creative discrepancy, an expressive troubling of formal and cultural boundaries. Name-checking both Sun Ra and Louis Armstrong, Mackey has noted what he calls a "play of parallel estrangements" in improvised music and in poetry, arguing that music "is prod and precedent for a recognition that the linguistic realm is also the realm of the orphan," that is, of the limits of sense, a liminal zone of both orchestration and letting go. Ho

Bynum's recordings pick up not only on Mackey's thorough enmeshment in jazz history, but also on his intention to pursue the expressive potential of language and of music at their textural boundaries, at moments of troubling contact between divergent worldviews, or between dissimilar social and cultural genetics. Composing using what Mackey calls m'apping – a portmanteau splice of mapping and mishap, pursuing what Mackey calls the "demiurgic rumble" of discrepancy, improvising across the gaps between careful craft and unruly noise – Ho Bynum conjures a hybrid and collaborative music that blends the complex Afrological heritages of jazz performance style (audible in Navigation's network of gestures to Charles Mingus and Duke Ellington, to name only two key forebears) with graphic scoring techniques derived from Sylvano Bussotti or Wadada Leo Smith, among others.

If improvised music, for Mackey, represents – and represents precisely – what defies descriptive capture in language, what eludes ekphrasis, then the music of Taylor Ho Bynum's sextet aspires to invert that representational effort, to take up the discrepant aesthetic

tactics of Mackey's writing and to assess how the written (as graph , as graphic score) can approach and test the expressive limits of making music happen. Taylor Ho Bynum's compositions for improvisers offer exemplary instances of how to negotiate creatively the boundaries between text and sounding, and suggest a means of addressing, too, the graphic work of other composer-improvisers, including the work of Nicole Mitchell, Anthony Braxton and Barry Guy.

**Kevin McNeilly** is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He is the UBC site coordinator for Improvisation, Community and Social Practice (ICASP – [www.improvcommunity.com](http://www.improvcommunity.com)) and for the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI). He has published criticism and scholarship on the improvised music of Steve Lacy, Charles Mingus, John Zorn, Miles Davis and others, as well as on contemporary poetry and poetics and on media. His poetry has appeared in a number of journals, and his book of poems – a genealogy of early jazz trumpet players – is *Embouchure* (Nightwood Editions, 2011).

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 2B (14:00 – 15:30)

Chaired by Sara Pinheiro

### Video NoD

#### Vanessa Tomlinson

**Listen to the sound of your imagination – An exploration of imaginative listening**

This presentation examines the notion and experience of 'imaginative listening' on the basis of one work by Vanessa Tomlinson – *Nostalgia* (2013) – and the notion of sensorial imagination of Kathleen Coessens (2012). Included in the presentation will be an embedded series of participatory listening activities and realtime improvisational outcomes by the authors. *Nostalgia* was composed to explore sound as it happens in the imagination. The work intentionally moves the scene of sound construction from the composer's imagination, to the performer and/or the audience. This work demands a different level of engagement and trust – requiring that the performer and/or audience to enter into an inner relationship with memory, experience and imagination that privileges the personal journey of each individual as a platform for sonic imagination.

The presentation will incorporate concepts of auditory imagination, explored through the examination of perceptual or sensorial imagination (Koessens 2012) and conceptual or propositional imagination (Williams 1973). We will explore these different sensorial modalities through analysing *Nostalgia* as a rubric of different types of imaginative listening; Material listening, Conceptual listening, Experiential listening and Internal Listening. Each listening attitude, helps provide a lexicon of listening approaches, hypothetically transferable to other musical settings. The compositional prompts provide multi-sensorial gateways into our imagination and into our memory, placing the act of sound production in the imagination of each individual performer and audience member. The sonic residue discovered, and the transitional or liminal space between located sounds forms a private listening experience for each active audience participant mapped onto the geo-cultural specificity of the individual.



Australian percussionist **Vanessa Tomlinson** is active in the fields of solo percussion, contemporary chamber music, improvisation, installation and composition. She has performed at festivals around the world such as Wien Modern, London Jazz Festival, Green Umbrella Series LA, Bang-on-a-Can Marathon NY, The Adelaide Festival of Arts, and Shanghai Festival. She is the recipient of 2 Green Room Awards, the 2011 APRA/AMC Award for Excellence by an organization or individual, and has been awarded artist residencies through Asialink (University of Melbourne), Civitella Ranieri (NY/Italy), Banff (Canada) and Bundanon (NSW). She has recorded on numerous labels including Mode Records, Tzadik, ABC Classics, Etcetera, Clocked Out and Innova. Vanessa is co-founder and artistic director of Clocked Out, one of Australia's most important and eclectic musical organisations, artistic director of percussion quartet Early Warning System and the percussionist for The Australian Art Orchestra. She is currently Associate Professor in Music at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

### Marc Hannaford

#### Improvisation as Bricolage

How does one plan to improvise? Traditional conceptions of planning as a set of fixed and all encompassing set of procedures fail to provide each level of the emergency management hierarchy the flexibility to quickly respond to novel and unprecedented situations using its specialised tools. Employing improvisation in disaster response emphasises a particular approach to the deployment of previously learnt knowledge and a particular attitude to the nature of the situation. If improvisation is to be employed certain approaches to organisational management should also be adopted.

In this paper I will draw upon theorisations of improvisation in terms of "bricolage" and "wisdom," as well as organisational principles of "decentralised power" and "emergence," in order to theorise improvisation firstly in relation to the 2009 Victoria bushfires in Australia, and finally to some Australian improvised music. My discussion will critique the Australian royal commission's response to the 2009 Victoria Bushfires. I plan to show how many of the commission's findings allude to improvisation without explicitly addressing it; leading me to conclude that the royal commission would benefit from foregrounding the concept of improvisation in order to be better prepared for future extreme emergencies. I will then turn to examples of Australian improvised music and use the same concepts to theorise aspects of ensemble improvisation that I posit provides a more nuanced account of planning for musical improvisation than Aaron Berkowitz in his paper "Improvised Performance: Performers Perspectives" (2010) and aligned with John Whiteoak's theorisation of Australian improvised music and jazz (1999). My aim for this discussion is to show that, in both the case of emergency management and music, planning for improvisation can be theorised to good effect in terms of bricolage, wisdom, decentralised power and emergence.

Marc Hannaford is a PhD student in music theory at Columbia University, New York. He is also part of the Institute for Compara-

tive Literature. His primary interests are music, improvisation, sociological difference, group identity and agency, and power. He has presented and taught in Australia, New Zealand, Berlin, Sweden, Canada and Brazil. Marc received his undergraduate degree in music performance at the Australian National University, and a Masters of Music Performance (by Research) at the Victoria College of the Arts. He is also an accomplished pianist. He won the 2013 Music Council of Australia's Freedman Fellowship, the 2013 Jazz "Bell" award for most original 2012 album (Sarcophile), and the 2013 Australian Performing Rights Association's Art Award for best work (Anda Two).

### Ximena Alarcón

#### Telematic embodiments: listening to the 'in-between' within migratory contexts

When we migrate between geographies our body moves, experiencing a new climate, different food and territories; our mind wonders trying to understand the trace left, our body feels it. In the migratory process sometimes we feel we are not present in our new land or, on the contrary, we fully deny our homeland. We eventually start to imagine an 'in-between' space (Ortega, 2008), where we could place ourselves, our physical and mental territories.

Networked Migrations is a practice-based research project that explores the 'in-between' sonic space that exists within the context of migration, through Deep Listening practice (Oliveros, 2005) and improvisatory performances on the Internet, in order to expand the perceived sonic spaces that inform the migratory experience. This paper analyses the experiences of embodiments by participants in the telematic sonic performances 'Letters and Bridges' (Leicester and Mexico City), and 'Migratory Dreams', (London and Bogotá), from the perspectives of somatics and dream-work (Stewart, 2012; Lewis, 2005; Bosnak, 2007). The embodiments take place in the process of 'unselfing' (Schroeder, 2013), characteristic of networked performances, as participants collaborate and improvise telematically using only sound. Focusing on voice, which in a telematic performance is a disembodied being, and the sound environment, which permeates our sense of being in a specific location, the paper highlights this mediated improvisatory performance as an experience that helps migrants to reunite with their multiple selves, and that offers an extension of their perception of their body in new physical and virtual territories.

**Ximena Alarcón** is an artist who engages in listening to migratory spaces and connecting this to individual and collective memories. She creates sound art works, using networked technologies, derived from listening experiences in interstitial spaces where borders become diffused, such as underground transport systems, dreams, and the 'in-between' space in the context of migration. In 2010 she engaged in Deep Listening practice listening to her own migratory experience and creating scores for The Migratory Band. Currently she is a performing member of the recently

formed multi-arts improv ensemble 4 4 Flow. Ximena has a PhD in Music, Technology and Innovation, from De Montfort University, and was awarded with The Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship 2007-2009 to initiate her postdoctoral research in the Institute of Creative Technologies (IOCT). In May 2012 she obtained a Deep Listening certificate. Since 2011 she has worked as a Research Fellow at Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice (CRiSAP).

### Ivan Palacký

**Sentences to tell over – interferences between improvisation in music and architecture.**

A short reflection on the strategies of improvisation in the interdisciplinary approach. The presentation reflects the essay « Sentences to tell over », published in the journal *His Voice* and from the

experience and micro-narration related to the architectural project for the Chapel of Franciscus of Assisi in Brno.

A musician and architect, **Ivan Palacký** performed in various bands and participated in a diverse range of musical projects. He performed at many concerts with the band «Sledě, živé sledě». He is currently a member of the ambi(val)ent duo «Tilko» (with Jennifer Helia DeFelice) and the audiovisual improvisational duo «Koberce, záclony» (with Filip Cenek). He also keeps audio diaries of his travels, recording story fragments, strange sounds and a diverse array of «acoustic errors». Since 2002, he has been involved in free improvisation, and enjoys participating in short-term projects (collaborations with Cremaster, Ruth Barberán and Margarida Garcia, Willem Guthrie, and Andrea Neumann, among others). He equally enjoys playing solo. His main passion since 2005 has been the «mining» of sounds from an amplified Dopleta 160 single bed knitting machine. As an architect, he is interested in architecture without «structures», sociological methods in project planning and morphogenetic maps in digital architecture.

## Friday 18.7.

Paper session 3A (16:00 – 17:30)

Chaired by Allison Johnson

### A Teatro

### Simon Rose

**The Agency of Improvisation**

The presentation describes how improvisation is a widespread activity, in all spheres of human activity, and at the same time relatively absent from education; signalling a deficit between our being-in-the-world and practice in education. The background and findings of the research project: 'Improvisation, music and learning: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis' (Rose PhD thesis, 2013) are presented.

The particular experience of working successfully with students who have been permanently excluded from mainstream education (8 years) led to research with the aim to better understanding processes of improvisation. Together with experience of working with young people with special educational needs; experience as a professional musician; and an early career in drama, this paper describes improvisation's broad potential for education.

A body of knowledge has developed within the international

community of musicians whose practice is centred on improvisation. Ten highly experienced improvisers from Europe and North America took part in semi-structured interviews, the overarching question was: What is the place of improvisation in your practice? The study employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) is an idiographic approach through which lived-experience is examined in analysis. Through analysis the following super-ordinate themes of improvisation were identified: Learning, Process, Body and Strategies. These themes, and their 'unity,' will be explained through reference to interview extracts from the ten interviews. The socially inclusive and autonomous character of free improvisation was highlighted for its broad potential in education. Interpreting the phenomenon of free improvisation acknowledges the multiplicity of experience of improvisation in music. The co-presence, or 'unity' of the super-ordinate themes, Learning, Process, Body and Strategies is also significant in developing understanding of the nature of improvisation.

**Simon Rose** plays baritone and alto saxophones. Born in London, England, he has performed in Europe, Canada and USA. As well as collaborating with those who play traditional instruments, Rose performs with musicians who employ self-designed instruments and electronics. He is also interested in collaborations beyond music, for example with dance and fine art contexts. Performing solo is an ongoing project: 'Procession,' solo alto and 'Schmetterling,' solo baritone. Music recordings can be found on the labels: Emanem, Leo, PSI, Bruce's Fingers, Not Two, Rayon and PFMentum. His research interest is in the creative process of improvisation, in which he has completed three studies. Following an MA at Middlesex University, 2008, he gained his doctorate in 2013 at Glasgow Caledonian University. He is currently completing a book for Intellectbooks, UK concerning the agency of improvisation. Other publications include book chapters: 'Free improvisation in education,' in *Investigating Musical Performance* (Ashgate, 2012); 'Improvisation as real-time composition' in *The act of musical composition* (Ashgate, 2014), and 'The Process of Improvisation' in *Organising and Music* (Cambridge, 2014).

### Lisa Cay Miller

#### Talking Improv—Removing the Civil Censor

Accessing instantaneous creativity is elemental to experienced improvisers, as natural as breathing, walking and talking. Improvisers master their instruments, obtain vocabulary and technique and develop sophisticated deep-level communication skills and strategies for taking part in complex musical dialogue and interaction. As experienced players, it is possible to underestimate the capacity for being fully present, for committing mindfully to expression, and for establishing and accepting trust of others and of ourselves, methodologies that might not easily be understood by those not dedicated to the living practice.

Children have direct access to improvisatory attitudes. They create without judgment, without fear, with delight and abandon. With social and cultural conditioning, adults learn to fear risk taking as they make their place in society. As they become 'civilized,' an inner dialogue begins which negates artistry, which cautions against individual expression and the unconventional. This negation affects artists and their role in society, and society's relationship towards artistic expression.

This discussion will investigate these questions: Whether as witnesses or participants, what is this mysterious portal that champions of improvisation develop to counter this inner voice, to embrace intuition, accept the push-pull and intricately interweaved roles of commenter, leader, supporter, negator, instigator, present in collaborative improvisation? How does one remove the public and private filters that inhibit the acceptance of the unknown? With are these conditioned rules that stand in the way of expression, and what is it in us that allows us to accept abstraction and enter joyfully into the world of improvisation?

**Lisa Cay Miller** is the Managing Artistic Director of the NOW Society who proudly presents Vancouver best improvisors. She has produced concerts and multi-media installations (Vancouver New Music, Coastal Jazz and Blues Society, Circus Maximus, and the Western Front Society). Miller has performed with Nicole Mitchell, Butch Morris, John Zorn, Eyvind Kang, Audrey Chen, Ig Henneman, Wilbert de Joode, Anne La Berge, Michael Moore, and Joachim Badenhorst, Tiago de Mello, Lucas Rodrigues Ferreira, Roldolfo Valente, Marcio Gibson, Mario Del Nunzio and Pianoquestra Her CDs, *The Lisa Miller Octet*; *Sleep Furiously*, the music of Lisa Miller, Q, Q; *Waterwall* and *The Lisa Miller Trio*; *Open* are available on the Greenideas record label and have received rave international reviews.

### Stephanie Khoury

#### Re-imagining the role of improvisation in music education

The creative practice of improvisation should be at the core of all music education. By prioritizing the attainment of musical fluency over the study and memorization of pre-existing compositions, we provide music students with the musical agency so often lacking in today's musical training. In this way, music education becomes a true arts education based upon an organic process of action, discovery and expansion. Through improvisation, students attain a deeper integration of the fundamentals of music and are challenged to be active listeners, capable of making complex decisions in the moment. When improvising collectively, students are learning to communicate with the language of music, giving them with the ability to interact with other musical genres and cultures. Students widen their musical possibilities while developing their own creative voices.

This discussion considers the necessity, implications and potential considerations of a transformation to music education. The author's own ethnographic research examines the music teaching of improvisation in three distinct contexts: a community music school in inner city Houston (USA), an improvised modal counterpoint class at McGill University in Montreal (Canada), and an institute of improvised music in Salamanca (Spain). Examining pedagogy and practice in these locations in contrast to non-improvised musical contexts reveals a number of benefits and important considerations for the field of music education.

Among these considerations is the problematic nature of formalized improvisation pedagogy, such as those in jazz or Early Music. Strict adherence to extreme complexity of form and linguistic syntax is often impractical or disadvantageous. Finding an improvisatory practice which embraces differences and encourages creative expression is crucial for re-imagining music education. Freer forms of improvisation diminish reliance on particular stylistic know-how and open the practice to all, creating a space in which diverse backgrounds and musical influences enrich the musical process rather than restrict it.

A successful pedagogy of exploratory improvisation must necessarily disrupt traditional teacher-student models and invite

the unknown into the teaching environment. In the spirit of critical pedagogy, the teacher becomes learner along with the students, opening themselves to the unexpected in order to help each individual and the collective grow into its potential. Ultimately, the most successful teachers of improvisation are those able to improvise in their teaching, using the tools at hand to connect with students and decipher what is necessary in order to enable them to find confidence and their own voice.

**Stephanie Khoury** is a guitarist, educator, and PhD Candidate in music education at McGill University. Her research interests focus on different aspects of creative music education, ranging from improvisation pedagogy to community music. Currently she is conducting ethnographic research of experimental community music programs and working towards a complete overturn of music education as we know it.

### Don Ritter

#### From Improvisation to Conceptual Interactivity

Ritter provides an overview of his work on interactive performances and installations that are directed by improvised music or by the extemporaneous actions of audiences. The presentation includes a description of an interactive performance system that Ritter began

developing in 1988, and how it became the technical basis for his interactive video-sound installations that are controlled by body motion, position, or voice. The term conceptual interactivity is proposed to designate when the content of an artwork is conveyed to audiences experientially, through their physical interactions with a work. The presentation will include documentary videos of performances and installations that demonstrate the notion of conceptual interactivity and its relationship to improvisation.

**Don Ritter** is an artist and writer who has been active in the field of digital media art since the late-1980s. His work consists primarily of large interactive video and sound installations that audiences control through their body position, body movement, or voice. During his interactive performances, video projections are controlled by live music. Ritter's performances and installations have been presented at festivals, museums, and galleries throughout North America, Europe and Asia, including Ars Electronica, SITE Santa Fe, Winter Olympics 2010 Cultural Olympiad, Metrònom (Barcelona), Sonambiente Sound Festival (Berlin), Exit Festival (Paris), and New Music America (New York City and Montreal). He has collaborated on performances primarily with trombonist George Lewis, and also with musicians Nick Didkovsky, Amy Denio, Thomas Dimuzio, Ikue Mori, Geneviève Letarte, Ben Neill, Trevor Tureski, and Tom Walsh. Ritter has held full-time professorships in art and design at Concordia University in Montreal, Pratt Institute in New York City, Hanyang University in Seoul, and currently at City University of Hong Kong in the School of Creative Media.

## Friday 18.7.

### Paper session 3B (16:00 – 17:30)

Chaired by Miloš Vojtěchovský

### Video NoD

### Michael Pelz-Sherman

#### Parallels Between Improvisation and the Software Industry

Drawing upon my 20+ years of experience in software engineering, jazz improvisation, and music scholarship (PhD UCSD 1998), my presentation will explore the many parallels between recent trends in software development practices and musical improvisation. In the talk, I will demonstrate that changes in corporate software development management practices (an activity which employs a greater percentage of the world's population each year) is emblematic of a

paradigm shift brought about by forces of technological and social change which increasingly demand self-organization and team collaboration - aspects of improvised musical culture that have been well-documented e.g. by Macarthur "genius" grant recipient George E. Lewis (who was also my PhD advisor and who will be a keynote speaker at the conference).

The presentation format will be similar to that of a «TED talk». I plan to delve into the socio-political implications of the influence of improvisational practices into the culture of work. In particular I would like the audience to consider the implications of these issues

on education policies and standards. I intend to argue that to prepare students to enter the post-industrial workplace, our schools should be teaching improvisation as part of the standard core curriculum.

Freelance scholar and musician **Michael Pelz-Sherman** has been composing and performing professionally on piano, keyboards, and percussion since the age of 16. A graduate of Indiana University and UC San Diego Music programs, Michael has studied composition with Earl Browne, Donald Erb, Harvey Sollberger, Rand Steiger, Roger Reynolds, and Brian Ferneyhough. His compositions and recordings have received numerous awards. An accomplished software engineer and computer-musician, Michael served as a Musical Assistant at IRCAM (Paris) in the early 1990s, where he created an original real-time computer-assisted performance system and designed sounds for Netherlands composer Klass Torstensson's *Urban Songs*. Michael's Ph.D. dissertation, «A Framework for the Analysis of Performer Interactions in Improvised Music», created under the guidance of trombonist/improviser/author George E. Lewis, demonstrates his deep love for and understanding of the history, development, and structure of creative improvised music that has risen out of the fertile soil of American Jazz.

### Rob Wallace Passages to India

This presentation is a brief sketch of the historical connections, contradictions, and continuing dialogue between the music of South Asia (primarily in the form of Hindustani classical music) and improvised music stemming from the jazz tradition. Encounters between jazz and Indian music, occurring in myriad ways since the early 20th century, continue to produce important collaborations and cross-cultural conversations. Particularly in the period after World War Two, both jazz and Indian classical music became, in a sense, “post-colonial”—even as musicians from both traditions continued to face aesthetic-, ethnic-, racial-, gender-, and class-based discrimination at home and abroad, Indian music gained respect just as jazz gained a more explicitly global mindset.

One result of these developments was the increased dialogue, both metaphorical and literal, between American and Indian cultures. Within these conversations, however, remain some important misunderstandings on the part of both jazz musicians and Indian musicians. I meditate on the potential meanings of the cultural contact exhibited and sounded through Indian music and jazz fusions, specifically as they pertain to the dissemination of the philosophical ideas of Hazrat Inayat Khan—the early-20th century Sufi musician and writer whose work has influenced multiple generations of Westerners in their approach to both Indian music in particular and music in general. I also address the complexities of Ravi Shankar's attitude towards jazz, and the uneasy linkage (from the perspective of some Indian classical musicians) that many jazz musicians make between jazz improvisation and Hindustani improvisation. Ultimately I argue that, as in much improvised music, the risk of misunderstanding and failure, however

we might define those terms, is often outweighed by the improvisers' ability to learn from such failures and risks and grow musically (and possibly even politically and spiritually).

Writer, musician, and teacher **Rob Wallace** holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His recordings can be found on the pfMentum and Ambiances Magnétiques record labels. He is the author of *Improvisation and the Making of American Literary Modernism* (Bloomsbury) and co-editor (with Ajay Heble) of *People Get Ready: The Future of Jazz is Now!* (Duke).

### Ricardo Arias Improvisation in Contemporary Colombian Experimental Music and Sound Art

In this paper I will take a brief look at the history of improvised music in Colombia as well as to the current surge of its practice in recent exploratory music and sound art in the country. I will show how improvisation has served as a bridge between different musical practices (electroacoustic, folk, jazz, rock) and how this might begin to configure a particular type of improvisation that addresses local musical preoccupations and social dynamics.

**Ricardo Arias** is a Colombian experimental improvising musician, sound artist, teacher and researcher. For many years his work has focused on improvisation using unconventional sound sources both acoustic and electronic. More recently he has begun producing sound installations and sound sculptures. He has presented his work in the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Roulette Intermedium (New York), Experimental Intermedia Foundation (New York), Museum Kunst Palast (Düsseldorf), Galerie Rahel-Haferkamp (Cologne), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Ohrenhoch Gallery (Berlin), La Casa Encendida (Madrid), the Miró Foundation (Barcelona), The Electric Eclectics Festival (Meaford, Canada), FIMAV (Victoriaville, Canada), Experimenta Festival (Buenos Aires), Espace SD (Beirut) and the Colón Theater (Bogotá) among many other venues and festivals in North and South America, Europe and the Middle East. His writings have been published in *Experimental Musical Instruments* and the *Leonardo Music Journal*. He is active as a curator of sound art and experimental music exhibitions and festivals. Arias is Associate Professor in the Art Department at Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia.

### Dimitris Papageorgiou Searching for a voice: Free-Improvisation as self-experimentation

Starting with the assumption that improvisation is a spontaneous composition, I will follow the line of thought that enframes my aesthetic viewpoint and my practice as an improviser/composer. As Harry Lehmann suggests it is only now – after the legacy

of classical modernism, the avant-garde and postmodernism – that the medium, the concept and the work of art can be understood as separate entities; which reintroduced in the aesthetic apparatus with their particular degrees of freedom, enable us to see artworks as “the presentation of an experiential pattern inscribed upon the work of art that is taken up by the individual on a trial basis, and in some cases provokes a new self-understanding in society”. Therefore, an artwork can be understood as a Gestalt (Martin Heidegger) or a Morphe, that emerges from what Michel Serres has called Noise: the phenomenological strife experienced by facing the sonorous multitude. And within the word multitude we can perhaps trace the different perspectives carried by the networks one has been exposed to. In this sense, improvisation/composition practice can be seen as an explorative dynamic process, where the exercise turns into a self-experiment investigating the synthesis between the different realities inside oneself.

This self-explorative process, along with the different musical landscapes one has experienced and exercised, is perhaps one of the agents that gradually crystallizes the development of a personal sound library. Hence, the analysis of the medium (free-improvisation) could involve a negation of the material logic allowing space for more abstract categorizations, i.e. gestalt streaming, or cohabitation

in-time. In my presentation, I will try to bridge the Arab “Saltanah state” in maqam improvisation, with Evan Parker’s suggestion for “repetition, practice, memorization” and his seemingly contradictory call for an “unforeseeable state” while improvising, as the influences that merge into the concept of my practice. Where the work – a spontaneous composition – becomes the praxis of the experiment, governed by the “flow of music” (Malcolm Goldstein).

**Dimitris Papageorgiou** is a violinist, improviser and composer. He holds a Diploma in Classical Violin performance and Diplomas in Advanced Music Theory (Harmony, Counterpoint, Fugue) from Greek conservatories. He also holds a BSc degree in Physics from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, with a Bachelors thesis on the mathematical processes that Iannis Xenakis applied in his music. As a violinist, he has performed with various ensembles in Athens and in Edinburgh ranging from classical music (i.e. Greek National Opera), Greek folk/Middle-Eastern music, world/jazz music, and free-improvisation collectives. As a composer, his output so far includes solo, chamber, orchestral, electroacoustic, and acoustic music integrated with electronic sound structures. As a solo performer/improviser on the violin, he is trying to amalgamate a musical flow that ranges from extreme extended techniques and noise sounds, to folk music styles from the Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern maqam improvisation practices.

## Saturday 19.7.

Paper session 4A (13:00 – 14:30)

Chaired by David Rothenberg

### A Teatro

#### Lindsay Vickery

##### Improvising with the Sonic Environment

Emulation of the sounds of the natural environment may be one of the earliest manifestations of musical improvisation. Alvin Lucier’s (Hartford) Memory Space (1970) and Carbon Copies (1989) both explore this impulse, instructing performers to imitate the sounds of any indoor or outdoor environment (albeit pre-recorded), “as exactly as possible, without embellishment” (Lucier, A. 1989. Carbon Copies. Material Press: Frankfurt am Main). This paper describes a score-player, implemented in MaxMSP, which analyses and visualises significant features of a sonic environment as a graphic score, allowing an improviser to interact with a field recording. The visualised score is

scrolled from right to left across the computer screen. Playback of the source recording is delayed so that it is heard as the corresponding visual event arrives at the “playhead”: a black line on the left of the screen. The frequencies of principal features of the recorded environment are represented by the placement of rectangles in vertical space, amplitude by the size of the rectangle, and the brightness, noisiness and bark scale value of each event as the luminance, hue and saturation of each rectangle. The final three parameters provide an indication of timbral changes in the source recording. An analysis panel provides controls for the performer to view and scale data from the field recording, allowing the performer(s) to “zoom” in or out on a particular range of data.

Multiple scoreplayers may be networked together, allowing

multiple performers to interact with varied frequency, amplitude and amplitude parameters of the same recording. The "Environment Player" builds upon Vickery's earlier work *EVP*, in which "electronic voice phenomenon" recordings were visualised as a scrolling score in realtime. In the current work the performer may also choose to analyse the field recording to detect recorded speech or speech-like artifacts that may be present. These are represented in the score as standard text that is visualized using the frequency, amplitude, brightness, noisiness and bark scale values that are applied to non-speech sounds.

**Lindsay Vickery** is a founder member of Decibel, SQUINT, HEDKIKR and Magnetic Pig. As a performer he has played at numerous festivals including the Shanghai, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth International Arts Festivals, SWR Tage für Neue Musik, Audio Art Festival (PL), NWEAMO (US), ICMC, ISEA, MATA, NWEAMO, Scintilla Divina, NowNow and WHATISMUSIC?. He has collaborated with artists including: Alvin Curran (US), David Toop (UK), Marina Rosenberg (US), Werner Dafeldecker (DE), Agostino Di Scipio (IT), Lionel Marchetti (FR), Amy Knoles (US), Annie Gosfield (US), Roger Kleier (US), Graham Collier (UK), Marek Choloniewski (PL), Jon Rose, Stelarc, Clocked Out, Ensemble Offspring and The Tissue Culture and Art group. He writes on a range of topics, most recently on the emergence and development of the "screenscore", nonlinear music and the realisation of Cage's music. He is coordinator of Composition and Music Technology at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts at Edith Cowan University.

### Ursel Schlicht

#### **SonicExchange: Film and Talk about a 100-day Residency**

SonicExchange took place in the summer of 2012 in the Kassel, Germany, and became a vibrant creative multidisciplinary project. My intent was to counteract the motto-driven cultural climate with open space and time, exchanging ideas through sound, dance, film and related art. Over fifty guests participated, from nine countries. Among them were free improvisers, composers, an Afghan poet and rubab player, dancers, electronic musicians.

I purposely sought a location not connected with a particular aesthetic and found the Foto-Motel, an artistic guest house with studios for visual artists and a low-key and intimate setting. The first and only musician there, the hosts provided me a small studio and gave me carte blanche to use the adjacent lounge as a performance space, a large yard for performances outside, film screenings, also allowing communication between inside and outside. The flexibility and simplicity was perfect for spontaneous programming of performances, sessions, talks.

Dancers performed in the yard, artists showed films with live music in the lounge or projected outside on the wall. Five pianists created an evening of pianism around one piano. Composers spoke about their music and then improvised with other musicians. Five musicians arranged Icelandic songs as a quintet with voice, piano,

accordion, violin and electronics. Others interpreted Afghan poetry and tales. As the ongoing avant-art exhibition Documenta(13) in Kassel transformed the entire city with literally hundreds of exhibitions, many of us were also very inspired by the visual arts.

The name SonicExchange reflects the concept of meeting on equal grounds rather than a hierarchically structured or curated situation. Each participant had to make a conscious choice to be there, I did not invite or select. This led to a mix of local and international encounters. Interestingly, the gender balance was almost equal – unheard of in most festival lineups. Many events were filmed and we produced a two-hour long DVD. The DVD contains an 15-min introductory film about the idea and the process, followed by chapters showing thirteen concert events, and a chapter crediting all participants and supporters. I would like to discuss how improvisation has the power to connect artists from many disciplines across aesthetics, cultural differences, or language barriers, show excerpts of the film, and focus on a few events where borders were crossed in particularly successful ways.

Pianist **Ursel Schlicht** plays improvised music, jazz, new music, and is a scholar and educator currently teaching Improvisation at the University of Kassel. Fostering intercultural collaboration has been an important focus of her work. She has brought together musicians from Europe, India, Eritrea, Mali, Japan, Afghanistan, Russia, and the USA, notably in her project *Ex Tempore*. Her compositions interweave notated and improvised material, and she interprets silent film classics *Nosferatu*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Faust*, and *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* with an avant-improv approach. Her work as leader or co-leader appears on *Nemu*, *Cadence*, *CIMP*, *Hybrid*, *Konnex*, *Muse-Eek* and *Leo Records*, with Robert Dick, Hans Tammen, Steve Swell, Lou Grassi, Ken Filiano, Bruce Arnold, Reuben Radding, et al. she is part of Hans Tammen's *Third Eye Orchestra* on *innova records*; forthcoming is a CD *The Galilean Moons* with Robert Dick. Ursel Schlicht holds a doctorate in musicology from the University of Hamburg, Germany, and has published a book about the working conditions of women jazz musicians, including Marian McPartland, Carline Ray, Joanne Brackeen, Connie Crothers, Jane Ira Bloom and Myra Melford. She has designed and taught seminars on *Music & Gender* and *Improvisation* at Ramapo College of New Jersey, and has taught *Masterpieces of Western Music* at Columbia University in New York.

### Lukas Ligeti

#### **Between and Beyond Frontiers: Journeys of Improvised Music in Africa**

Many West African music traditions and forms (my initial experiences were in Côte d'Ivoire) have contributed to the fundamental concepts of jazz, and in working with musicians from these traditions, it is possible to see some of the basic ingredients of American improvised music at work. The rules governing improvisation in these traditions are often quite complex, but, as in jazz, they build upon and further permit, to a degree, spontaneous interaction between

musicians, allowing for conversational interplay. However, there also exist music traditions - I have come across these mainly in other parts of Africa such as Uganda - where improvisation is rather limited and does not strongly impact the overall form of the music.

I have attempted many approaches to improvisation in my African collaborations, ranging from collective free improvisation (an activity otherwise nonexistent in this part of the world) to collectively developing frameworks and rules for interplay. In some instances, I encouraged musicians to appropriate concepts from other music traditions or cultures as part of our nascent improvisational vocabulary. Some approaches employed computer technology as an additional challenge or as an aid in performance, acting as a conductor of sorts. In a band I co-founded in Burkina Faso, Ableton Live is used extensively, but a complex cueing system is simultaneously in place to help make our performances more flexible and spontaneous. But I have also done more «straightforward» improvising in contexts such as the ever popular «jam sessions» and played jazz standards with African musicians: many musicians I have worked with consider themselves jazz musicians, but the way they handle rhythm and form tends to be somewhat different from their American colleagues, informed by the traditions of the region and by local patterns of jazz reception (which are often strongly dependent on the selection of imported recordings, a dependency now in decline due to the internet, but still relevant).

Transcending the boundaries of genre, the Austrian, New-York-City-based composer-percussionist **Lukas Ligeti** has developed a musical style of his own that draws upon downtown New York experimentalism, contemporary classical music, jazz, electronica, as well as world music, particularly from Africa. Known for his non-conformity and diverse interests, Lukas creates music ranging from the through-composed to the free-improvised, often exploring polyrhythmic/polytempo structures, non-tempered tunings, and non-western elements. Other major sources of inspiration include experimental mathematics, computer technology, architecture and visual art, sociology and politics, and travel. He has also been participating in cultural exchange projects in Africa for the past 15 years. His commissions include Bang on a Can, the Vienna Festwochen, Ensemble Modern, Kronos Quartet, Colin Currie and Håkan Hardenberger, the American Composers Forum, New York University, ORF Austrian Broadcasting Company, Radio France, and more; he also regularly collaborates with choreographer Karole Armitage. As a drummer, he co-leads several bands and has performed and/or recorded with John Zorn, Henry Kaiser, Raoul Björkenheim, Gary Lucas, Michael Manring, Marilyn Crispell, Benoit Delbecq, Jim O'Rourke, Daniel Carter, John Tchicai, Eugene Chadbourne, and many others. He performs frequently on electronic percussion often using the marimba lumina, a rare instrument invented by California engineer Don Buchla.

## **Michael Francis Duch and Bjørnar Habbestad**

### **Lemur – Methods and Music**

What constitutes the core of our collaboration, what comes across as important in the development of our musical and improvisational practice? We present three potentially important aspects: first, a sonic approach to developing musical material. Secondly, an interest in practising and finally, the different improvisational approach of the ensemble members.

At our very first rehearsal, before we had played our first concert together, we found a shared interest in the actual sound of the ensemble. This sonic approach has influenced our way of discussing, rehearsing, performing and creating together. During these last eight years we have also met regularly for practise and rehearsals in between tours and recordings. This, we believe, is something that is less common in Free Improvisation than in other musics. Our concerts are always free improvised, but listeners comment that the ensemble sounds rehearsed or even composed. We believe that this is related to our rehearsals and methods of practise, creating our own exercises to shape textures, material and interplay.

The background and aesthetic preferences and playing styles of each member of Lemur varies. While Grenager and Habbestad both have their background and formal training from classical music, Tafford and Duch both have backgrounds and formal training in Jazz and improvisation. This often results in several “styles” operating individually and melting together at the same time, rather than a specific area that all four are striving for together. More importantly we share a broad spectrum of different practise methods and techniques that we employ in making our own methods and exercises.

When improvising in ad hoc-situations certain techniques or musical clichés may not sound as clichés at all. Whereas in an ensemble playing with some regularity, like Lemur, using the same type of material gets musically challenged and confronted in a way that does not happen in ad hoc-situations. An ensemble that plays together often, playing the same material could eventually lead to playing the equivalent of “songs” or “tunes”, rather than Free Improvisation. One of the important issues this paper questions is whether this form of music-making is less “free” or less improvised than that of other free improvising ensembles? We strongly believe that the very opposite can be true, largely based on our own experiences from being members of Lemur.

**Michael Francis Duch** is a double bass-player and Associate Professor at the Department of Music, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim. He completed his project “Free Improvisation – Method and Genre: Artistic Research in Free Improvisation and Improvisation in Experimental Music” through the Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship Programme at NTNU late October 2010. He has been involved in more than 40 recordings including the critically acclaimed Cornelius Cardew: Works 1960-70 with the trio Tilbury/Duch/Davies. Duch regularly performs improvised and composed music both solo and with various ensembles.



**Bjørnar Habbestad** is a flutist and research fellow at the Norwegian Academy of Music, educated in musica, art history and philosophy from Bergen, London and Amsterdam. Habbestad works as a soloist, chamber- and ensemble musician in Scandinavia, Europe, Asia and the US, covering musical grounds from classical

contemporary to noise, electro-acoustic and free improvised music. He is a founding member of the N-Collective, Artistic Director of +3DB records and a co-curator at Lydgalleriet, a Bergen based gallery for sound art.

## Saturday 19.7.

### Paper session 4B (13:00 – 14:30)

Chaired by Allison Johnson

### Video NoD

#### Amandine Pras

**Different approaches to free music improvisation in New York**

New York played a crucial role in the history of music improvisation with the rise of free jazz in the 1960s and the emergence of noise in the 1980s. At present, the city encompasses a dynamic live scene attracting musicians from a great variety of origins. The boundaries between the two American post-war traditions of non-idiomatic improvisation distinguished by George Lewis, namely the Afrological and Eurological perspectives are not clear anymore: the notions of Afro-centricity and Euro-centricity have expanded to other cultures and improvisers from diverse musical backgrounds share the stage, thus their approaches blend musically to create a unique art form.

In this paper we investigate the different creative concepts and artistic intentions of improvisers who perform on the same scene in New York. Our ethnographic study involves twelve New-York-based professional improvisers having more than fifteen years of international career. Between 30 and 70 years old, these musicians grew up in different countries such as France, Germany, Japan, and USA, with African-American, European, Moroccan, Israeli and Mexican origins. They were formally trained in straight-the-head jazz or classical music, and/or informally learned on the job by playing pop-rock covers or Latin music.

Our qualitative methods combine individual interviews and group listening sessions of concert recordings with the musicians. We will present the improvisers' verbal descriptions of their own definition of free improvisation; their experience when they are improvising; and the possible connections between their practice of free improvisation and their personal life, political convictions and spiritual practices. We will illustrate our presentation with excerpts

of concert recordings.

Artistic freedom has been defined in the individual interviews with contrary opinions. We have observed strong differences among the improvisers' creative processes, ranging from the avoidance of thinking to intense thought activity. While all mention the interdependence between their improvisation practice and their personal life, political and/or spiritual connections remain strictly individual and vary in their degree of significance. Although these diverse approaches to free improvisation are influenced by different cultural traditions, they do not prevent musicians from performing together.

These findings allow us to grasp the complexities of personal expression as opposed to artistic traditions. A discussion between these findings and a literature review on the different approaches to free improvisation will contribute to our understanding of how musicians with diverse cultural backgrounds improvise with each other.

**Amandine Pras** is conducting research with the free improvisation scene of New York City. Her study focuses on the musicians' experience when they are improvising and the relationship between this experience and the musical result. She is currently a Visiting Scholar at The New School of Social Research in New York with a postdoctoral grant from the Fonds de Recherche Société et Culture of Québec (FQRSC). She holds a PhD in Information Sciences from McGill University in Montréal about the best practices to produce musical recordings in the digital era and she graduated from the Music and Sound Recording program of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP) in 2006. Amandine teaches musical recording techniques at the Steinhardt School of New York University since 2012. In parallel to her academic activities, she works as a record producer and a sound engineer in different countries and for a great variety of artistic projects.

## Charles Bramley

**Too important to be left to the Musicians: building socio-musical activism through un-Musical improvised practice.**

Communities of musical improvisation have long utilised the rhetoric of revolution and rebellion, yet haven't typically addressed internal flaws in their social organisation that diminish the social relevance and activist potential of their practice. This paper will argue that because the vast majority of improvised practice is the domain of highly trained musicians, it preserves notions of professionalism and specialism that betray what is a key activist potential of this approach to music: its anarchic breakdown of the binary boundaries: 'professional'/'amateur'; 'musician'/'non musician'; 'musical'/'unmusical'. While these communities often provide valuable resistance to various oppressive ideologies, they can at the same time further perpetuate existing ones. A learn the rules before you break them maxim perpetuates the existing order of a music for musicians culture, and is a key contributing factor to the continuing preservation of a stubborn and inert musical environment.

What is sometimes forgotten is that it's not just the so-called formal institutions of universities, schools and conservatoire's that regurgitate these stale ideologies - it's also apparent in those so-called informal, 'experimental' organisations who inscribe their surface output with labels of rebellion, revolution and experimentation, yet beneath the surface of their own myths, expose the inert odour of a politician's internet search history. They replace the funk odour with the odour of bleach. For a completely untrained performer like myself, someone who has been labelled 'unmusical' many times, it becomes extremely tiresome reading promotional literature on how revolutionary various improvised practices are, when the fundamental modes of operation remain utterly fixed in orthodox tradition, privilege and exclusion (sometimes wittingly, sometimes not). Whatever experimentation or deviation from the orthodox has occurred, you better believe in the virtuosic quality inherent in these musicians. That way, it keeps the deviation sterile, safe, and removes the deviant danger from it. You are safe in these people's hands. It's not 'just noise', or total chaotic nonsense, they really know what they are doing because they are professional musicians playing professional music. Nauseating and repulsively stale.

I will present various case studies of a particular model of improvised practice that explicitly works to undo the dominant conception of musicality that is allowed to stratify the musical environment into those who 'can' and those who 'cannot'. un-Musical activism encourages so-called 'non-musicians' to hear beyond specialist binary boundaries and actively participate in the creation of their own musical knowledge(s). It does this by firstly, creating opportunities in which to overcome the ideologies that constrain music-making (usually in the form of regular informal workshops) and secondly, by building long-term social engagement through regular recording sessions and performance events. For improvised music to be socially relevant, it cannot continue to ignore such activist potential by cultivating yet more specialist musical communities, precisely because for those on

the outside of specialist musical knowledge, music typically instills a deeply rooted fear of playing - and it's this absurd reality that demands an un-Musical activism.

**Charles Bramley** is a 3rd year PhD student based within the School of Arts and Cultures, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, under supervision by Dr. William Edmondson and Dr. Elaine Campbell. As a completely un-trained musician and someone who has been labelled 'unmusical' before, he utilises auto-ethnographic methods and case studies to demonstrate the need for un-Musical activism. He is a regular participant in various improvised music activity in Newcastle, including the monthly performance event 'Blue Rinse', the record label 'Felt Beak' and my own weekly improvised music sessions which are open-access.

## Laurel Felt

**Improvisation: The Key to 21st Century Learning**

Public health scholars, marriage and family therapists, and organizational communication consultants are just some of the experts who have contributed to our extensive documentation of how culture — practices, values, and norms — impacts psychosocial development and learning outcomes. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the culture of a learning space (e.g., a classroom, a laboratory, an after-school workshop, etc) also will influence students' functioning. Research by Yeager & Walton (2011) supports this conclusion. Their meta-analysis of «non-academic» interventions found that students' participation in social-psychological programs that addressed cultural issues (e.g., students' implicit theories of intelligence, subjective norms, appreciation of course material's relevance, communities of practice, and support networks) led to large gains in student achievement and sharply reduced achievement gaps even months and years later (p. 267).

Rich academic literature and my own personal experiences as an educator, student and improvisational actor inform my conceptualization of an ideal 21st century learning culture. I submit that, in order to optimize students' likelihood of developing skills across cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains, their learning cultures should facilitate student engagement, empowerment, and connection. Moreover, improvisation, particularly improvisational theater, is a growth-medium for this culture. Improvisation's norms cultivate the ideal culture of engagement, empowerment, and connection, and its practices cultivate 21st century skills. By applying improvisation as a pedagogical model, and also by physically improvising, members of learning communities can facilitate 21st century learning, which implies more innovative academic work and healthier social functioning.

This paper reviews three workshops offered by Laughter for a Change (L4C), a Los Angeles-based non-profit that brings improvisational theater workshops to at-risk and underserved populations (e.g., veterans, urban youth) to facilitate healing and community-building. The workshops under review all operated on a weekly basis for at

least eight works, offering a group of approximately 10 youths the opportunity to develop improvisational acting skills by playing theater games. By analyzing these cases, I hope to gain insight into the following questions: RQ1: To what extent, if any, did each workshop's learning culture seek to facilitate learners' engagement, empowerment, and connection? RQ2: How does the presence or absence of 21st century learning culture (e.g., engagement, empowerment, and connection) relate to 21st century learning outcomes (e.g., cognitive/head, intrapersonal/heart, interpersonal/hands)?

**Laurel Felt** is a PhD candidate at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and a veteran improvisational theater actor. Over the years, Laurel has co-designed and assessed various after-school, arts-based workshops for youths in such cities as Los Angeles, Dakar, and Mumbai; collectively, these experiences suggest that improvisation is key to 21st century learning. Laurel applies this educational insight as an Instructional Design Specialist with the USC Joint Educational Project (one of the largest service-learning organizations in the United States) and as a columnist for KCET Departures, covering youth civic media-making.

### **Ritwik Banerji** **Bourdieu's Improviser**

Pierre Bourdieu's treatment of improvisation in his theories of practice and the habitus stand among the earliest discussions of improvisation as a critical dimension of human social practice, and not merely an element of aesthetic action. His work places improvisation within the fundamental sociological question of how structure and agency mediate one another in the reproduction of social orders. Though they themselves may not be fully conscious of the social formations they exist within, Bourdieu's improvisers are those whose performances contribute to the perpetuation, rather than challenge, of ongoing social orders. Crucially, this conception of improvisation

invites a critique of notions of freedom and non-idiomaticity in improvisation, calling attention to the paradoxical manner by which a putatively free improvisation comes to elaborate structure in performance.

In this paper, I will examine Bourdieu's engagement of improvisation in his conceptualization of self-reproducing social orders in order to sketch an analytic framework for the emergent elaboration of structure through collective action in indeterminate conditions, or in a word (perhaps), improvisation. Beyond Kabylia, Algeria, where is Bourdieu's improviser? What is the purchase of his particular conception of improvisation in the understanding of improvised practice across art and sociality? Principally, I will consider several discussions of improvisation in theater, music, and systems theory which purport the emergence of recognizable structure from the distributed action of individual agents, each unaware of and unable to predict the overall aggregated structure beforehand. Moreover, as Keith Sawyer suggests, certain desirable structures of improvisation are perhaps unattainable in conditions in which actors are intending and aware of the target structure. This paper considers Bourdieu's improviser as a means of outlining the productive and sustaining consequences of collective improvisations in art and social practice. How might a Bourdieuan improvisation function integrally in the optimal production of a particular structure, whether aesthetic, social, or technical?

**Ritwik Banerji** is a graduate student ethnomusicology at the University of California, Berkeley. His research revolves around the development of an interactive musical agent, known as "Maxine", who functions as a co-ethnographer in the study of the interplay of ethics and aesthetics in the real-time interactions of free improvisation. With Maxine he has performed in India, Spain, Germany, Austria, Brazil and the US, with a recording of this duo project soon to be released on pfMentum Records. As a Fulbright Journalism and Berlin Program fellow at the Freie Universität-Berlin, Banerji will conduct an ethnographic project on Echtzeitmusik, a scene and discourse of improvisation steadily more active since the fall of the Communism.

## Saturday 19.7.

Paper session 5 (15:00 — 17:30)

### A Teatro

#### Peter Heltzel

**Love Supreme: Improvising for the Common Good**

Improvisation is the heart of jazz and religion. In contrast to static concepts of religion in the shadow of modernity, jazz music offers an alternative approach to theology that is subversive and transformative. A jazz approach to religion, improvises on tradition(s). Jazz never simply argues or critiques; it riffs on themes, transforms or transposes them, and subverts especially popular forms of culture by making them better. John Coltrane's *Love Supreme* offers a model of improvisation on the love motif, deepening its musical and meditative dimensions. Coltrane's improvisation on love opens up the possibility of improvising for love in a broader, public and political way. The principle of improvisation in jazz offers a good model for academically-informed theology for the people. As a method, it also resembles Jesus' loving but subversive riffing on Second Temple Judaism. In the spirit of Jesus' whose teaching of the Kingdom inspires us to work for the common good, faith leaders today need to improvise for love and justice.

**Peter Heltzel**, an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is the Director of the Micah Institute and Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at New York Theological Seminary. Rev. Heltzel holds a B.A. from Wheaton College, a M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and earned his Ph.D. from Boston University. A gifted writer, Rev. Heltzel has contributed to seven books as author or editor. He has published numerous articles in journals, such as *Books & Culture*, *Science & Theology News*, *Sojourners*, *Political Theology*, *Princeton Theological Review* and the *Scottish Journal of Theology*. He serves on the Metro Commission on the Ministry and the Anti-Racism/Pro-Reconciliation Team of the Northeastern Region, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and is Associate Professor of Theology at the New York Theological Seminary.

#### James Falzone

**The Already and the Not Yet: Improvisation and Theology in Dialogue in Chicago**

Contemporary theologians, ever looking for metaphors for understanding "the nature of God and religious experience," are turning to the arts in general and improvisation in specific, as means to convey the complexity of theological discourse to everyday people. What had once been an antagonistic relationship between theology and the arts is now a rich, open, and far-reaching dialogue with improvisation as a significant theme. Leading Christian theologian N.T. Wright, as one example, has posited that the central mission of a person of faith is to "discover, through the spirit and prayer, the appropriate ways of improvising the script with constant attention." If we understand "script" in this sense to be the sacred scriptures, the traditions of Christian practice, and the life of the local church, than Wright is suggesting an improvised life of faith based on study, fidelity, and community. As a further example of this ongoing conversation, consider a survey of recent titles in theology: *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (Samuel Wells, 2004), *Theology as Improvisation: A Study in the Musical Nature in Theological Thinking* (Nathan Crawford, 2012), *Resurrection City: A Theology of Improvisation* (Peter Heltzel, 2013).

For the past 12 years I have developed a unique perspective on this dialogue as I have gone about my work as a musical artist (clarinetist and composer), teacher, and scholar, focusing on improvised music, while simultaneously serving as Director of Music and Resident Composer at Grace Chicago Church, a small congregation on the north side of Chicago. This collective work, reaching across the border of the secular and the sacred, has led me to observe a number of connections between practices important in improvised music and how I see the parishioners I serve "improvising the script with constant attention," to borrow N.T. Wright's phrase above. When theology is being performed, like great improvisation, there is no grand system at work but rather a series of in-the-moment decisions that rest upon years of experience and study, all funneled through

the mystery of intuition.

My presentation will examine the conference question of how non-artists improvise. I will look at this phenomenon both individually (the parishioners I serve) and collectively (the parish as a whole). Drawing on my dual experience as a working, improvising musician and as a church musician, I will show how the work of the improviser is a mirror for how a person lives out theological concepts in their everyday experience as they seek to reconcile issues of faith and social justice. I will frame my discussion around three main themes I see at work in improvisation and practical theology: the need to disappear (so that something far greater can appear), the recognition of one's place in the "story" (what I refer to as The Already and the Not Yet, borrowing a phrase from early 19th century Dutch theologian Geerhardis Vos), and the importance of risk.

Multi-faceted clarinetist/composer **James Falzone** is an acclaimed member of Chicago's jazz and creative improvised music scene, a veteran contemporary music lecturer and clinician, the longtime Director of Music for Grace Chicago Church and an award-winning composer who has been commissioned by chamber ensembles, choirs and symphony orchestras around the globe. He leads his own ensembles KLANG, The Renga Ensemble, and Allos Musica and has released eight highly regarded recordings on Allos Documents, a label he founded in 2000. James has performed in recital halls, festivals and jazz venues throughout North America and Europe, appears regularly on Downbeat magazine's Critics' and Readers' Polls, and was nominated as the 2011 Clarinetist of the Year by the Jazz Journalist Association. His work has been featured in the New York Times, The Chicago Tribune, New Music Box, Point of Departure, and many other publications.