

Aalborg Universitet



## Intuitive Music

*A Mini-Handbook: Version 2009f*

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# INTUITIVE MUSIC

## A Mini-handbook

New, revised and expanded version 2009ff

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Updates to this text can be found here:

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(alternatively you may go to [www.vbn.dk](http://www.vbn.dk), then search for bergstroem-nielsen)

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## **PREFACE (2009f)**

After revising and amending for a number of years, this book appeared in 2001 as a static version, which I indicated by giving it the ISBN number 87-91425-01-8. Time has come now to move beyond it into a more overall revision of both exercises and other parts of the text and take into account several important new exercises. Until further notice, these versions are without an ISBN number because they may still be in progress.

This is still a small selection of the exercises I know of, but more or less a core consisting of what I could consider "my own" ones and some few more I feel closely related to. I have worked with the majority of them innumerable or many times in slightly or greatly varying versions, both at Aalborg University, Denmark, and internationally. For more material to get inspired from, see the references given at the end.

People often ask me about the term "intuitive music". It was introduced by Stockhausen in 1968 in relation to his text-notated pieces, and by this term he meant to stress the intuitive, anti-cliché aspect. In the Group for Intuitive Music from 1975 and on, I have played many of them. The title of my improvisation training courses at Aalborg University that still are taking place, has been "Intuitive Music" right from the beginning.

When other authors are mentioned, their exercises either appear by permission, or the context has convinced me that I could safely quote them. Any unwanted quoting will of course be deleted on demand.

My thanks to all those colleagues and workshop participants who have shown their interest!

## **PREFACE (1992)**

This book, the first versions of which date back to 1990, is both for young people and adults. It deals with the practical aspects of engaging in collective, improvised music as the creative molding of sound. It is addressed to all interested parties, including: music teachers, musicians, composers and music therapists.

The collection of material has its source in my activities as a composer, performer and instructor of intuitive music. I have been engaged in the two former activities since 1972 and my teaching activity has been primarily with the Music Therapy Department of Aalborg University (AAU), Denmark, which I have been affiliated with since 1983.

When I started to become interested in contemporary and experimental "classical" music, improvisation became especially attractive to me because it lent itself so easily to communication and collective discovery. Although my background in psychodynamic music therapy which I acquired later may sometimes be apparent, my primary concern in the present work is not the field of therapeutic techniques. Themes like group dynamics and awareness training will be dealt with but only in terms of the general aspects of improvising music collectively rather than in the context of working with people in a psychotherapeutic context. Music therapists can, however, benefit from supplementing their knowledge of psychological elements with a greater understanding of improvised music processes from a musical point of view.

Free improvisation--without prior verbally- or notationally-indicated restrictions--is an important, liberating form of music. It is a highly creative form of music, it cannot be replaced by anything else and it should never be confused with specific composers nor styles. There is, however, no reason not to make any mutually agreed upon guidelines for an improvised playing session if you wish; this preparation might help you go deeper into the musical experience. I see this as a positive use of musical composition not centered around the glorification of individual "geniuses" but in the service of collective creativity.

In much traditional music, there are mountains of theory and analysis which is sometimes dealt with in pedantic ways. Because this technical knowledge can be imposing, it could lead some people to prefer not conceptualizing and theorizing at all concerning improvised music. However, I think a reasonable amount of it, still respecting the freedom of thought we should enjoy in artistic matters, will be beneficial.

This mini-handbook is divided into three sections: 1) the preface and introduction which I recommend reading before going further; 2) a collection of exercises to be used according to needs, with an introduction and an index; and, 3) sections about specific subjects where one can go deeper into certain areas of exploration..

All of these exercises have been tested by me in practice and I am familiar with the majority of them from my extensive experience with various academic and non-academic courses.

The exercises are selected ones from my index. Designing an exercise to me is very similar to designing a composition and an equally creative task. Some exercises quote and adapt from the work of others. Some are my own versions of activities I later found had been created by others, too, from subtly and interestingly different viewpoints. I take pleasure in discovering such collectivity which testifies to a common, creative necessity. Thanks to the International Committee at Aalborg University who paid for it, the English language of this work was revised in November 1992 by Music Therapist Kenneth Aigen, D.A., CMT.

The mini-handbook is permanently being expanded and revised by the author. Therefore, pages written out from a WordPerfect file bear date of printing. Page numbers from different printings need not match each other.

This edition is "freeware" and can be copied on paper, diskette and any storage system, inclusive of "Madison Music" and "Psychogramm" which have been included with the permission of the composers.

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## **I INTRODUCTION**

To engage in the activities described here, I presuppose a motivation to make "fantasy music" or something akin to this. If you work with children, you will need to adapt and transform the ideas into more adequately play-like activities for them.

In many cases improvisers do make exercises to sharpen their awareness and to try out new possibilities, and music educators need ways to introduce and develop the activity.

Beyond that, some improvising musicians also cultivate playing pieces of compositions for improvisers. I see this as an updated form of composition. Why should composition remain something to be notated down in all details when we have new means for notating and working out that can make the process more interesting for everybody involved? Different group members may present compositions after another. Chapters IV and V point to some resources. The exercises are also good preparations for such composition activity. I might as well have called them "pieces," "recipes" or "playing rules."

You do not need specialized instruments nor specific musical skills beforehand. But you will need to take efforts to carefully investigate and cultivate instrumental and vocal possibilities, and the activity makes demands on participants as to their tolerance to unforeseeable sounds and situations as well as on their ability to concentrate.

Concerning instruments, I would say, "The more, the better"!, meaning that you will often benefit from having quite different sound-producing means at your disposal. Be careful, however, with differences regarding how loud they can play! Ideally the strong ones should hold themselves back, but pragmatically selection beforehand may be considered. Small percussion instruments, pennywhistles and melodicas are useful. Home-made instruments are certainly appropriate for use and it is not necessary for the instruments to be in tune. Use of other objects (for instance, tables, ashtrays, bundles of keys) may take place with caution, provided that a serious interest in their very sound can be sustained. Voices and melody instruments have a special advantage in being able to sustain their sound. When exploring instruments, you might also become aware that many traditional ones offer good possibilities for varying many parameters of the sound.

As far as educational contexts are concerned, I consider an instructor or leader who is taking care of the process to be an important element. When playing together, the leader is encouraged to participate but should as far as possible not take a leading role during playing. It is unavoidable that students are especially aware of what the teacher does, but he/she should be aware of it and limit his/her activity according to perceived needs in the group of being encouraged by his/her initiative or, on the contrary, of having freedom to act on its own. Although I will refer to the "teacher" in what follows, groups who would like to engage in these musical experiences without a leader are certainly encouraged to do so.

If possible, you should alternate freely between instruments and voices during playing, taking care to engage in a period of vocal warm-up or preparation especially in educational contexts. "Vocal Warm-Up" or "Vocal Warm-Up in a Circle" may be used for this purpose. Use voices in the improvisations freely together with instruments.

The teacher should begin the activity by providing examples of what to do and by participating (not conducting). This does not mean that the specific activity must be one previously engaged in or known to the teacher.

To me, the ideal size for a group is from 4 to 12. This is large enough for the individual to receive a variety of impulses and small enough for the individual to make him/herself heard as an important part of the group, both while

playing music as well as during discussions. One may, of course, experiment with other sizes of groups, but very large groups should probably be divided after a general introduction to this way of playing is offered. Otherwise, the intent of engaging in free form playing might be subverted by the amount of teacher control required in such large groups. The teacher may wander between groups or may stay with one, allowing the others to listen and comment.

Attempts have been made to make it as easy as possible to find relevant material for starting--you may then later go into details of various subjects. Ideas for beginning music-making are stated at the beginning of the next chapter. The remarks about the categories of exercises are explicated in the corresponding sections in the chapter "general topics". These are presented both for the teacher's background as well as to have the option of bringing this information to the group--possibly in an adapted form--if this is found to be relevant.

As a METHOD I would suggest selecting some exercises from different categories and alternating between categories when practicing so as to broaden the experience and enhance the versatility of the musicians. You may wander around and return to previously executed exercises. In some cases, exercises may be combined if you judge it relevant. Discuss the music and experience in between exercises if this is of interest to those involved.

A common obstacle to successful experiences with free music is the tendency to engage in musical clichés. Trust the sound to be capable of total flexibility and do something about it if this is not the case. For example, choose a new exercise which attacks the problem! A first "rule" might be: It is forbidden to play something known beforehand. The "Now"--the common meeting place--should be respected and kept fresh. It is a place to be "set foot on" but not "trampled down!" The next instruction (for more experienced players) might be: In the right place, in the right amount, in the right way, everything is permitted.

When you carry out the exercises, begin and end collectively. Take eye contact to make sure the others are also ready. If someone is ready to finish, he/she may pause; the more people looking passive at this time, the more it will appeal to the others to finish the piece as a group. With some experience, one learns to notice whether the group is ready to end and may do so also in sudden ways. Do not "steal" the beginning from the others by starting before they are ready, thus making a false start. And, do not "steal" the conclusion either by assertive solistic activity after a collective conclusion process. When the activity is first introduced, the teacher may stop playing relatively quickly if he/she wishes something to be attempted for a few minutes. Concentrate on the playing rule and stop before concentration begins to slacken.

You may very well wish to alternate between performing exercises and playing without rules or just for a certain amount of time. You should feel free to experiment here.

## II

### THE EXERCISES

#### Introduction to the Categories of Exercises

**BASIC EXERCISES GOOD FOR STARTING:** In this section, exercises have been collected which can increase the confidence and allay the fears of those with little prior experience in free improvisation. You can use the exercises from this category with more experienced individuals by intensifying the demands.

**AWARENESS EXERCISES:** Here, awareness and imagination is trained in the musician him/herself--the musician being the most important instrument!

**GROUP-DYNAMIC EXERCISES:** All the participants in intuitive music are equals. These exercises train getting to know and listening to one another and strengthen the ability to respond to an ever changing social environment in music.

**PARAMETER EXERCISES:** These are technical exercises dealing directly with the sound. They are recommended in order to sharpen the musician's feeling with the sound, to put things into a broader theoretical and historical

perspective, and to provide a challenge – a collective challenge of a common task. Usually they are best employed after gaining some previous experience, unless the particular group consists of people who prefer to start very systematically.

#### Suggestions on Strategies for Various Types of Groups

1) A group pre-disposed toward free improvisation and without any particular inhibitions.

(BAS) Instrument-Storm  
(BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
(BAS) Endings  
(BAS) Multi-exercise  
(GRD) Charlotte's Relay Race  
(PAR) Parameter Exercises (etc.)

Basic Principle: To train a variety of abilities which, of course, is a principle applicable to all groups.

2) Musicians who are accustomed to playing from pre-composed music with rehearsals, but not to improvising:

(BAS) Graphic Notations (Fire-Music or Game of Contrasts)  
(BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
(BAS) Instrument-Storm  
(GRD) Cutting Down On the Material  
(BAS) Multi-exercise  
(GRD) Charlotte's Relay Race (etc.)

Basic Principle: To move from something familiar to activities with increasing emphasis on the imagination.

3) A "benevolent" group that accepts the activity but needs to find its own motivation:

(AWA) Fantasy Journey  
(BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
(GRD) Cutting Down On the Material  
(BAS) Instrument-Storm  
(BAS) Vocal Improvisation in a Circle  
(GRD) If-Then  
(BAS) Graphic Notations (etc.)

Basic Principle: To initially exclude activities that might appear trivial or childish and to subsequently introduce playful activities.

4) A "quiet" group needing to adjust to the free situation:

(GRD) Follow Each Other (may be used for warming up voices)  
(GRD) Rounds  
(BAS) Vocal Improvisation in a Circle  
(AWA) Fantasy Journey  
(BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
(GRD) If-Then (etc.)

Basic Principle: To start with easy-to-follow activities, gradually moving to those demanding more independence and initiative.

5) A "noisy" group whose members tend to individually "blow off steam," who may need training in concentration and

listening to each other:

(BAS) Graphic Notations and (AWA) Listening to Recording  
(GRD) Charlotte's Relay Race  
(BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
(GRD) Cutting Down on the Material (etc.)

Basic Principle: To allow an energy release while simultaneously demanding a critical attitude to results.

6) A "skeptical" group needing to intellectually understand the activity:

(PAR) Parameter Exercises  
(BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
(AWA) Casual Playing  
(BAS) Graphic Notations & Improvising Without Rules (etc.)

After playing, to the recording and engage in parameter-analysis of it (see (PAR) Parameter Exercises and the chapter Parameters of Musical sound under GENERAL TOPICS). This may be repeated.

Basic Principle: By starting only with instruments, by stressing parameter exercises and by analyzing recordings participants will increase their analytical understanding of sound and will be encouraged to engage in suitable activities of a freer nature when the opportunity arises.

7) A group being "quiet", "noisy" and "skeptical" at the same time.

(GRD) Rounds  
(BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
(BAS) Instrument-Storm and (AWA) Listening to Recording  
(BAS) Vocal Improvisation in a Circle (etc.)

Basic Principle: Learning balance!

8) A "serious but mixed" group which may for example consist of both trained and untrained improvisors as well as artists from other fields.

(BAS) Voice Warm-Up  
(BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
(PAR) Parameter Exercises (maybe stressing volume and timbre as a preparation to the next)  
Fire-Music (or a different open composition)

Basic principle: To be ambitious in setting up a goal to achieve while at the same time allowing plenty of time to practise intermediate stages and, if time enough, some varied use of instruments and musical material (if not time enough, everything could be preparatory exercises to the final piece – a bit similar to a "standard rehearsal situation").



**Index of Exercises****(BAS) BASIC EXERCISES, ALSO GOOD FOR STARTING**

(BAS) Graphic Notations  
 (BAS) Scribble  
 (BAS) Voice Warm-Up  
 (BAS) Instant Composition  
 (BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo  
 (BAS) Vocal improvisation In a Circle  
 (BAS) Instrument-Storm  
 (BAS) Departing from a Recording  
 (BAS) Multi-exercise  
 (BAS) Two movements  
*see also:*  
 (GRD) Rounds  
 (GRD) Following Each Other  
 (PAR) Homage to Nils Harbo  
 Listening to Recording  
 (PAR) Parameter Exercises, especially:  
 Durations 3), Right Durations; Pulse --- no  
 pulse; Density.

**(GRD) GROUP-DYNAMIC EXERCISES**

a: dealing with following the group or the  
 group sound  
 b: dealing with training the ability to react  
 while listening to the group sound.

(GRD) Dividing the group b  
 (GRD) Charlotte's Relay Race b  
 (GRD) Reacting on unforeseen cue b  
 (GRD) Zina's Circle  
 (GRD) Interdependence b  
 (GRD) Following Each Other a  
 (GRD) Rounds a;b  
 (GRD) Cutting Down on the Material b

(GRD) Taximeter Exercise b  
 (GRD) If-Then b  
*see also:*  
 (BAS) Vocal Improvisation in a Circle a;b  
 (PAR) Parameter Exercises, Durations 3),  
 Right Durations b  
 (AWA) Know what you are doing

**(AWA) AWARENESS EXERCISES**

(AWA) Listening to Surroundings  
 (AWA) Listening to Recording  
 (AWA) Analyzing Recording  
 (AWA) Fantasy Journeys  
 (AWA) Casual Playing  
 (AWA) Play For a Long Time  
 (AWA) Miniatures  
 (AWA) Ending  
 (AWA) Psychogram  
 (AWA) Houdini Exercise  
 (AWA) Know what you are doing  
 (AWA) Flow exercises  
*see also:*  
 (PAR) Parameter Exercises  
 (BAS) Instrument-Storm  
 (GRD) Cutting Down on the Material  
 (GRD) If-Then  
 (GRD) Reacting on unforeseen cue  
 (BAS) Two movements

**(PAR) PARAMETER EXERCISES**

(PAR) Parameter Exercises  
 (PAR) Little Parameter Exercise  
 (PAR) Build-up Parameter Exercise  
 (previously: Big Parameter Exercise)  
 (PAR) Difficult Parameter Combinations  
 (PAR) Adaptable Tonalities  
*see also:*  
 (PAR) Homage to Nils Harbo

## Descriptions of the Exercises

### (BAS) GRAPHIC NOTATIONS

.....

Enclosed is an example of a free, "doodling" type notation ("Madison Music" by Joergen Lekfeldt). I recommed translating the visual impression directly into music without any prior agreements among the musicians as to the significance of the visual notations. I have also included examples of notations with symbols having specific significations, although they are not specific tones. The notations should be studied carefully before playing. Prior to playing "Psychogramm", the explanation should be read carefully.

See the sections "Composition for improvisation" and "Playing Material" in the section dealing with specific subjects. For copyright reasons, not everything can be quoted here.

And, please go on making your own notations.

### (BAS) SCRIBBLE/GIBBERISH

from John Stevens and others

.....

Play or sing extremely fast figures. It does not matter if they sound repetetive or monotonous. The purpose is to "get going" motorically and to use this warming up and as a starting-point in a dynamic way. After this has been well started, you may let lead on in any way, for instance using fantasy and awareness ("what does the music demand from us right now" "now very slow" - "now with a lot of pauses" - etc etc). "Voice Warm-Up" below and "Instrument-storm" below use similar strategies. This one makes an even simpler start, because focus is on the motoric action.

### (BAS) Voice Warm-Up

.....

Stand in a circle. Stretch hands up in the air, as much as you can .... and, when the teacher says to do so and together, let them fall down with a loud sighing. Repeat this several times – and he third time, tell people to continue the sound (before the third time or after the sound has begun). This should be an open, full register one. Use the means you like to make people extend and vary it – movements, verbal suggestions... Then, get into contact with higher registers of the voices in this way: tell people to imagine a large room, like a cathedral, inside their heads, and to make light, "slim" sounds travelling around in that room (you may start yourself to suggest how to begin).

You may at this point try to extend the improvisation already going on, by movement or verbal suggestions or both - this may or may not lead to a new beginning, it could also be signalling "please go on", but it might well include something like "now, use both kinds of sounds". You can use any suggestion, according to ideas and resources. In some cases it is needed to provide some to stimulate further imaginative vocalizing, like "Imagine..." – maybe from time to time. End, finally, when appropriate.

It fascinates me that the purpose of "warm-up" so often can act as a simple "cover" or "excuse" for what turns out as a real creative activity.

### (BAS) Instant Composition

.....

Decide on a theme and a simple description of material: for example, 1) A theme could be "fantastic dance" and the description could be "a pulse and melodies with accents between beats." 2) A theme could be "secret signaling" with the material being "points and sounds that stand alone."

The theme may be: an indication of a kind of music you would like to make; a description of something imaginative; an atmosphere; a fancied kind of music; etc. The description of material should put this idea into terms as concrete as is possible. A simple, comprehensible recipe will help provide an identifiable character to the music. As the examples here illustrate, just a few elements being fixed will suffice in making a rough and simple sketch. It will, of course, come alive through your improvised playing!

A variation: state three different emotional attitudes or atmospheres (first letters may be given to make a free associating easier). A succession of three movements are made. You may choose to continue with themes having a direct relation to participants.

### (BAS) Homage to Nils Harbo

.....

See the recipe (enclosed).

I now usually use it as a basic training in making different and contrasting kinds of musical sound, and use the individual concepts (staccato-legato etc.) for the whole group alternatingly. These words can be read aloud, thus avoiding the necessity of photocopying. As you see, the sound categories are then taken one by one, avoiding the thick texture of many at a time. The exercise functions very well as a preparation for parameter exercises but uses more well-known words.

This may be also be performed polyphonically ad lib or on one tone, with either few or many parameters set for each musician. Take care, however,

that the sounds does not get too thick. It is also good for training of improvisation in jazz, rock, and other popular forms. It can be done with improvisation which follow scales, too.

#### (BAS) Vocal Improvisation in a Circle

.....

This could be good for starting a lesson. The circle gathers people together and instructing the participants to close their eyes helps them to be more confident in their own soundmaking; instructions are supportive without being restrictive.

Participants should sit in a circle. The teacher states that in a short time the group members will close their eyes. He/she will then provide a sound to begin. The group itself then discovers what to do with the sound. The initial sound may determine the resultant process, especially if the group is new and has not yet come into its own. You can start, for example, with a quiet glissando on "nnn" moving slightly up into a higher register, for an example of something apt for gradual warm-up. Or the initial sound could be slightly more challenging. The improvisation could last for approximately ten minutes--it remains up to the group itself to decide when to stop. When the improvisation is over, people are instructed to open their eyes if they have not already done this on their own.

#### (BAS) Instrument-Storm

developed from an exercise by Inge Nygaard Pedersen

.....

Choose one instrument and--rather than focusing outwardly on the group--attend to your instrument by exploring possible ways to contact it, such as how to touch, manipulate, and move it. Explore the variety of sounds it can produce. As individuals have been well engaged in doing this for some time, go on but direct your attention to all the sounds in the room and be aware of playing together. If time allows, let your attention alternate freely between an inward and outward focus.

Variations: 1) Use an instrument you are not familiar with. 2) Use an instrument you know well, but use it in new ways.

3) While playing, be active with your body and be aware of working hard and becoming tired (precautions may be taken in the form of warnings and even earplugs to prevent possible noise of harmful strength). After this, play while being completely at rest. 4) Utilize a material you do not

use much (for instance, metal, skin, wood, etc). 5) Sit or stand without movement (not being stiff, but at rest). 6) Try dancing. 7) Try playing "nicely," "not nice," etc. 8) combine with directions of the kind focused upon in the other exercises.

#### (BAS) Departing from a Recording

.....

Listen to a recording. If the exercise is to be easy, choose something that is not too difficult to imitate (it could be from improvised or experimental music). Play for a while imitating it after listening is finished. Play for a while "doing the opposite". As this is a rather ambiguous notion, funny things may happen while participants still have their individual ideas about this opposite. Play on inventing new instructions relating in some way to what was before – "something different" – "like before, but..." – "as before, but with faster/slower tempo", etc.

This exercise will combine excellently with (GRD) Dividing the Group. Difference in playing may come out of groups simply playing alternately without necessarily being instructed.

#### (BAS) Multi-Exercise

.....

Create two series of simple instructions written with a marker pen on sheets of paper and read instantly by the group. One could be of concrete instructions, like "loong tones", "melodies", "very individual dynamics", etc. The other could be of a more suggesting kind, even also absurd or paradoxical, like "bubbling", "like the sun", "something you don't like", "boring", etc. I recommend having the sheets ready in a numbered sequence in separate stacks, and to have one index sheet for the teacher showing all the instructions. Then you will be free to choose from section to section and to find the desired sheet quickly. I also recommend bringing a marker pen and some empty sheets – who knows whether you will be inspired to some new idea...

Instruct participants that at each section, they are shown (by finger signs) the number of people that are to play. Within 10 seconds, one should decide whether to participate this time or not – this should be possible with some care given to look and hear around. Sections last as long as the teacher thinks they should – and terminate when a sign is given, followed by a new hand-sign for the number of players and a new sheet.

#### (BAS) Two movements

(from Christoph Baumann)

.....

Make two different improvisations, with a clear, long pause in between. This makes demands on participants to listen and by collective intuition to create a different kind of music after the pause.

#### (GRD) Dividing the Group

.....

A group may be divided into many different smaller ones which probably will reveal very different playing! And they will present different kinds of challenges to individual musicians. Derek Bailey's improvisation festival Company Week and other arrangements are built on this simple principle. - Big groups can be divided into subgroups playing alternately or even making rounds - this may be further developed by the listening group telling about its associations and making a title as a starting-point for playing again, maybe aided by the teacher.

See also the section below (under "General topics") on Making Constellations.

#### (GRD) Charlotte's Relay Race

.....

Imagine standing in a circle and throwing a ball to each other. The one who has the ball soon throws it out into the middle of the circle where another person catches it. The ball may, however, also be taken from you.

Do the same thing in music: one at a time, play for a very short time and "throw the ball" again (that is, become silent). Conversely, the ball may be "taken" by someone else (that is, the other person plays and the first person must stop).

Here is a variation that allows more persons to "seize the ball" at the same time (that is, play simultaneously): Imagine that the ball, when played, may for a short time split up into several balls--how many and for how long may be agreed upon. With this variation, the exercise approaches a free improvisation while the quickly changing process of people contributing to the music is retained.

#### (GRD) Reacting on unforeseen cue

(from Pauline Oliveros)

.....

Participants close eyes and await a cue from the leader or a designated participant. It may be one clap of hands; other very short sounds could also be tried out. At the cue, everybody is to react with a short vocal sound to it, without thinking first. In the resulting sound one will probably hear some variety of time elapsed between the cue and the

reaction. Discuss to which degree participants think it succeeded and try again. It should be possible to react by approximately a tenth of a second.

#### (GRD) Zina's Circle

(from Pauline Oliveros<sup>1</sup>)

.....

Stand together in a circle with joined hands and eyes closed. One person has been designated as the "transmitter". When the time seems right, the transmitter starts a pulse that travels around the circle, by using the right hand to squeeze the left hand of the person next. The squeeze should be quickly and sharply made, to resemble a light jolt of electricity. It must then be passed on from left hand to right hand by the person receiving it, fast like a reflex, without thinking. Simultaneously with the squeeze, each shouts "hah". Make sure this shout comes with complete abdominal support, using the diaphragm muscle deep down in the body. It will be possible to estimate from the time taken for the sound to go through the circle whether a high level of reflex-like reaction was reached – this will be the case when the time delay is about to reach one tenth of a second per participant. Variations could be: reversing the direction - doing several cycles with increasingly short time between each, maybe continuously – each person chooses which direction to send the pulse (the transmitter continues to control the beginning and ending of a cycle).

#### (GRD) Interdependence

(from Pauline Oliveros<sup>2</sup>)

Vocal version: choose freely between the sounds 'ho', 'ha', 'he' and 'hu', making them as short as possible. Before making sound, decide whether you act as a sender or as a receiver. Next, add long, static tones (both as sender and receiver). Next again, add almost imperceptibly slow glissandos (as receivers only). When receiving from long sounds, wait until they are over. You may now perform the piece in three sections (a new one starts when someone enter new material) and collectively find out how to end it.

1 See the collection of exercises/pieces by Oliveros: *Sonic Meditations*, Boston (Smith Publications) 1974, for a more elaborate description.

2 The description given here is a paraphrase of how the exercise/piece was instructed by Pauline Oliveros at Openform Festival in Oslo, 29.November 2009. You can make instrumental or mixed versions too (the glissandos only applying then to those instruments capable of performing them). See also the published edition of *Four Meditations for Orchestra*, Deep Listening Publications 1996, of which *Interdependence* is one.

## (GRD) Following Each Other

.....

Preparatory Exercise: Stand in a circle while holding hands. Very slowly, go down to your knees and, after that, stand up simultaneously without anybody leading. Even if this seems impossible to you, continue with your attempts! Continue in music making, for example, allowing the sound intensity or pitch go up or down.

## (GRD) Rounds

.....

While sitting in a circle, each participant plays for a brief time before the next person plays. This can be done vocally and/or instrumentally. What each participant plays may be a variation of the music immediately preceding it or a free reaction to it. Rhythmic motifs may be used. The purpose may be to work with unity (doing something collectively) or with variety (to risk making a personal statement). Can also be done with a large group with sub-groups instead of individuals (see also "Dividing the Group").

## (GRD) Cutting Down On the Material

.....

(From Mauricio Kagel)

Engage in free improvisation for a few minutes. Participants should have only one or two short sound(s) or event(s) at their disposal. This forces attention away from the continuity in one's own playing and toward the sound as a whole. Often, by subsequently listening to a recording of the music (which I strongly recommend!) people will be surprised at how much is nevertheless happening, and it will be evident how the process is clarified when we are not overwhelmed by an excessive density of sound. Playing this way might make people feel frustrated or perplexed-- probably because it demands much attention and resolute initiative while at the same time continuous physical playing activity is not possible. Rather, a sort of meditative quietness must be sought after.

## (GRD) Taximeter Exercise

.....

This activity is oriented toward leaving room for others and making economical use of the shared musical space. Participants are divided into two groups who play for each other, in turn, using the "Taximeter Principle." This principle is that the duration of sound multiplied by the dynamic intensity of sounds equals "consumption" of musical material.

From the perspective of the participant: if you play for some time without pausing, if you play loudly or if you do both, it must be balanced by being proportionally quiet at other times. You may imagine that the music offers you a certain amount of space and you are responsible for your own household. And you may imagine a taximeter which is influenced by both duration and by how loud you play.

The listening group points out when the musical process is clear to them and when "over-consumption" occurs, producing a "muddy" sound. This may be done by each member raising a hand, the higher the more overcrowded they think the music becomes.

## (GRD) If-Then

.....

The pieces If-Then VIII and IX (see the closing section) address participants' critical awareness whether the music process is interesting or not! This is, after all, what everything is about. Different opinions may exist, but that does not make it less meaningful to have a clear perception of it and to act responsively. These pieces take the attention to an oscillating process between listening to what is out there and paying attention to one's own impulses and imagination. Action must then follow. You can pick that one of the two that fits best or take one after another to repeat the effort from a slightly different angle.

## (AWA) Listening to Surroundings

.....

Listen to your surroundings for a brief time, perhaps one minute, with closed eyes. Afterward the listening period, write down what you heard. Use concrete terms that describe the quality of the sounds as accurately as possible. For example, "whirring and rattling" would be better for the purposes of this exercise than would "the coffee maker is operating." Share your descriptions aloud with each other.

## (AWA) Listening to Recording

.....

Listening to a recording of an improvisation immediately after creating it is an effective way to gain a broader perspective. We listen with different ears from when we are in the midst of playing. This takes a significant amount of time, especially when discussion of the music follows the listening.

It can be made into a repeated procedure. The composer Helmer Nørgaard describes a rehearsal practice for a group that played regularly. They began each time by playing for thirty minutes without previous

verbal agreements as to the nature of the music. The entire recording was subsequently played back.

Discussion may be without an agenda or focus on themes such as:

- what became musically/aesthetically significant and how did we arrive there?
- what were we individually attentive to?
- on which grounds did I take decisions during playing (consciously, intuitively, spontaneously, thinking ahead...)?
- etc...

Listening to improvised music not created by the group itself may help to expand the perspective.

See also: Analyzing Recordings

#### (AWA) Analyzing Recordings

.....

The teacher or a participant takes home a tape recording and analyzes it with a goal that suits the group and the situation. If specific sections of the improvisation are to be referred to, then excerpts may be copied to facilitate their availability. If the analytic task is complex (as is often the case) and/or you wish to save time, during the improvisation you may note the time at important places. This exercise is good for highlighting the significance of the improvisation as a whole as well as the specific sections illustrated.

#### (AWA) Fantasy Journeys

.....

Participants lie down with closed eyes on mattresses or in some other comfortable position. The leader provides instructions to facilitate the participants' relaxation. A story may be told and questions asked of participants about their own imaginations--sounds and music may be played. It is especially recommended to make this journey without sound and music as an introduction to allowing participants play afterwards.

For this exercise, the instructor should be experienced in being a participant him/herself. A practical idea for getting started is for the instructor to seek a suitable therapist or psychologist (obtain recommendations from people you know, newspapers, magazines, or the telephone directory) and make an appointment for a fantasy journey. It is also possible to work with other interested persons using each other as experimental subjects. Participants should know what a fantasy journey is and accept the idea of engaging in one. In contrast to working with adults, in employing this technique with children the instructor must take the responsibility for deciding whether the participants are

mature enough to benefit from it.

The relaxation instruction may take a simple form mentioning different parts of the body such as the following: "Feel your head lying on the mattress - let go and let it relax." All of the instructions should be able to be followed by the instructor together with the other participants.

The journey takes place exclusively in the present even when the instructions are to look back in time: "And now, imagine yourself looking back on what has happened. Is there anything you especially note about it?"

It is a central technique to ask questions about what the participant experiences so that they may create their own content. The story should typically incorporate a broad framework. Pauses, sometimes really long ones, are important, and questions should always be followed by pauses.

Starting from the story, participants are to contact their own feelings and fantasy and the practice of "Fantasy Journey" encourages the resting of conscious and rational activity. Semi-conscious and unconscious material may arise and the experience can be dream-like and intense as novel aspects of the personality emerge. At times, intense, repressed feelings may be brought forward.

With this activity, I have used subjects like "The Forgotten Music" and "Playing Among Foreign Musicians." As an author of journeys, start with simple scenarios like journeying and arriving at places. Again, the framework must be clearly imaginable by the instructor while preparing! You may find further inspiration in psychological literature.

The instructor must take responsibility both for having a secure setting and for being well aware of the process. No one should enter the room after the story begins (put a message on the door and lock it, if possible) and the room should remain quiet. No interruptions of the journey can be accepted--this could greatly disturb the participants.

It is not possible to "correct" errors nor to make disturbances undone--they must be integrated in the whole! In spite of all precautions, should a disturbing noise from outside nevertheless occur, it is possible to proceed in the following way. Let us assume that in the middle of the journey you have said: "You are now very far from any noises. This is a very quiet place." At this point, someone hammers very loudly at the door (in spite of people outside having been informed). A possible way to intergrate the disturbance is to say: "Suddenly, you think of a disturbing experience you once had. What kind of disturbing experience was this?" There is then a pause, the instructor takes steps to end the disturbing noise, and peace returns again. The instructor takes time to

get back to the point in his/her own imagination where the disturbance took place: "How was your experience of that. (Pause) Now, go back to the landscape. How do you feel in the peacefulness here?"

In the case of a participant being in an intense emotional state after the playing is finished--crying, for example--the instructor and group should respect these emotions and take care of the person in question. However, do not try to excessively calm the person--the emotions have their reasons for coming up and normally one's personal defenses will limit the expression to a level that is safe. Should aggressive criticism of the form of the journey occur, it is not necessary to take this at face value. If the instructor believes that inner forces in the person are pushing him/her a bit too far, the instructor should try to redirect attention to the person's own mind, the investigation of which is the mutually agreed upon purpose of the fantasy.

After the journey, people are instructed about gradually returning from the fantasy: "And now, come back to yourself, lying there. (Pause) When you are ready, begin to move your body a little and open your eyes. (Pause) Gradually, stand up and begin playing the way you feel like."

#### (AWA) Casual Playing

.....

(from Eckhard Weymann)

Play casually along, without looking for anything in particular, but be open for what might happen unexpectedly; and then follow that up with determination! (Expect the unexpected.)

The trick here is not to find too quickly, but to prolong this first moment of openness, of not knowing, this state of suspense „preceding the creation of the world", not to start „tinkering around" here, but to wait in an active state of mind, playing, until something really unexpected occurs, something convincing and compelling.

#### (AWA) Play for a Long Time

.....

For participants with previous training together. Play for a long time – an hour or several hours. This will allow for a variety of textures to emerge and for change of roles, in a natural way. In teaching contexts it may be felt by participants as liberating, as they will have more freedom to decide for themselves than usual. This practise is also likely to produce interesting material if you record it and play it back later in excerpts – see (AWA) Analyzing Recording.

#### (AWA) Miniatures

.....

This seems a "classic" exercise among improvisers. Play many short "pieces" of one minute each. This makes participants alert to utilize opportunities before it's too late, and also of how the endings take place.

#### (AWA) Ending

.....

(from Tom Hall)

Learning how to hear and create endings is as important as any other part of improvising, for one simple reason - something has to end in order for something else to begin. This is true for every part of music, whether it's a sound, a phrase, a part of an improvisation, an improvisation, or an entire performance.

We all understand endings, because our lives are full of beginnings and endings. This makes it easy to learn how to use the concept of endings in improvisation. All that's needed is to stay aware of potential endings as they occur, and to be ready and willing to end at any time.

Once a group has developed the ability to recognize endings and make use of them, this becomes an important compositional tool. But in order to use this tool the group must develop the shared awareness that an potential for ending has occurred, and that someone has made the choice to end or to not end.

This simple exercise is great for developing awareness of endings. It can be done with any number of people, but I have found duets get the point across the fastest. It helps a lot to have an experienced "ender" listen for and point out potential endings.

#### Exercise

Start playing.

Stop at the first potential ending that occurs.

Once that's been mastered, here's a series of variations of increasing complexity!

#### Variation 1

Be aware of the first ending and choose whether or not you want to go on.

#### Variation 2

Be aware of the first ending and choose whether or not you want to go on. If you choose to go on, be aware of whether what you're doing is a continuation of the 1st section or a new section

## Variation 3

Be aware of the first ending and choose whether or not you want to go on. If you choose to go on, be aware of whether what you're doing is a continuation of the 1st section or a new section. If there is a third section, is it a continuation of the 1st section, a continuation of the 2nd section, or a 3rd new section?

## (AWA) Psychogram

(Piece by Max E. Keller, see appendix)

.....  
Strong medicine, to be used wisely. This piece contains a wonderfully large selection of ways to react, most of them beyond being "nice". Yet, because it is written you can just play what is there and feel confident that no one will blame you.

## (AWA) Houdini Exercise

(from Cornelius Cardew)

.....  
Strong medicine, to be used wisely. Play with your hands tied together on the back. You will have to invent other ways to use instruments than usual, probably also very primitive and awkward ones. Keep this exercise instrumental so that vocalizing is not an easy way out.

I have used this a number of times to effectively shake experienced players out of too much routine. More experimenting and playfulness resulted, and, most interestingly, much more spontaneous interaction.

It is recommended to have a number of pre-cut, short pieces of rope ready in advance.

Houdini was a magician famous for his escape shows that could involve handcuffs and similar devices.

## (AWA) Know what you are doing

(from Malene Bichel)

.....  
At any time, act according to the following three possibilities:

- 1) Stillness (no sound no movement)
- 2) Searching
- 3) Do something that must be done.

Shifts ad libitum.

Searching is a legitimate part of free improvisation - acknowledge it when relevant. If there is something you feel is important to do, do it. And if there is no special reason to make sound, be still, thus making more room for the sounds and the other

players.

## (AWA) Flow Exercises

These deal with the collective flow of ideas. Improvisations often feature alternating sections being built up by a kind of negotiation by participants. One could also call it dynamics of conversation. Or in still other words, by the group adopting something from a participant which seems a "good idea".

Many good ideas:

Try collectively and spontaneously during playing to make a number of sections short and quickly alternating. Or oppositely, let sections be long and weighty.

Discussing Your Rhythm Of Ideas:

Try together before playing to discuss what you did previously from this viewpoint and let participants state their thoughts and ideas about it. Notice if it influences your subsequent playing and if participants liked the musical result.

Thoughtful Responses:

Try individually to vary the responses to each other: imitation, caricature, in the same direction, something else, something very different...while still maintaining sensibility in listening to and reacting to each other.

## (PAR) Parameter Exercises

.....  
Based on concepts directly related to music moving freely within a large universe of sound, these exercises both stimulate the musical appetite to explore "that which I have not tried yet" and at the same time train the perception of what is going on in the complex sound. Each one is important and has its special impact on the music. You do not need to practise them in the sequence given below. Density influences group dynamics in a special radical way and may be taken first, for instance, with an advanced group. And working with pulse --- no pulse may solve a basic problem many beginners have.

Practise improvisations focusing on one parameter/one aspect at a time and striving to explore it through intuitive changes.

Pitches:

- registers: use during the improvisation all the space between highest and lowest (an "orchestral" sound



may result).

- other uses of pitch:

1) Imagine (silently, in your fantasies) fluctuations in loudness for approximately 15 seconds. Then sing or play music with fluctuations in pitches according to this imagination for approximately 20 seconds. Thus, the fantasies about loudness fluctuations in the imaginary music are transformed into pitch fluctuations in the real music. Let these pitch fluctuations be the most important thing in this music. Repeat the process. This works well if the teacher times the various segments and gives signals for pausing and playing. The purpose is to move past habitual melodic ideas.

2) Improvise while focusing on movements up-down, a terminology that I propose to use instead of the word "melody," the employment of which will probably result in a different musical product, although the two instructions are identical. Again, expansion of habitual melodic ideas is the point.

One (1) may be done with other parameter combinations and two (2) with another parameter other than pitch. In this case, find out for yourself...

Durations:

1) Vary between many sizes of split-seconds to very long (10 seconds and maybe much more). In order to sound long, sounds must be static! To make long, sustained tones and sounds possible, this may be trained first. For pianos, xylophones and other percussion, tremolo and similar techniques are most important to be familiar with, so as not to exclude the possibility of playing long sounds.

2) Use sound materials analogous to "points," "dots," or other brief sounds lasting only split-seconds, or no more than two seconds each. After this, participants report how they experienced the kind of musical communication which took place.

This may be done with a series of improvisations, especially in the event that the first one does not illustrate the possibilities of a musical "stream of consciousness" – the teacher could make suggestive comments if necessary to make this happen. Other possible titles for improvisations here could be "table tennis" or "popcorn." A recording of popcorn popping may be listened to!

3) Right Durations

This activity brings participants' attention to the collective feeling for the durations of sounds and pauses, helping the individual to limit the amount of his/her activity. It also highlights how the feeling for durations changes in a "seismographic" manner.

The verbal instructions for improvisation in this piece by Karlheinz Stockhausen are as follows:

.....

Play a tone. Play it until you feel you should stop. Play another tone. Play it until you feel you should stop. But whether you play or pause, listen to the others all the time.

Play preferably when someone listens.  
Do not rehearse.

.....

The last two sentences may be omitted when the instructions are read to a group. However, it is safer to write it (on a blackboard, for example) than reading it as no one should be in doubt about the text.

These suggestions are certainly most easily implemented with instruments capable of offering sustained tones, such as wind and bowed string instruments and of course voices. Pianos and percussion instruments will have to employ tremolo and similar techniques – avoid wrestling with this problem unless musicians have enough training for doing it easily and keep to the other sound sources or other exercises! If the room produces reverberation, this may lengthen all sounds considerably. If this is the case, participants should take responsibility for the lengthening of sound duration; it should not be considered "something we have no control over."

Timbres:

Vary between

- 1) Tone ----- noise (find appropriate instrumental techniques; with voices, experiment with consonants)
- 2) Hard ---- soft (try to distinguish this from loud --- soft)

Dynamics:

- 1) Create interesting sound-patterns by making individual variations in dynamics, fast and slow.
- 2) Collectively, try to make only sudden changes of dynamic levels together. This is the so-called "terrace dynamics" of the baroque period. As ever in this context, no conductor of course. Try to achieve an effective approximation by paying close attention to each others' playing.

Density:

This parameter is strategic for the group dynamics.

It is pragmatically defined here as how many parts are sounding at the same time (polyphonic density). Play, and let density vary intuitively. This is a collective task that can only be realized through listening and willingness to take initiative or pause for a while according to the perceived need of the musical totality.

Aim for a complete equality of the density "values" from zero (nobody playing) to maximum (all

playing) over time – and also for this to happen in spontaneous ways. You may imagine a measuring instrument showing this variation... So that you will hear many combination sizes and variations of them, sometimes a solo, and they may have greatly varying length, etc. Even if this ideal may be extremely difficult to reach or even approach, every step forward may benefit the playing afterwards. Clearly, it is indeed a fundamental resource of an ensemble that you can experience such different sub-groupings apart from the tutti.

#### Pulse --- no pulse:

This parameter is strategic for the integration of traditionally-pulsed music idioms with non-pulsed, freely flowing ones. The conflict between those can be a major block to free improvising, especially for beginners. But with the experience that a successful going in and out of pulse according to the group's inspiration is possible, this can radically change.

Play, focus on the allowing of free changes between shared pulse and no pulse at all (or, at least, no shared one). Intermediary stages between the extremes comprise such ones with individual but different pulses, as well as those where pulse is difficult to hear but could be suspected to exist somewhere underlying. They are, of course, interesting in their own right. Changes may happen variously often and with various speeds, but do not think they can only be few and slow. Spontaneous, collective joining in on a new pulsed idea may occur in split-seconds when the inspiration is right, and once you have become aware, collective "enough is enough" feelings occur with spontaneity, too (although creative conflicts and negotiations are not excluded). The teacher may encourage many and fast changes, for an advanced variation.

*Preparatory exercise:* clap hands together (or, sitting, clap your legs for a more quiet version) with a pulse. Just the naked pulse, no subdivisions! Go on ensuring that the pulse is really felt with a collective beat, springy and precise. Then gradually let it decay by allowing tempi gradually to deviate and fluctuate into slightly slower or faster ones. After some time of disintegration and a maximum of unpredictability, go slowly back again.

#### Original material --- Quotations:

Explore using quotations - glimpses of well-known music pieces, or just well-known styles. Mix it with any other material - and leave spaces to make fast change possible. Caricatures and "dirty" playing is allowed! This parameter is strategic for integrating improvised playing with everything else in music...

#### Degrees of contrast:

- 1) - vary degrees of contrast or similarity between individual parts/players
- 2) - vary degrees of contrast between sections in the improvisation (so that there arises both "rather similar", "different", "very different", etc. sections).
- 3) - vary the amount of continuity, that is, move freely on a continuum ranging from no sections at all, instead static character or only gradual change --- and to having many collective, marked changes.

Practise these one at a time. Making such changes is of course, once again, a matter of collective intuition. Almost all the individual player can do is to pay attention and be ready to join in.

#### (PAR) Build-Up Parameter Exercise

(previously: Big Parameter Exercise)

.....

This may be done as an alternative to the parameter exercises focusing on one parameter at a time, or as a supplement to them.

Participants improvise according to the instruction of varying as much as possible in a given time period, e.g., one minute. That which the group does is to sound as varied as possible thus demanding collective responsibility for the outcome. (A discussion about here-and-now in music may be engaged in first.) After listening to a recording, the teacher points out what did not become varied. This is repeated with sensitivity for what is going on in the group's working process. At a suitable point, the teacher asks which parameters and dimensions can be varied, with a dimension being that which is variable as to one characteristic. A short explanation about the acoustic nature of music and pitch, timbre, intensity and durations as fundamental properties may be offered here, but a long discussion should not be engaged in immediately before or after the improvisation. A good idea is to make a list on a blackboard of proposed parameters that should be copied by all. Refer to (PAR) Parameter Exercises for a list of parameters and propositions how to work with them.

This exercise should be taken as far as is reasonable according to the situation and can either sensitively lead to other activities or just settle into the participants. Here is a quotation from a student: "Much has happened in music in this lesson." (Although the playing lasted only 5 x 1 minute, however intensely!) You may end by listening to all of the improvisations focusing on the development in them.

Here is a true story about the pre-history of this exercise: At a concert with the Group for Intuitive

Music in Ghent 1977 I asked the lighting man at the rehearsal to vary the light as much as possible. He faded the various lights up and down with regular intervals. "No, I mean in all parameters," I said to him. "Oh, in all parameters," he replied. Because he was trained in new music and improvisation he was then able to immediately do as I desired.

#### (PAR) Little Parameter Exercise

.....

This is an easier version of the "Build-Up Parameter Exercise" for beginners. Vary one tone in terms of dynamics, durations (also irregular ones), pauses, timbre, etc, as many as you can overcome. The number of parameters may be slowly increased and new ones introduced over a period of time.

#### (PAR) Difficult Parameter Combinations

.....

The more you can use parameters independently, the more possibilities and the more flexibility you will have with the musical sound. Try these combinations:

- fast, pianissimo
- sharp timbres, pianissimo
- soft timbres, loud
- ...and maybe more that may appear odd to you.

#### (PAR) Adaptable Tonalities

.....

Although not belonging to parameter exercises according to my definition, these are related to them because they deal with musical material which can be considered just one part of the total universe. Obviously, chord progressions, so characteristic of what we usually call "tonality", require a heavy amount of arranging and ensuing predictability which would contradict the idea of free improvisation. Yet some simpler forms of tonality can be encountered and also practised so as to have a keener awareness about them when they pop up.

1) Drone-tonality: agree on a tone. It should be sustained in a low register throughout, but its execution could well be divided between several players overlapping freely, so they can be free to change their roles during playing. Other players play free melodies departing from, and coming back to, the central tone. Participants should feel free to join into a polyphonic web, although they should also listen well and make pauses enough to avoid a too tight texture that could blur the melody/drone

relations.

2) Interference-tonality: this form utilizes in its most direct forms absolute pitch, as it bases upon those vibrations produced by two or more tones near each other in frequency. The resulting sound may sound like one tone with a vibrating, complex environment. This phenomenon is often referred to as employing "micro-tones", although the point here is gradual sliding change of pitch, not stepwise movement.

Participants must be able to sustain and gradually change their pitch. This rules out a number of instruments, but voices are fine, and it may be easiest to start with them. The first time, point out some participants who keep a sustained, agreed-upon tone, while the others make free, ever-so-small slides away and from it. Later, alternation between sustaining and sliding may take place freely. With both male and female voices, try to find a pitch both can sing, low for the female and some comfortable place in the upper register for the male ones. If not feasible, one octave's difference may work anyway (for instance, when one sex is in the majority). If still difficult, try to divide the group into smaller ones. Listen and enjoy...

3) quotations: this is the possibility of nevertheless entering glimpses of well-known music into the improvisation. It is described under (PAR) Parameter Exercises.

4) tone repetitions: fast repetitions establish a kind of "very local" tonality – maybe a polytonality – in glimpses. Try it out, in pure form or together with other material. Avoid triads and chord-like figurations that may lock up the sound which should be kept open.

5) interval structures: make sure everyone can make long, sustained tones – else practise first (tremolos and the like – should sound as even as possible). Play/sing different ones polyphonically with individual pauses. Like previously, avoid triads and chord-like figurations that may lock up the sound which should be kept open. me. (This could be named 'atonal chords' were it not for the fact that "atonal", despite its strict meaning of "no tonal center", for some people sounds like "noisy and scratchy", which need not at all be the case. This could rather become a "chamber music"-like thing halfway between traditional tonal music and music with all kinds of sounds).

### III GENERAL TOPICS

#### **Getting Started/Getting On**

Although intuitive music appears unique because it is not well known, it is in itself a broad field where many trends can be discerned and followed. It can be practiced within any of the following contexts: as a meditative activity (work with thoughts, imaginations, energies); as a dramatic activity that might be used in the theater or with a film; as a psychodramatic activity; for the pure enjoyment of playing music; and, considering the playing of music primarily as a social activity. These very different types of activity represent examples which I have repeatedly heard people associate with intuitive music.

The teacher/person taking initiative is encouraged to find out where his/her own interest lies when starting. This will make it possible to set a course and to conceive ideas of how to pursue the specific ends. As the group spends more time together, it is recommended that the group itself finds out in which direction it would like to go.

Each of the exercises may be regarded as a form of continuous, dynamic activity to which you may return. For example, cultivate each of the categories of sound and reaction in a "Game of Contrast," return to "Instrument-Storm" in new versions, listen often to recordings, do more and more of the Parameter Exercises from time to another, etc.

#### **Awareness Training**

With a model created by the founder of Gestalt Therapy, Fritz Perls, one may view human attention as operating in three zones: the outer, intermediary and inner zone. The outer zone involves sensing of the outer world. The intermediary zone contains ideas, including fantasies and thoughts. Direct contact to reality takes place through the outer zone (the outer reality) and through the inner zone (inner reality). The contact always takes place in the ever changing here-and-now. Conceptions, thoughts, fantasies of the intermediary zone are "models of reality inside your head."

A common, unbalanced way of functioning is to use the head and the intermediary zone too much and the other zones too little, according to Perls. The practicing of sensing (here: listening) without interruption is a strong exercise that expands your musical reality. This discipline requires you to avoid any kind of explanations and conceptualizations of what you hear, thus enabling a more pure or "clean" perception instead. Consider the following possible

reactions:

1) Now the guy at the piano is flipping out, now the flute is playing a funny "talk-like" phrase with triads.

2) I hear a lot of fast piano sounds, I hear them echoing, I hear they are louder now. Now it is changing between high and low. I hear another timbre.

Example one (1) is characterized by interpretation and evaluation as the possible moods of other musicians are speculated at and elements are evaluated as more or less interesting. This type of cognitive stance reduces and distance the listener from the abundance of listening data. To be sure, receptive abilities work together with abilities to take initiative in a close interaction in practise when we play and we cannot help having preferences, , but listening is also an important challenge in itself.

In "Listening to Surroundings" one works with being attentive to the ever-present, pre-existing sound. With "Listening to Recording" you will have the possibility of hearing a greater amount of the sound than when playing. "Instrument-Storm" leaves room for investigating the relation of the body to the physical presence of the instrument as well as its sound. With "Cutting Down On the Material" you are relieved of much of the playing obligation and forced to listen.

In "Fantasy Journey" the intermediary zone is, however, worked upon as new inspiration can be gained from your fantasy and an expansion of the concepts about what music is and what is possible. In "If-then" critical judgement and ensuing action is encouraged – decisions along the way certainly do play a role in improvised music.

Parameter exercises strengthen awareness by helping to make sound describable and thus easier to keep in conscious perception. In "Build-up Parameter Exercise" working on the outer zone is supported systematically by the intermediary zone's consciously working itself out of fixed conceptions.

"Fantasy Journey" and parameter exercises are not only concerned strictly with the here-and-now, but also with concepts and ideas to support the motivation, inspiration and presence. One benefit from parameter exercises can be a clearer feeling for what is happening and a greater ability to sense from where one has come in previous stages of the improvisation. Remembering back just 5 minutes may at times be really difficult. But the more one can sense at a glance, the less one will be prone to repeat habitual patterns without becoming aware of it.

### Group Dynamics

Free improvisation can, at times, lead to a chaotic and frustrating situation where competition in making oneself heard is the dominant dynamic. With the exercises here, a different mode of expression is developed which promotes collective invention. Important elements in this development are that the participant

- 1) **makes pauses,**
- 2) **gives attention to the context of sounds around him/her and**
- 3) **is able to take initiative.**

If these demands are met, it will be possible to hear what is taking place in the music. Also, there will be space for mutual, fast reactions that meet here-and-now demands. "Charlotte's Relay Race" can be strongly recommended as a versatile exercise that trains all this at the same time.

To **make pauses** needs not at all mean that I give up something. If I experience being part of the deciding process, then the others' sounds will also become "mine"! And is not a free interaction between listening and expressing yourself exactly what characterizes the kind of behavior people have when they show spontaneous, mutual interest in each other? Pausing and listening are closely connected. Pauses can have all durations, but do not forget the long ones. A saying to remember could be "Mind the gap" (LaDonna Smith 2019). A different version is "Remember your gap" (from Phil Minton, heard 2021), meaning you should wait for the right moment to come in.

However, unfolding of this requires that participants have confidence in each other. To this end, exercises dealing with **following each other** may serve the purpose of helping you to get to know each other better and to build confidence. Even established groups can benefit from working on this.

"Following Each Other" has the theme of focusing the participants' attention to a common element through feeling, seeing and hearing. The role of the individual is to subordinate his/her own immediate needs. This is especially relevant when starting or ending an improvisation and when agreed upon rules are to be followed. Otherwise, "subordination" should in fact not take place at all unless it arises in the form of a spontaneous agreement, so do not exaggerate this exercise! Apart from the use of it to make clear that it is good to have

a clear start and ending of the improvisation, it can be used for warm-up or for meeting a possible group need for being provided instruction or direction. Another possibility (which I have not encountered in practice) is to use it with people who are so accustomed to individual disorganized, uncooperative behavior that they are unfamiliar with the experience provided by a simple, shared activity.

"Rounds" can be used for presentation and for developing new ideas in playing.

"Vocal Improvisation In A Circle" focuses on the group situation - participants are physically close to each other while individuals tend to merge into a whole by solely being heard, not seen.

**Training the ability to listen** is a part of many exercises. "Listening to surroundings" does so in a pure form. "Listening to recording" creates a new platform from where to take a fresh view, from outside, of one's own playing.

Exercises **dealing with training the ability to react while listening to the group sound** are strongly to be recommended - the previous category may be seen as preparatory to this. In "Rounds" the ability to react is trained in a foreseeable and ritualistic way, and the degree of contrast may be varied which again may meet demands for a gradual and slow start.

In "Charlotte's Relay Race" the predictable aspect has been removed and instead there is a realistic situation comparable to free playing. However, the effect of the playing rule will be to introduce pauses and to constantly challenge the participants to be alert, to listen and to react. "Cutting Down On the Material" has a similar effect on the music. The "Taximeter Exercise" brings attention to the musician's volume and offers feedback from a group of listeners.

In some cases obstacles are encountered to the playing: **dominating persons and those who are too quiet.**

Problems of dominating may, but do not have to be, related to the instruments played. Virtually every instrument can be made to play quiet sounds – if not by its usual sound, then by extended techniques, that is, new, and in some cases highly untraditional, ways to use the instrument. The CD literature testifies effectively to this. Each person has her or his own voice in the total sound – instrument is not considered an excuse here. Making more pause if you play relatively loud is of course also one option.

Pianos may present such problems in an especially obstinate way. In traditional music (including much jazz), we learn to represent both melody, chords and bass at the same time, in a way

that could make up for a whole orchestra. But as this may be irrelevant for a communal music made of sounds that interact freely, an out-of-place "piano concerto" may arise. Take care!

Dominating persons may effectively inhibit the process. In *mild cases* doing "Cut Down on the Material" may work. It can have a profound effect by simply making it obvious for everyone that habits of playing more or less all the time are not necessary here. Quite on the contrary, they may block the flow.

In *more severe cases* one can listen to a recording and point out who takes up more space than the others. The teacher can ask participants about their own experience of it. This could be more revealing about what happened than when the teacher makes a statement as a listener from outside.

A clear-cut metaphor to state which is probably easy to remember after the discussions could be "Don't be a blanket" (from LaDonna Smith 2019). That is, do not cover up others so that they cannot be heard.

If the problem persists beyond such attempts to directly reflect on it in the group, it is probably too fundamental to the person to be changed right away. The only general way out I can think of would be inventing exercises with absolutely clear-cut tasks and roles. Creative use of conduction means could be part of this. Such use of firmly controlling the process is a compromise between the ideal of empowering the group to deal with all decisions by itself and a difficult reality. I can imagine cases in which this is necessary... but try the other means first!

A less conspicuous problem is presented by *those who are too quiet*. When one is dealing with dominating persons and there are at the same time also too quiet group members, it is a good idea also at the same time to encourage them to be more present. This addresses the problem from one more side, since the dominant soundmaking can become even more so when others are passive. Also it can make the criticism appear less one-sided for those who are to receive it. Shy and passive behavior can lead to a situation in which everyone waits for everyone else and nothing happens. It should be dealt with using appropriate awareness exercises, also if there are no dominating persons. An exercise dealing with the Inner Zone that encourages participants to put into music what they feel here and now may be employed - maybe in the indirect form of letting them react to given sound stimuli. (See

"Awareness Training" for an explanation of what Inner Zone is). You may also find out an exercise for yourself. Psychogramm (see appendix) has often been very helpful when initiative was to be strengthened. I consider this piece a "strong medicine", to be used wisely. The "If-Then" pieces also invite confidence in one's own reactions, in a less directly challenging way.

Intuitive music may feel very natural to play, but it is a far cry away from traditional dogmas. In pre-composed music, parts are sustained within volume, harmonic and other boundaries by a standard way of arranging elements. Possibly there are solos which exist as "reserved places" for special, individual activity. In intuitive music - in which these boundaries and reserved places do not exist--you may play in a more free interaction, influenced by both the situation and your own inclination. One's participation can range between doing the same thing as others (from a pure forgetting your individual self to a conscious accompanying) to "doing your own thing" (ranging from being subversive to making comments). The concept of playing "wrongly" in traditional music would correspond here to not making pauses, to dominating (for instance, by playing loud instruments without extra pause or quiet ways of playing) and to be blocked in expressing oneself. Similarly, "going out of style" would here correspond to sticking to a style as a cliché that prevents developments in the here and now.

Common ways of ensuring that participants do not overwhelm each other through excessive volume include establishing a common pulse and/or an approximate volume level. Rather than appeal to these techniques, I advocate the principles described here. Training the polyphonic, creative dialogue in music, not formalizing it! In other words, I insist that the "elephant" and the "mouse" should be able to co-exist in freedom. An exercise highlighting this could be to let a Jew's harp and a drum kit play a duet. You should feel free to work out an exercise like this for more than 2 players...

Group members should feel free to express criticisms and constructive ideas about the group process.

See also "Awareness Training".

### **Parameters of Musical Sound**

"Homage to Nils Harbo" exemplifies how sound may be given different appearances independent of things like traditional virtuosity, scales and chords. It certainly would be appropriate for free improvisation to have a music theory that accounts for the sound as a whole.

By parameters I mean concrete, acoustic parameters in the sound itself as opposed to parameters for the perception or experience or for the production of sound. Pitch, duration, timbre and loudness can (ideally) be described in an acoustically precise way in a given moment. And they meet the demand of being continually variable from one extreme to the other, unlike for instance "intensity" which is often used as an experienced sum of perceptions, not as one clearly defined characteristic of sound proper. A list of parameters from a group of students is seen below:

Loudness

Density

Timbre (dark --- light)

Pulsating --Not Pulsating (regularity)

Durations

Pitches

It is not uncommon for volume and density to be perceived as more important than pitch in the improvisations. Density may be expressed in terms of how many sounds are produced per time unit or in terms of the number of players producing sound during a given period of time. Some parameters require an interpreting activity to be defined. This is the case with density, as well as with the "degree of contrast", one of its meanings being the property of music described on the scale of "continuous" to "divided into sections." Still, these terms have utility when their meaning is made reasonably clear for all. More parameters include: timbre (hard/soft); parameters describing the sound source(s) in space; developing/static; material "in a state of pure cultivation"/quotations of familiar elements. This list is not exhaustive.

In the exercises section, I have placed parameters in the "classic" sequence of pitch, duration and dynamics being the first ones. These three can be exactly defined in frequencies, time units and decibels. Such concepts from acoustics inspired serialists in Europe after the 2. World War while working with both the new electronic means and with instrumental music as well.<sup>3</sup> Among other things, they employed a historical view, noting that in the course of music history, more and more parameters came into conscious use and became notated. Thus monophonic chant focused on a selection of pitches, later rhythmic intricacies were gradually cultivated, only with the baroque periode began dynamic indications, etc. Even though early serialism became controversial, the parametric ways of thinking

remained basic for much new and experimental music to the present day (2009). It was not restrained to Europe either – John Cage also devised making variations in several "interpenetrating variables" at a time in his "Variations"-works.

For the experimentalists, music became a phenomenon centered around the open and infinitely explorable sound phenomenon, and sound became polyphonic in itself, so to speak and very literally, as its different parameters may vary independently of each other. For improvisors, polyphony was also a natural part of what they did together, rather than music based on harmonic systems, chords and bass lines.

To make a "map" of the musical "landscape" can serve many relevant purposes. It can: provide greater flexibility in musical behaviour; provide a conceptual tool for remembering what happened; facilitate innovation in music production; provide a general overview of a given improvisation; help one to become more familiar with a given piece of music; and, provide a basis for historic or stylistic criticism and comparison. "Just sound" is most surely not "just sound!"

It can also be instructive to listen to various examples of music completely through and parameter-analyze them. Participants get to know each other's different listening-points and a subsequent task might involve concentrating on a parameter that the listener did not notice during a prior listening.

Surely, what could from this viewpoint be termed "non-parametric properties" also exist – sounds which do not remain the same and cannot be placed within a continuum with regard to one constant characteristic. Trevor Wishart suggested the term "grain" for sound having a varied "inner life". Robert Moog's analytical terms which have become the basic ones for defining synthesizer sounds are also well-known: attack – sustain – decay - release.

If for some reason you do not find the parameter concepts employed here suitable for being used directly in your teaching, you may "translate" them into the traditional ones, melody, harmony and rhythm, as a pedagogic device which strongly accentuates continuity with the historic background.

Melody needs not be like "lyric singing" but could also consist of small figures, outbursts, "virtuosic phenomena" (cf. historic examples like be-bop or symphony orchestra music). Its dynamics can change, maybe dramatically. It may be extremely fast or extremely slow. There may be more melodies interacting (polyphony) and they may have a call-response relation to each other. Etc.

Harmony needs not be based on chords but on

<sup>3</sup> See [www.intuitivemusic.dk/intuitive/par/](http://www.intuitivemusic.dk/intuitive/par/) for in-depth discussions and illustrations.

qualities of sound: hard, soft, light, dark, static, changing, etc.

Rhythm may also comprise changes of tempo, any combinations of short and long, any accents, infinitely many kinds of regularity or irregularity, any division of time, also things which "take time", everything concerned with "timing", etc.

### **Composition for Improvisation**

Parameter exercises lead easily to considerations about composition - there is a continuum between improvising and composing. Sometimes free improvisation is called "instant composition" because it happens in real time - while composition in the classic sense is a planning activity in which the composer may go back and revise the plan. But even if decisions must be taken during the process when improvising, they do exist - for instance, one may sometimes ask oneself whether to change into "something else" or to stay at the "same place" some more time. Such basic considerations may be seen as a kind of composition activity. From here, a next step toward composition outside real time could be the kind of agreements made by musicians, in the style of "let's begin like this... and at some point, then..." etc. They are in many cases not written down, specific to the persons involved, not revealed to others and have thus a private character compared to classic composition. They appear like a greyzone kind of composition, compared to composition that is shared with others. It would again take one more step to share the recipes with other musicians. In its full consequence, this would involve an intended completeness in explaining one's intentions so as to minimise possible misunderstandings, and a feedback with a tradition as well, allowing one also to study what others have done and to get ideas from that. In the kind of experimental music discussed here, this does not require training in traditional music notation.

I recommend devising your own recipes for improvisation. If you have the time, each member of a group might offer their own ideas and you can take turns playing from each other's recipes. An amplified version, suitable for groups without members who play regularly, is to devise a task which each member of the group has a turn to engage in, e.g., creating a piece that makes use of movement in space. Conversely, a more economic version is to let the pieces be simple and play them after each other as modules (for instance one minute each) in a collective composition for improvisation.

### **Historical Background**

Improvised music existed in Western Culture

in popular music as adding parts to a given melody. It has also existed in the music for the church and the concert halls. In the seventeenth century, applicants for organists at the Cathedral of Venice were still asked to prove their abilities solely by improvising. Subsequently, improvisation lost its importance as music printing, related to a market, came to the fore and as notation has developed and become able to accurately convey increasing numbers of parameters.

Not until the arrival of jazz to the West did improvised music become re-acquainted to the general public.

Carl Orff was a classical composer who developed a systematic instructional method with a greater emphasis on the common accessibility of instruments and on the creative aspect than was common at the time. In the post-second world war period, composers and musicians experimented with improvisation and, especially in the sixties, efforts were directed at rediscovering improvisation, both in the context of "open works" demanding an improvisation-like activity from the performer, although the word was often not used, and, more overtly, in the context of improvising ensembles. Some of those were lead or initiated by composers: Nuova Consonanza (Franco Evangelisti), (Vinko Globokar)

Western societies after 1945 were characterized to a high degree by rapidly developing industrialization and urbanization. Individualism (having one's own room, choice of occupation, etc.) as well as new kinds of groups and communities resulted. Avant-garde artists of all kinds explored the creative field and sought to move beyond traditional norms. In the visual arts, collages became accepted on a par with oil paintings. Teachers started to put emphasis on the learning process instead of on the product. And in music one can cite both jazz musicians--such as Albert Ayler--and those with a classical background--such as John Cage--stating that sound is the true and essential form of existence for music. And they do not mean sound that has been restricted in a rigid system.

Jazz musician Ornette Coleman, inventor of the expression "free jazz", experimented in 1960 with collective improvisation within his arranged pieces. He refers to collective improvisation by calling attention to its original place in New Orleans Jazz. Others went further, especially in European jazz (Oxley, Parker, Prévost, Schlippenbach/Johansson and many others) and made collective improvisation a primary element of their music.

In classical music, avant-garde experiments with improvisation started later but often had a radical nature. They can be said to be preceded by John Cage and other composers of the so-called "New York School." The freedom in performing one of their



compositions could, in practice, be considerable. From mid 1960s and on (where rock music also for a short period could feature free playing together), a number of composers experimented with broadly devised, sometimes graphically notated compositions for improvised performance. Important members of this group are Karlheinz Stockhausen, Vinko Globokar, Cornelius Cardew, Christian Wolff and Robert Moran. In their expressly stated attitudes and theories, some composers of this type endeavoured to introduce improvisation as an innovative element and as a phenomenon in its own right. One example is the "intuitive music" of Stockhausen that belongs to the immediate historical tradition of what I am doing.

Improvising groups of musicians became ever more common from about 1970 on--some stemming from the classical avant garde classic, some having their origins in the jazz world, and others combining the two traditions. This coming together was precipitated by organisations established to take care of common tasks such as finding spaces for rehearsals and arranging concerts. As meeting places, these organisations made further mixtures among musicians possible and helped lay the foundations for a consolidation of the phenomenon of "improvised music." Organisations of this kind still exist in Sweden, England, Belgium, Germany and probably a number of other places. Places with regular concert activity are, among others, Stockholm, London, Ghent (Belgium), Zürich (Switzerland), Bremen, Wuppertal, Berlin (Germany), New York and Tokyo. Since the First Festival of Scandinavian Improvisation in 1995, Copenhagen can be said to appear on the map at least to some modest degree.

During the same time span, the idea about collective creativity has manifested itself in Germany in the influence of music educators like Friedemann and Meyer-Denkman. A Danish parallel might be the collection of electronic music with graphic scores, "Båndtropering" edited by Finn Egeland Hansen (from the 1980s) to be used for improvised playing by children in elementary school. Similarly, the 1970s was also the time in which art therapies, including music therapy (among other kinds the one I practice with free improvisation) arose and came into their own institutions and educational places.

During the eighties and on, "popular" and "serious" genres were increasingly mixed, and the practise of free improvisation attracted new generations of young musicians. New magazines specializing in improvised music like *The Improvisor* (USA), *Resonance* (UK) and *Hurly Burly* (ESP) came into being. Record distribution of improvised music began to grow.

By the beginning of the 21st century,

specialized paper magazines have largely been replaced by internet. But free improvisation is thriving more than ever as a music form in its own right, in terms of the number of concerts, festivals, record labels and writings, including PhDs, devoted to it.

### **Making Constellations**

"Constellations" is the common designation for different combinations of musicians for a concert or a playing session with free improvisations. Before a concert, musicians might agree on a sequence of duos, trios, tutti etc. which will ensure a varied programme. An early, and probably seminal, instance of this was Derek Bailey's festival "Company Week" held 1977-1994. Bailey invited musicians, made some suggestions about constellations and also let musicians choose some groups (according to David Toop, 2010).

Such dividing into constellations is practised both at concerts and at many places running regular (usually monthly) open sessions for improvisors, however with interesting differences. At Berlin Exploratorium (2009) Open Scene participants seek out who they would like to play with and write lists of their names accordingly on a blackboard – the moderator sees to it that the given time frame will not be exceeded, ten minutes being a standard duration. In Wiesbaden "Improvishorium" different lists are made for first and second set, allowing for new ideas arising along the way (RG 2004, see below). In Heidelberg also the audience participates in the discussion of how to make the constellations (RG 2004). In Japan (Osaka 2005, Kobe 2009) there was a hostess who would collect names and put constellations together. In Osaka there was also a common discussion afterwards, moderated by the hostess. In Kobe, a small game could be involved, with musicians drawing lots, some of which would designate the owner to have a "leader" status, to be kept secretly during playing. The "host model" is also used in Vienna (RG 2004). At Copenhagen improvisation festival "The Expedition" 2008 and 2009, a sequence of duos, trios etc. was laid down by the organisers, then lots were drawn to determine who would play with whom. Denmark's Intuitive Music conference has also made extensive use of random combination of musicians during the first days since the end of the nineties, followed by something similar to the "Berlin model" (see above). However, as random combinations do not ensure maximum variety in the mix, we have experimented with other procedures as well. One is similar to what was done in the London Relay festival of the nineties: different ensembles at different places, and at certain time intervals some musicians will leave in order to join

one of the other groups, and others will come and join the group which the others left, etc. Still another way to change groups gradually is to let one player start, letting more players join slowly *ad libitum* and let musicians who have played leave again at some point, maybe having a maximum for how many are playing at the same time (experienced at Krefeld Frei Festival 2018). A different "sombbrero" method (practised in Düsseldorf 2010 or before), for groups playing for each other, consisted of letting one musician begin according to random drawing of little pieces of paper with everybody's names, then let this person choose whether to have one more, then let the next make the same choice, etc. until somebody chooses not to make the group larger. Variations may be thought out - for instance, letting the first person determine how many more to play with and choosing random players accordingly. Or, differently, they could be chosen by the first person. Size of the group could also be determined by random drawing. So you could go various middle ways between total random and opening to choice.

Still another method is to let constellations forming happen simply by initiative, until the group reaches its permanent size - one player comes up, next one joins, etc. And of course there could be rules such as maximum size of groups and letting everyone in turn have an appearance. This was practised with Glasgow Improvisors Orchestra in video playing sessions - at the announcement of "small groups", everyone turned their camera off, and eventually the group would emerge (2021).

Combining a previously planned performance by invited musicians with an open session has also been practised - this may remind loosely of the "jam sessions" from old jazz times. At Copenhagen, "Meet da Lama" (2004-05) and "Club Cactus" (2010) were conducted in this way. At the first mentioned, groups and individuals could be invited by the organiser, but spontaneously formed ensembles could also come into being.

In some cases, the entire ensemble remains together during the whole session. To my knowledge, this has been the case with Maggie Nichols' and with Eddie Prévost's weekly London workshops in the nineties and on - with Prévost there could also be talk and commenting in between, while the Nichols session which I experienced in 1997 went on without interruption once started. Discussions in between playing have an important role in Improvisiakum, a weekend symposium organised by Reinhard Gagel in Cologne since 1999, which features both different groups in different rooms, and different groups playing for each other (visited 2002).

It appears among other things that there is a

basic option of putting musicians together by choice or with random procedures, that the coordinator may have a more or less active role, that there is an option whether to talk and comment on the music or not, and that there are subtle differences in how the programme may be composed according to musicians' wishes. The number of participants will be a strategic element too. Find out your own way!

(RG 2004 means Ringgespräch über Gruppenimprovisation juni 2004, which had a list of open scenes.)

#### IV OTHER RESOURCES

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See my homepage, with information about Denmark's Intuitive music Conference (an international, yearly improvisors' meeting), This Month's Quotation on improvised music (with an ever growing archive) and more:

<http://www.intuitivemusic.dk/>

These are large bibliographies concerning improvisation and new notations, with summaries:

[www.intuitivemusic.dk/iima/legno1uk.htm](http://www.intuitivemusic.dk/iima/legno1uk.htm)

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**V CLOSING: SOME IMPROVISATIONAL PIECES**

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PSYCHOGRAM

Max Eugen Keller, Jan. 1971

## Remarks:

The piece is written for 39 participants with instruments freely selected. If four musicians are playing, each one pauses during at least 25% of the playing time, if five are playing 40%, if six are playing 50%, if seven are playing 55%, if eight are playing 65% and if nine are playing 75%. Total playing time may either be fixed (approximately 1030 minutes) or left to reveal itself during playing.

Each participant--in a sequence determined spontaneously by the individual--chooses from the notated instructions regarding different forms of relating to or reaction to the group or a single player--the duration of each element is free. Going from one element to another may either be performed as a gradual transition or one may jump from one to another.

One does not prepare a plan for participation. Instead, during playing you should decide, taking the music as a whole into consideration, when to do what.

Those playing indications written with capitals, e.g., VIGOROUSLY, STUTTER, are not descriptive of forms of reaction towards the others, but they directly circumscribe a musical structure. They are used in the same way as the others and serve also as means to start the piece.

**PSYCHOGRAM** Max Eugen Keller, Jan. 1971

Support another player

Dominate everybody else

Do not allow yourself to be disturbed

Do not listen to the others

Contrast everybody else

VIGOROUSLY

Accompany another player

Parody another player

Stay where you are

STUTTER

Imitate another player

Play a dialogue with another player

Take initiative

Accompany all others

Join another player

Play against all others

Contrast another player

Join the majority

IN A HURRY, BUT QUIET

Alternate between contrasts without mediating

Break out of the group

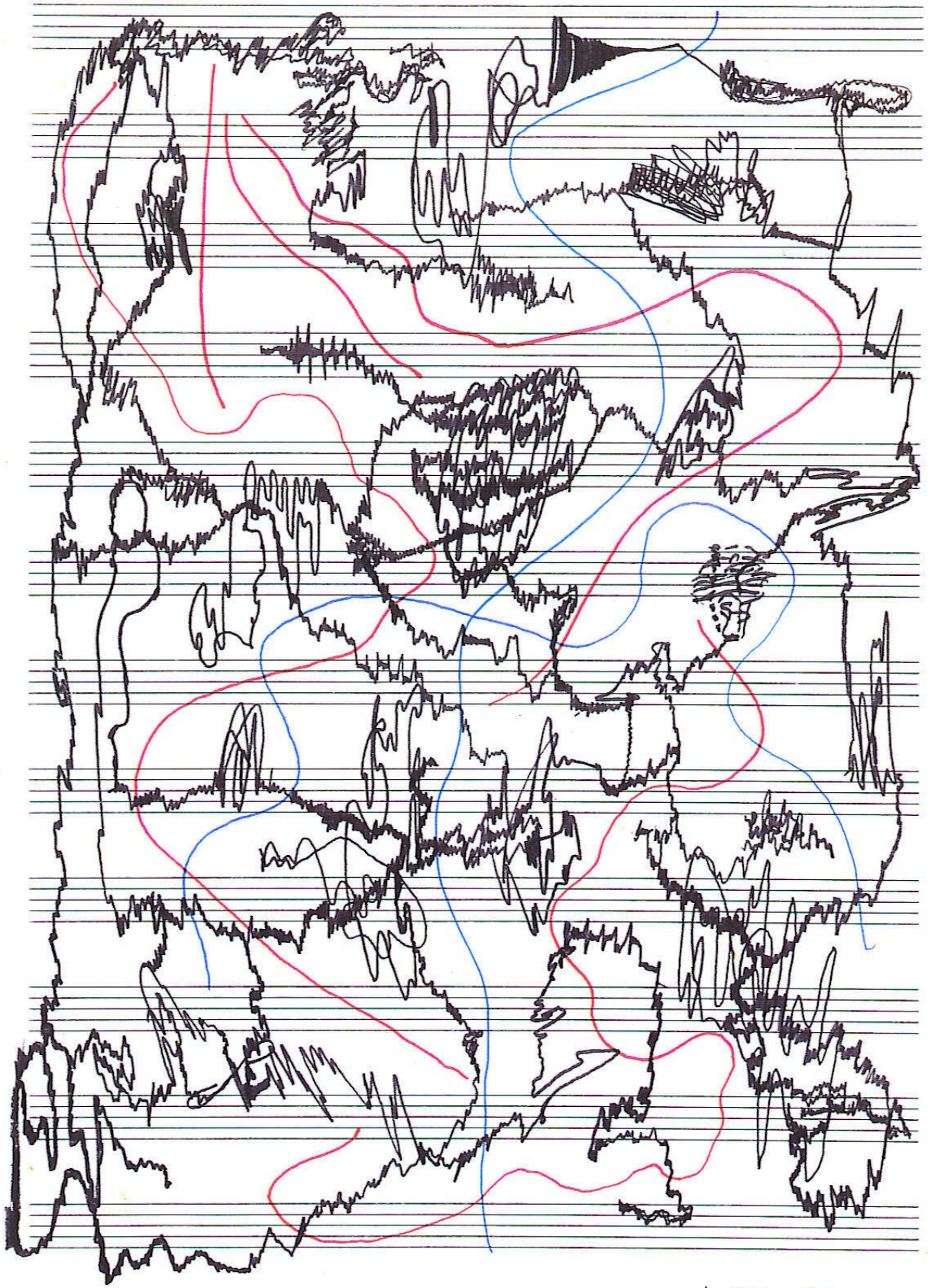
Submit to the group

Mediate between contrasts

IRONICAL

Play against another player

## MADISON MUSIC.



J. Lekfeldt 12/5-76.



**ILD - MUSIK**  
**FIRE - MUSIC**

IMPROVISATIONSSTYKKE FOR ENSEMBLE  
IMPROVISATIONAL PIECE FOR ENSEMBLE

GENTAG INDIVIDUELT OG UDFORSK ET UNIVERS AF TEMPOER (OSSE FOR DET ENKELTE ELEMENT) INDTIL LYDENE BRÆNDER. (.) = KAN UDELADES; /= VÆLG FRIT.  
REPEAT INDIVIDUALLY INVESTIGATING A UNIVERSE OF TEMPOS (ALSO FOR EACH ELEMENT) UNTIL THE SOUNDS ARE BURNING. (.) = MAY BE OMITTED; /= CHOOSE FREELY.

© 1976/ Carl Bergström-Nielsen, Borrekrattet 17, DK-2800 Lyngby, Danmark, Skandinavien, (02) 87 76 17. Forstørret udgave fra det oprindelige tændstikboksformat. Andre oplæg har osse ✓ / Enlarged version from originally in matchbox-size. Other pieces also available ✓

## KONTRAST-SPILE GAME OF CONTRASTS

for ensemble

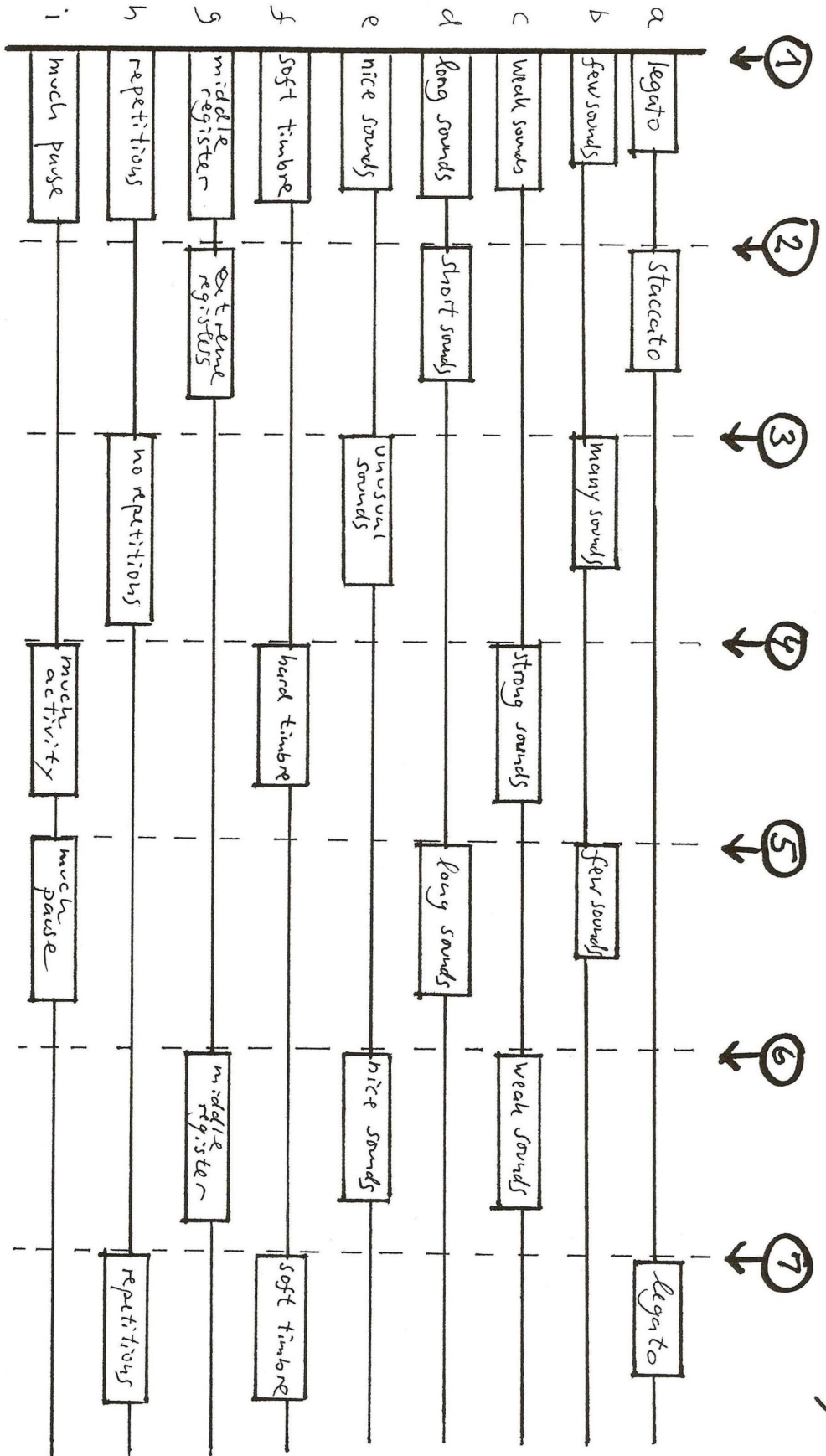
Brug spilleplanen i fri improvisation, idet der begynder ved nr. 1 og gås individuelt fra felt til felt ifølge numrene.

Use the plan in free improvisation, beginning with no. 1 and proceeding individually from square to square according to figures.

1 KORTE LYDE SHORT SOUNDS 4 6	4 LANGE LYDE LONG SOUNDS 2 3 9	7 SPIL EN SOLO PLAY A SOLO 8
2 TÆNK PÅ NOGET BESTEMT OG SPIL NOGET HELT ANDET THINK OF SOMETHING SPECIFIC AND PLAY SOMETHING ELSE 7 8	5 UNDERORDN DIG GRUPPEN SUBMIT TO THE GROUP 2 4	8 BLØDE LYDE SOFT SOUNDS 1 3 7
3 FASTHOLD EN BESTEMT IDE FOR ET STYKKE TID STICK TO A SPECIFIC IDEA FOR A WHILE 5 6	6 HÅRDE LYDE HARD SOUNDS 1 5 9	9 SLUT VED FÆLLES OVERENSKOMST END BY COMMON AGREEMENT

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# HOMAGE TO NILS HARBO<sup>x1</sup> for ensemble (also voices).



improvise freely, but follow all one or more set of directions  
 in the section you are in. (sections are read vertically,  
 sets of directions horizontally). A direction is valid until  
 changed. Durations of sections and means of coordinating  
 them may be agreed upon.

Can  
 Ruppel-  
 Nilsen  
 1986  
 (English ed.  
 1992).

**IF - THEN VIII (1991)**

*To Intuitive Music Group.*

If that which you hear is

satisfactory

clear

convincing

THEN

participate or take a pause.

If not

THEN

do what you can in order to change this situation in the  
direction of the one described above.



**IF - THEN IX (1991)**

*To Intuitive Music Group.*

If that which you hear is  
    acceptable  
    interesting  
    inviting you to participate

THEN

participate and make a suitable amount of pause.

If not

THEN

take a pause for a while

or (alternate freely)

comment the others' playing by means of what you play (for instance, it is allowed to make fun of others' playing, to be aggressive, to insist on having an answer).