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IMPROVISATION IN THE BEGINNING PIANO CLASS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

By

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Denton, Texas

December, 1977

Jones, Nancy Ragsdale, Improvisation in the Beginning Piano Class.
Master of Music (Music Education). December, 1977. 159 pp.,
bibliography, 96 titles.

The problem was to survey and collect ideas on the use of improvisation as a teaching and learning tool in elementary piano instruction and to prescribe activities and exercises for second through fourth grade piano classes. These areas were examined: philosophies and theories influencing traditional instruction, effects of creative keyboard activities on children's musical development, specific teaching strategies using improvisation, evaluative procedures, and suitability of materials for young children.

Data collected from published and unpublished materials were classified, and presented concerning the feasibility of using keyboard improvisation with early elementary children. It was found that suitable improvisational exercises allow the child to organize his perceptions into the basic concepts of music. Recommendations for teachers and researchers were made.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	
Definition of Terms	
Delimitations	
Basic Assumptions	
Background for the Study	
Methodology	
Plan for the Report	
Chapter Bibliography	
II. IMPROVISATION IN HISTORY: THEORY AND PRACTICE . .	19
The Rise of Improvisation	
The Decline of Improvisation	
Current Learning Theories	
Summary	
Chapter Bibliography	
III. CREATIVITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING	39
Basic Principles of Creativity	
Creative Experiences Through Improvisation	
Eliciting Creative Behavior	
Music Reading and Creativity	
Contemporary Idioms in Improvisational Activities	
Summary	
Chapter Bibliography	
IV. TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING AND EVALUATING	
IMPROVISATION	69
Optimum Age for Improvisation Instruction	
Rhythmic Improvisation	
Melodic Improvisation	
Harmonic Improvisation	
Formal Improvisation	
Stylistic Improvisation	
Additional Activities	

	Page
Evaluation	
Evaluative Problems	
Evaluative Procedures	
Improvisation as an Evaluative Tool	
Summary	
Chapter Bibliography	
V. MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR USE IN TEACHING	
IMPROVISATION	106
Teaching Materials	
Pedagogical Resources	
Summary	
Chapter Bibliography	
VI. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	127
APPENDICES	145
APPENDIX A: SELECTED MATERIALS FOR USE IN TEACHING	
IMPROVISATION	
APPENDIX B: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING MATERIALS ON	
IMPROVISATION TO BE USED IN	
CHILDREN'S PIANO CLASSES	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	150

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the inconsistencies of music teaching in the past was that although music was claimed to be one of the creative arts, it was rarely taught that way (23, p. 516). In 1956, Julia Broughton, in Success in Piano Teaching (5, p. 99), exemplified the particular spirit toward creativity in piano instruction prevalent at that time when she observed that "those who strongly advocate creative work have had very little experience in actual piano teaching . . . and I think a great deal of creative work is a waste of time. We might better turn our efforts toward something more practical." In 1954, Hetty Bolton, in her text On Teaching the Piano, included but two short paragraphs on playing simple tunes by ear (3, p. 40).

Then in 1963, E. Paul Torrance wrote that although teachers have often insisted it is more economical to learn by authority, the results of research indicated that man fundamentally prefers to learn in creative ways -- by exploring, manipulating, questioning, experimenting, risking, testing, and modifying ideas (28, p. 12). In fact, there continues to be growing interest in creativity as it relates to music

education. There has been considerable interest in the act of creation itself, the process underlying it, characteristics of creative people, and methods showing how to elicit creative activity (9, p. 3). Few teachers, however, are aware of the art's historical significance or of its educational possibilities, and are, for the most part, unprepared to meet the implications of the development of the increased interest and recognition of the art of improvisation (8, p. 1-2). Perhaps one of the reasons that improvisation has been allowed to decline is that many instructors avoid teaching improvisation due to a weakness in this part of their own background (13, p. 7).

Much has been written in the field of piano pedagogy regarding the development of technical proficiency; however, there is ample evidence which indicates that skill development does not necessarily lead to musical insight (17, p. 19). Perhaps, through active experimentation with sounds and structures, the student can discover for himself those concepts of organization and interaction which are fundamental to musical understanding.

To date, numerous systems incorporating ideas of both the Yale Seminar and recent educational findings have been presented. A common element in all these music education curricula is the use of improvisation and music creativity. Although more

emphasis is on the acquisition of well-rounded musicianship, improvisation unfortunately plays little or no part today in the training of the average piano student (15, p. 38).

One major aspect of modern teaching is the trend toward discovery as a learning procedure. Indeed, the most generally accepted theory of American music education today is that students should discover musical principles through their own exploration and manipulation of sound (14, p. 115). Changes in teaching methods would seem to be coming about as a result of several factors including a shift in the attitude toward reward and punishment, a realization that the function and play of children is exactly the same as learning about themselves and the world about them, and a realization that knowledge must be presented in an interesting manner which is suited to the child's own interests, aptitudes and abilities (9, p. 5).

Music educators are also recognizing the problems involved in the use of improvisation with children, one of which is the difficulty in evaluating creative behavior. Specifically, what should be evaluated: attitudes (quite difficult), skills (relatively simple), cognition (spotty at best), aesthetic sensitivity (almost impossible), or a combination of all these things? Is evaluation to be a part of the learning experience, or is it to remain an external factor?

Another problem faced by piano teachers who are interested in incorporating improvisational activities into their lessons is the lack of resource material geared toward the early elementary age child. Numerous texts and method books have been produced for the adult beginner in piano (generally class piano on the college level for piano minors) which offer instruction in the functional skills deemed so essential to a thorough knowledge of music. These contain in varying degree some material and suggestions for improvisation which are adaptable to the young student. On the other hand, while jazz has brought about a renaissance in improvisation, books dealing with jazz improvisation generally offer very few activities suitable for any but a rapidly advancing older student with a full-sized hand. There is a need for appropriate material to offer suggestions and opportunities, and stimulate enthusiasm for improvisation which would be suitable for use in beginning piano classes in grades two, three, and four.

In summary, the need for this study was influenced by the growing interest in the study of music creativity and improvisation as a teaching and learning tool and the suggested need for a better understanding of these terms as they relate to piano instruction today. It is hoped that by collecting a number of ideas on creative keyboard activities from a variety

of sources it will be possible to synthesize those ideas into a workable guideline that might be useful to teachers interested in using improvisation in their lessons.

This survey will also endeavor to present a guide to the available resources and teaching materials on the subject, and offer a compilation of specific pedagogical routines to aid the teacher in the pursuit of an effective and efficient methodology.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to survey and collect ideas on the use of improvisation as a teaching and learning tool in elementary piano instruction and to prescribe specific activities for the implementation of these ideas with seven- to nine-year-old children in the first year of study in a piano class setting. The answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the attitudes toward music creativity that are held by music education specialists and piano pedagogues, and how do these attitudes affect the use of improvisation in piano study?

2. What specific musical concepts can be taught or reinforced in the weekly piano class by the use of improvisation as an educational tool and can the results be evaluated?

3. What materials and resources are available to aid the piano instructor in incorporating improvisation into the beginning

piano class and how can they be utilized or implemented?

Definition of Terms

The term improvisation refers to spontaneous music-making without the aid of manuscript or memory, a creative musical act demanding instant musical decisions. Groves dictionary succinctly defines improvisation as "the art of thinking and performing music simultaneously" (7, p. 991). It is characterized by subconscious use of concepts with skills and emotion at the same moment and demands an active relationship between the imagination and the keyboard. Improvising musicians make use of "building blocks," choosing from among them, combining, recombining, and rearranging them (21, p. 13). Ferand refers to improvisation as "the spontaneous invention and shaping of music while it is being performed" (11, p. 5), and distinguishes between strict and free improvisation. The former refers to the alteration of or the addition to an already existing composition at the moment of execution. The latter implies simultaneous invention and performance (11, p. 6). Improvisation, then, is the discovery of new relationships of sounds and the ordering of these relationships into a variety of expressive combinations and patterns.

The term improvisational activity refers to a creative exercise lasting about ten minutes in which students perform

music extemporaneously at the keyboard within teacher-imposed limits, either alone or in ensemble with other class members. In this type of activity some areas of the framework have been prearranged so that all factors are not improvised at once. This is sometimes referred to as planned improvisation in which the student has the freedom to change or rearrange only one or two of the basic elements of music while retaining the others in a prearranged structure or form.

The term piano class refers to four or more students of approximately the same age and proficiency level meeting once each week and using either the electronic piano lab or conventional pianos. The class experience in improvisation provides for the free exchange of musical ideas and learning among students.

The term musical development refers to the growth of an individual in the cognitive and affective areas of learning, including the acquisition of the concepts of the elements of music, and employing creativity as an integral part of learning. The purpose of combining the cognitive and affective domains in teaching is to use the former to explain the latter, thus heightening aesthetic awareness and judgment, and providing skills for musical growth. The essence of musical development is the building of a stable framework of musical concepts through a

progressive organization of experiences. It is this conceptual musical framework that permits an individual to think about music (25, p. 7).

The term cognitive refers to the intellectual area of learning and the term affective refers to the domain that includes appreciation, attitudes, interests, and unique to musical learning, musical taste (30, p. 21).

The term concept refers to a clear and complete thought about something that has been acquired through perception (30, p. 12). Woodruff defines a concept as that which remains in the mind following a given learning experience (29, p. 51). Once a new concept has been experienced and discovered by the student, the process is continued through exploration and analysis. Analysis may be followed by the symbolization of the concept.

The term elements of music refers to the physical dimensions of sound (pitch, duration, loudness) and to the more musical manifestations of these dimensions (melody, rhythm, harmony, form, and dynamics).

The term creativity refers to the ability to utilize materials and ideas in new ways. Unusual recombinations of a variety of concepts accessible to an individual result in creativity. A creative product may be considered a thought, an act,

or a construct that is original to its creator (though not necessarily to others) (18, p. 3).

The term musicality refers to those understandings and skills which allow the student to read, write, interpret and use musical symbols for greater personal responsiveness. Essentially, it is the capacity to express a musical idea accurately through pitch and time. It is also the capacity to grasp in its completeness and detail a musical statement heard (20, p. 6). The Yale Seminar Report indicates that a basic musicality should be developed before the teaching of reading, notation, composing, or analysis is attempted, for these skills become mechanical and meaningless without it (20, p. 6).

Delimitations

This study will be concerned only with the elementary age child (grades two through four) in the first year of piano study and having no prior keyboard experience. This is generally considered to be the traditional starting age of children of average ability which make up the majority of most teachers' classes.

This study will not emphasize jazz; however, resources from the developing field of jazz education will be used in terms of basic approaches or the use of rhythmic cells traditionally considered to be jazz-based.

This study will consider improvisation in the piano class setting rather than in the private lesson.

Basic Assumptions

The basic assumption of this study is that improvisation is a skill that can be taught, opposing the idea that only certain persons are born with the potential to improvise. It is further assumed that the systematic use of improvisation in piano teaching is not a widespread practice and that information about its status can be collected without the use of normative survey techniques.

Background for the Study

A review of recent literature reveals the existence of a wide variety of musical objectives. There appears to be a consensus that one of the main purposes of music education should be to provide all children with a creative means of expression and communication, and an outlet for their creative abilities (24, introduction; 27, p. 50-52).

The work of Carl Orff has pointed up serious defects in much of our teaching of children. We have expected them to master difficult instruments such as the piano or violin before they have experienced music; they are taught modes and techniques of expression before they have anything to express. The primary

purpose of music education, as Orff sees it, is the development of a child's creative faculty which manifests itself in the ability to improvise. This can be achieved only by helping a child to make his own music, on his own level, integrated with a host of related activities (24, introduction).

Orff's followers do not expect the masterful improvisation of a trained musician; the goal of extemporaneous performance is rather to form the habit of thinking creatively (14, p. 87). In creative work, the process is often more important than the product.

Benson, Fowler, and many others have written that the creative experience can enable students to discover many of the most basic concepts in music. In 1966, educators taking part in the Manhattanville Project observed that true discovery of the nature of music usually demands involvement in creative activities (17, p. 16), and that to emphasize an "evaluation of skill developed separately from the total musical experience . . . is to create a distorted hierarchy of values which can ultimately narrow the entire learning experience" (17, p. 12). Along this line, the Pilot Projects sponsored by the Contemporary Music Project in Baltimore, San Diego, and Farmingdale present convincing evidence that the ability of children is frequently underestimated, and that they are challenged by experiences

that include creating and performing in conjunction with listening (10, p. 87).

According to Bradley, student involvement in a total musical experience provides greater motivation and results in more musical growth and learning than the traditional performance oriented program. The underlying philosophy of Bradley's study was based on the theory that the various structural aspects of music can become an integral part of the learner's musical experience and involve the gradual development of a student's perception of each of the essential musical elements by the use and manipulation of each element as it relates to the total concept of music (4, p. 236).

Is it the prime function of music teachers to teach pieces which are all too soon forgotten? Robinson, Jarvis, Mehr, Zimmerman, and other noted authorities in the field consider the goal far broader and more basic. Mehr proposes that generalization is not the beginning of learning, but the result, and that learning must begin with living experience, including ample opportunity for creativity (19, p. 10, 13). Zimmerman further states that it is from a child's various perceptions of music that he develops the music concepts that permit him to make comparisons, to organize sounds, to generalize, and finally to apply the emerging concepts to new situations (30, p. 12).

Regarding keyboard improvisation specifically, Lindstrom has observed that frustration among students with note reading has been noticeably diminished as a direct and immediate result of successful experience in simple melodic improvisation (15, p. 38). Furthermore, if there is a marked correlation, as William Newman states, between the ability to improvise (an aural approach to the piano) and the ability to memorize, sight read, and demonstrate good fluency in piano playing (an elusive quality) (22, p. 6), clearly it is the duty of the conscientious teacher to guide and encourage children in their spontaneous music-making before emphasizing the cognitive aspects of musical learning (30, p. 15).

Methodology

In collecting the data, method books, pedagogy texts, articles, and unpublished research studies dealing with the subject of improvisation were examined. Attitudes and ideas on the inclusion of creative keyboard activities in traditional piano instruction were studied as well as how and why these attitudes have developed and their relationship to current theories of learning and teaching. Ideas regarding methods for eliciting creative behavior, the relationship of music reading to creative activity, and the use of contemporary compositional techniques

in the improvisations of elementary age students in grades two through four were collected.

Guidelines for teaching and evaluating improvisation in classes of beginning piano students are presented as are theories on the optimum age for beginning the study of improvisation. Specific strategies for the teaching of certain musical concepts to young children through the use of creative keyboard activities were examined. Finally, selected printed materials and resources for use in teaching improvisation were surveyed.

The collected data were classified according to information pertinent to each sub-problem, then presented as current thoughts concerning the feasibility and practice of using keyboard improvisation with young children.

Plan for the Report

The subject matter for this report is presented in the following manner:

Chapter II - Improvisation in History: Theory and Practice - contains a brief history of the rise and subsequent decline of improvisation in performance and teaching followed by a discussion of learning theories and philosophies of music education.

Chapter III - Creativity in Teaching and Learning - contains a discussion of theories of creativity and its use in children's

music education including methods for eliciting creative behavior, the relationship of music reading to creative activity and contemporary idioms in improvisation activities.

Chapter IV - Techniques for Teaching and Evaluating Improvisation - presents (a) some guidelines for activities upon which the musical concepts of rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and style can begin to be developed, (b) a discussion of the optimum age for beginning improvisation instruction, and (c) evaluative problems and procedures. This chapter will concentrate on compositional techniques which are used extensively in children's keyboard literature as well as those which provide a variety of opportunities for guided and free improvisation.

Chapter V - Materials and Resources for Use in Teaching Improvisation - presents a survey of methods, texts, and other resources on improvisation which are available to the keyboard instructor and suggestions on their use and implementation.

Chapter VI - Summary, Findings, and Recommendations - contains a summary of the report, findings of the study, and recommendations for teachers and researchers.

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CHAPTER II

IMPROVISATION IN HISTORY:

THEORY AND PRACTICE

From earliest primitive beginnings, improvisation has been the primary factor and impulse in the development of the art of music (21, p. 38). In fact, musicologist Bruno Nettl believes that it should be considered one of the few universals of music in which all cultures share in one way or another (26, p. 4).

The Rise of Improvisation

Beginning with Ambrosian and Gregorian chant of about the eighth through the eleventh centuries, a form of improvisation is inherent in the rich adornment of melodies (10, p. 6). Polyphony of the centuries following the chant (the twelfth to fifteenth centuries approximately) seems to be a product of improvisation in which vocalists and later instrumentalists improvised over a liturgical cantus firmi (17, p. 30).

The music of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries placed great emphasis on improvisation. Before the general availability of the printed score, improvisation was necessarily regarded as an essential tool of the competent

keyboard player (21, p. 38). History indicates that many of the most illustrious composers were known to improvise freely on new thematic material or on familiar tunes even in formal recital situations (17, p. 32). Masters such as Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven were as famous for their improvising as for their written compositions (15, p. 404).

The first comprehensive study dealing with improvisation was made by Ernest Ferand in 1938. His book, Die Improvisation in der Musik (Brunn, Czechoslovakia: Rhein-Verlag Zurich, 1938), was followed in 1956 by an anthology entitled Die Improvisation in Beispielen aus neun Jahrhunderten abendlandischer Musik (Improvisation in Nine Centuries of Western Music: An Anthology with a Historical Introduction). Ferand translated this latter work into English in 1961, making more accessible a comprehensive history of the scope and significance of improvisation. Other studies of importance to the history of improvisation include those of Dannreuther, Dart, Dolmetsch, Donington, and Simpson, who described the seventeenth century English practice of improvisation known as "divisions" (15, p. 405).

The fact that the major treatises of the past devoted much space to the discussion of improvisation gives ample proof of the importance that it played in the period. While not all writers are of the same opinion regarding "how much" or "when"

improvisation should be employed, "the very fact that there was a controversy over its usage indicates common use" (8, p. 20).

Historically, there is "scarcely a single musical technique or form of composition that did not originate in improvisatory practice or was not essentially influenced by it. The whole history of the development of music is accomplished by manifestations of the drive to improvise" (10, p. 5). Ferand further states that improvisation was always a powerful force in the creation of new forms, and that every historical study "that doesn't take into account the improvisational element in living musical practice, must of necessity present an incomplete, indeed a distorted picture" (10, p. 5).

Some outgrowths of very free improvisations are the toccata, prelude, ricercar, fantasia, and intonazione. These may have risen from the musician's need to warm up his technique, fix the tonality for a vocal performance, set the stage briefly for some other music to come, or occasionally fill an interlude between songs and dances. The earliest examples of each of these forms are virtually brief improvisations (30, p. 81-83). Pincherele suggests that some additional reasons for improvising may have been the desire to fill out a sonority, the desire to show one's knowledge, the desire to prevent monotony, or the desire to express personality (31, p. 155).

Ensemble improvisation played an important part in Renaissance and Baroque music until the introduction of the solo cadenza in the Baroque concerto grosso. The baroque art of variation or ornamentation upon the repeat of a section also provided the improvisational basis for another important form -- the instrumental, classic sonata allegro (17, p. 31).

The eighteenth century and early nineteenth century may be regarded as the high period of the art of improvisation at the keyboard. In the classic period it was the general practice to improvise cadenzas on motifs or themes of a concerto (10, p. 19). In most of the earlier keyboard concertos (including those by Haydn, Mozart, the first four of Beethoven), the cadenzas are not written out, but were supposed to be improvised by the performer. Donington writes that it was also customary during this period for a performer to decorate or improve a melody for the purpose of making the music more interesting and offering musical scope for the player's virtuosity (7, p. 110). Later on, in the Romantic period, Moscheles, Liszt, Franck, and Bruckner were famous for their improvisations, which were frequently included in concert programs (15, p. 405).

With such a rich history, why (as Apel states) has the great art of improvisation been lost? Why has one of the major disciplines necessary to the complete musician been so neglected in

the mainstream of musical education? Why have so many teachers been more interested in piloting a student through a prescribed course of study (12, p. 310) than in leading him through musical experiences of total involvement by way of his own creativity? Why has research in the area of music curriculum and learning given little attention to improvisation and musical creativity (9, p. 2)?

The Decline of Improvisation

Specifically or implicitly accepted in all the general discussions is the suddenness of the creative impulse. The improvisator makes "unpremeditated, spur-of-the-moment decisions, and because they are not thought out, their individual importance, if not their collective significance, is sometimes denied" (26, p. 3). Actually, it was the fashion some years ago to discourage improvisation (sometimes referred to as playing by ear) as a distraction, even a harmful influence (27, p. 5). It was a common theory that pupils should know the fundamental rules of harmony and melody writing before trying to create or compose and that "most of a student's time should be used for absorbing practical knowledge" (2, P. 99).

Perhaps the real culprit in what began to appear as low creativity among students was high skill on the part of teachers

in discouraging curiosity, experimentation, and speculation (33, p. 257). The child was regarded as a passive receptacle for the teacher's wisdom. Early in this century, the authority of the teacher and text was absolute. Teachers who encouraged independent thinking and free inquiry were the exception; the inventive mind, being disruptive, was unwelcome (12, p. 164-5).

Groch credits the rapid and haphazard growth of psychology and education as new sciences with the denial of creativity and the construction of learning theories which accounted for knowledge but not discovery, for memory but not innovation (12, p. 138). For example, behaviorist learning theory did not promote creativity in that it tended to overlook important positive internal motives and drives such as curiosity, the urge to explore, joy in learning, and the desire to achieve competence and to emulate a model (12, p. 172). The behaviorists viewed motivation for learning as primarily external.

Progressive education under the leadership of Dewey was the first movement to offer encouragement to the creative child. Progressive education treated students individually rather than statistically and it recognized curiosity and imagination in the learning process, but its theories proved to be too vague and inadequate. It placed much more emphasis on critical thinking than on original problem-solving. After

reaching its zenith of popularity in the thirties, progressive education retreated in disgrace. Unfortunately, what was wise and valuable in Dewey's educational philosophy, especially the justification of music instruction, was never given a chance (12, p. 186, 183).

Gunther Schuller (in his forward to Coker's text) notes that the conception of music improvisation as a vague, nebulous act, fundamentally outside the control of the "inspired" creator, has unfortunately persisted for many years. He states that this myth has been propagated by those who regard thought processes or any intellectual activity whatsoever threatening to true artistic creation (3, p. viii).

Another misconception about improvisation has been that it can't be taught. The power of improvisation is supposed to be a gift, a power that cannot be developed, much less brought to life by special studies. Jaques-Dalcroze has viewed this as manifestly an error and states that "countless experiences enable man to assert that any child sufficiently musical to profit by piano-forte instruction is capable of improvising" (16, p. 371). R. Murray Schafer agrees and states that he has "still not met a child who was incapable of making an original piece of music" (35, p. 224).

Current Learning Theories

Today, the two leading brands of learning theory are stimulus-response theories and cognitive theories. The first is basically a mechanistic view in which learning is a matter of forming correct habits of response, and stored knowledge is acquired by drill. Traditional private piano teaching is based on this psychology and includes the learning of notes before playing, the presentation of beginning material from Middle C up and down, etc. The other most common way of looking at the learning process is from the Gestaltist viewpoint, which proposes that abstract facts and symbols cannot be considered the bases for learning, but must be considered the summary, the generalization of learning that has gone on before (24, p. 9-10). To the cognitive psychologist the essence of understanding is not mechanical, but involves an intelligent act of knowing.

Learning by "insight" is central to classical Gestalt and other cognitive psychologies. An important factor in this theory is the factor called pacing, or the intelligent distribution of work and rest periods in the mastery of new materials or problems on the part of the learner. Such distribution is intended to insure the steady development of insight by the pupil at all levels of maturation (37, p. 173). Today, cognitive psychologies flourish which welcome creative behavior and divergent thinking;

however, theories of conditioning, particularly operant conditioning (B. F. Skinner) can still be found focusing teaching on behavior rather than on the student (12, p. 178).

Association is defined as mental connections established between things in our experience and may be the most important mental activity connected with creativity and improvisation (9, p. 67). The total concept of trial and error inherent in musical production relates to the general function of thinking as stated in association theory. This theory leads one to conclude that musical activity can be learned, because it is a normal function of thinking and learning (7, p. 94). Thorpe refers to the ability to discern relationships in a new or problematic situation as an act which could lead to the making of an adaptive adjustment, the solution of a problem, or the improvement of a skill; an insight usually follows a period of trial and error. These solutions gained by insight can be repeated and also utilized in new situations. This concept of Thorpe's is very similar to the association theory.

Groch feels that learning processes are actually a combination of understanding and habit formation. The moment of insight may be preceded by many trials, whereas trial and error learning may involve the manipulation of thoughts as well as physical objects and may be controlled and purposeful (12, p. 162).

As the teaching of reading and writing music progresses, corresponding progress should be expected in the ability to express and grasp musical ideas. For this reason, discovery as a teaching-learning strategy has been very popular in recent years. In music education it has been supported in the belief that it leads to the formation of concepts, and encourages and makes use of improvising and composing (1, p. 31). Schwadron states that the discovery method, a non-verbal approach to the art, is well suited to the teaching of music, for the developing and testing of concepts, and for the cultivation of discrimination. Whereas educators have in the past concentrated primarily on teaching about the known, the discovery method gives attention to the task of finding out about what is not known, and learning by this route is internalized. Schwadron further advocates learning experiences using leading questions, musical problems, and other resourceful challenges that invite thinking about and experience with musical ideas (36, p. 109). Eberhard reports that the emphasis on discovery in learning causes the learner to "organize what he is encountering in a manner not only designed to discover regularity and relatedness, but also to avoid the kind of information drift that fails to keep account of the uses to which information might have to be put" (9, p. 7).

While stating that one of the greatest difficulties that teachers have with the discovery method is "the necessity to deliberately withhold information," Olson identifies several steps which should unfold in order for this method to achieve its maximum effectiveness: the problem is presented, the children search for an answer and express their answers, the process by which the answers were found is described, the answers are compared and tested for verification, new questions which arise are explored, later lessons are planned as a reinforcement by the presentation of the same concept in other musical settings, and then last of all, terms and symbols relating to the musical concepts are used (28, p. 53). Other specialists agree that a conceptual approach must begin with an experience, proceed with an understanding of that experience and continue with a reapplication or a re-experience (17, p. 22; 34, p. 135; 23, p. 234).

While the committees of the Yale Seminar were attempting to incorporate twentieth century musical changes into public school music, advancements as to the manner in which students learn were being forwarded by scholars of psychology and education (9, p.2). Today many believe that conceptual understanding is the main goal of the music curriculum for all children and that it is imperative for intrinsic involvement, that it produces broader, deeper insights and facilitates later growth

(13, p. 211; 17, p. 38; 22, p. 24). A concept is committed to the subconscious only with knowledge of the variety of ways in which it may occur in music, some actual experience with it and the development of skills for its execution. The first step in the development of a musical concept is described by Hartshorn as the direct aural perception, for the distinguishing characteristic of music is tone and tone is perceived through the ear (13, p. 211). Woodruff agrees and states that while perception is closely related to listening, they are not the same process; perception results in the formation of concepts. The data received are supplemented, interpreted, and given meaning as the mind reacts to the sense impressions in terms of past experiences, present situation, and purposes or goals. The next step involves recall, re-examination, and mental exploration, putting bits of meaning together until they make the most sense to the student. The last step is the application of the concept; it is put into practice (9, p. 59, 65-6). This closely parallels a key concept underlying Piaget's theory of intellectual growth and understanding -- that of conservation.

The concept of conservation, as described by Pfloderer, is necessary for all rational activity. It results when a given musical element remains unchanged in the child's thinking even though changes occur in its form (32, p. 6). The conservation

of a musical element or thematic material is an important factor in the hearing and understanding of musical relationships, for it enables a child to identify previously heard material when it occurs in changing contexts (39, p. 20). Furthermore, when that material is organized in terms of a student's own interests and cognitive development, it has the best chance of being accessible in the memory (9, p. 7).

Leonhard cites one danger in the emphasis on concepts and structured learning -- that of becoming so involved in the specifics and minutiae of music that one forgets that the musical experience is basically an affective experience (19, p. 19). However, he concurs with Kolar (17, p. 89) that the conceptual approach is fundamental to the development of the ear, eye, and mind for musical improvisation. Since a musical concept is a mental image of music, it is an absolute requirement that it be based upon a direct experience with music and a conscious awareness of music that calls for something more than casually hearing it or performing it. This is one of the strengths of a conceptual organization of content in the teaching of music (13, p. 212). Of course, this conceptual organization in music learning is dependent upon aural perception, since music learning begins with the perception of sound (39, p. 12).

One man who pioneered the use of improvisation in the music instruction of young children was the German composer Carl Orff. Orff recognized the fact that various aspects of the child's musical development must occur simultaneously and that creativity must be encouraged at all stages of complexity. His description of his educational plan included the suggestion that teachers who are themselves creative, flexible, and open to new ideas are best suited to fostering these characteristics in their students. Orff's followers do not expect from the young beginners the masterful improvisations of a trained musician; the goal of extemporaneous performances is rather to form the habit of thinking creatively (18, p. 73, 87). McMurray writes that when pupils are encouraged to try their hand at producing musical sounds in an experimental attitude, then the level of interest is likely to be high and the learning good, no matter how unskilled the performance (23, p. 51).

Finally, Leonhard and House (20, p. 133) define literacy as the "conscious use of information, skills, appreciation, and musical concepts in a cognitive framework," and the "ability to apply consciously one's knowledge . . . to all types of musical experience." The simultaneous spiral of literacy and creativity provides continuous growth in musical awareness and perception. Literacy establishes the conceptual knowledge of musical facts

and skills while creativity expressively applies the musical knowledge, understanding, and skills to situations which are new or different to the individual. Improvisation can be the vital bridge relating literacy to creativity and vice versa, by providing students with an outlet for experimentation which illuminates abstract musical thinking (literacy) and, at the same time, offers him the opportunity to express himself (creativity) (17, p. 5; 38, p. 22).

Summary

Improvisation has undoubtedly been a factor and impulse in the development of the art of music from its earliest beginnings. Liturgical chant from the eighth century as well as the polyphony of the twelfth century were probably products of improvisation. The music of the sixteenth, seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries placed great emphasis on improvisation and it was regarded as an essential tool of the keyboard player. Many illustrious composers were known to improvise skillfully. Numerous forms of composition such as the prelude, toccata, and fantasia originated in improvisatory practice and the art of improvisation at the keyboard reached its high point in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Despite a rich history, the art of improvisation declined dramatically during the last century and came to be regarded as

unnecessary in performance and improper in the piano studio. An unfortunate misconception persisted that the teaching of the "vague" and "nebulous" art of improvisation was impossible and that only a few gifted and inspired individuals were capable of this type of inventiveness.

The last two decades have brought some renewed interest in improvisation and educators have begun to consider it as having integrity as an idea and validity as an educational tool.

The two most prominent learning theories are the stimulus-response and the cognitive, the first primarily a mechanistic view (learning by drill and repetition) and the second is a Gestaltist view (learning by insight). Association is regarded as an important mental activity connected with a creative mode of learning. The trend toward discovery as a learning procedure is a major aspect of modern teaching, and the conceptual organization of music is stressed.

Orff did much to further the use of improvisation in the music instruction of young children. He advised encouraging creativity at all stages of complexity to maintain high pupil interest and develop musical literacy.

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CHAPTER III

CREATIVITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learning in creative ways requires certain skills not required in learning by authority -- the skills and strategies of inquiry and creative problem solving (33, p. 15). Creativity is not possible without discovery, for when an individual thinks or acts creatively he is discovering something previously unknown to him. Torrance writes that creativity as a learning process provides the motivation and opportunity for all children to learn more effectively than they would with traditional approaches which stress acquisition of facts rather than the development of ideas.

H. C. Colles comments that "years ago, it was said to be doubtful whether the art of improvisation could ever be satisfactorily taught, but the statement could hardly stand today. It has been realized that not only can it be taught . . . but it is one of the most direct ways of teaching music itself." He describes it as the most natural means of approach (8, p. 991). Current uses of improvisation include its employment by "rock" and jazz musicians as well as its use in performance by college faculty ensembles and in other areas by amateurs and professionals

alike. Its use as a method for teaching music in the elementary school is becoming more common, largely as a result of the experiments and publications of Carl Orff (9, p. 100).

In creative teaching and learning, uniqueness and individuality are stressed. Perhaps this is the necessary reinforcement which causes inventiveness to appear again and again so that we can get at it and work with it (13, p. 20).

Basic Principles of Creativity

Hickok and Smith list as a basic principle of creativity that all children are born creative, that creativity is not a special talent doled out to a chosen few, and that its development depends largely on the environment into which it is placed. They state that while there is a reasonable relationship between creativity and intelligence, even slow learning children can be creative (13, p. 9). Creativity has been described as largely an outgrowth of attitude rather than an activity, a set of predispositions rather than a production line (34, p. 36). According to Hallman,

. . . creative abilities are to be interpreted as natural, as normal, as common to all mankind, and therefore, as modifiable by environmental conditions. Creativity, as a part of personality structure, is subject to educative processes, and is not a function of gods, madmen, or geniuses (12, p. 19).

Vaughan writes that creative behavior is typically accompanied by relatively high levels of energy. She postulates a developmental sequence based on this idea of energy levels. The first stage is acquisitional, in which the student assimilates the concepts of rhythm, melody, and so forth, as well as certain attitudes and predispositions toward music and which can be described as precreative. The next level of energy is combinatorial, at which the child is encouraged to use the basic materials of music in different combinations and under trial and error conditions. The third level described by Vaughan is the developmental level at which there is a recognition that creative development means not merely increasing productivity, but increasing insight. The fourth level is the synergistic, where the creative attempts of the individual come together with the requirements of the classroom (34, p. 36).

Hallman equates the central problem of creativity with the central problem of education. He concludes that an inventive mode of response can be taught because "it is the process of developing oneself as a personality, of unfettering the chains of habit, routine, and repression, of shaping one's surroundings, of relating oneself productively to others, of identifying oneself and defining one's own existence" (12, p. 23). The traits contributing to a young person's creativity, traits

which can be developed to some degree by every child, are recognized by many and perhaps best described by McClusky: receptivity to sound stimuli, ability to see the gap between what is and what could be, flexibility to toy with sounds, and discernment to find order underlying varied musical experiences (20, p. 35).

Petzold concluded that aural understanding, which is the reflection of accurate auditory perception, results "from intelligent thought and not from mechanical imitation, from judgments made independently by the child in terms of his understanding of basic musical concepts and not from judgments made for the child by the teacher" (26, p. 43). The results of his study suggest that the music program must include a variety of creative activities designed to stimulate and challenge the child if he is to develop an aural understanding of musical sounds. In addition, Bradley found that greater competence can be developed in students for both aural and visual areas of musical learning through the use of and encouragement of the creative potential (4, p. 240).

Creative Experiences Through Improvisation

Participants at the Yale Seminar in 1963 proposed that the creating of music should accompany other activities from the outset of instruction to help the student to become inventive, to gain facility in making new combinations of materials, and to

actually serve him as a vehicle for learning. Alice Beer adds to these some other reasons for including improvisation in the music program. First, creative experiences give the student an opportunity to make musical judgments. An improvisation requires a very quick response. Decisions have to be made within seconds. For example, where will something sound best? How loudly or quietly should it be played? What kind of texture should be used? Second, these experiences give the student great leeway in fulfilling assignments; they permit him to draw on all he knows about music to make his composition interesting and satisfying. Musical concepts lie at the source of musical understanding. Only with concepts of meter, duration, tempo, melodic movement, and formal design, is the organization of music itself possible. Through improvisation the child can express in musical terms what he himself feels and understands. Third, creative experiences provide the student with a greater chance for success. Finally, they help the teacher to assess what the student knows (3, p. 120-121).

According to Sheehy, there is a vast difference between uncontrolled haphazard banging on a keyboard and thoughtful experimentation with it, even though the results may sound alike. In one case, the child is not really interested nor even thinking about what he is doing; in the other, he is

making a conscious effort to produce sounds that satisfy him. It is the difference between not using his ears and using them (30, p. 38). However, Smith emphasizes that the child does not have to create something completely original to be involved in a creative experience and, in fact, the child is making a creative contribution whenever he uses familiar musical elements in a different manner (32, p. 188).

Improvisation provides for the continuous, imaginative reapplication of former learning (15, p. 5). Wollner, in her text on keyboard improvisation, characterizes this type of creative experience as the immediate response to an internal musical idea as the creator uses his "mind . . . emotion and . . . motor capabilities at one and the same time" (36, p. 13).

Improvisation serves the student as a release from a preoccupation all too often characterized by mechanical fingerwork, imitation, and at best, interpretation (37, p. 22). In the past, teaching methods in keyboard instruction have often been what Wollner describes as either "stilted and stiff or loose and careless" (36, p. 15), but progress has been made toward an ideal of discipline and freedom.

Creative improvisatory experiences provide opportunities for realizing each student's potential in the expression of musical concepts and skills and establishes along with literacy,

opportunities for more knowledgeable, meaningful aesthetic experiences (15, p. 36). Schafer writes that "one learns almost nothing about the actual functioning of music by sitting in mute surrender before it." He believes that one learns about sound primarily by making sound, about music by making music, and that "all our investigations into sound should be verified empirically by making sounds ourselves and by examining the results" (28, p. 49). Ling agrees and writes that producing your own music provides insights into the structure of the art and its symbolization that cannot be learned better in any other way (18, p. 95).

Lindstrom has discovered that a student will respond with enthusiasm to the new-found freedom of improvisation and that the new confidence at the piano can and must be employed to transform conventional piano study into a more personal form of communication (17, p. 38). Knowing how to improvise, the student has the tools for continuous exploration and application of musical ideas. With this background, the student will be able to maintain an ongoing growth process in music after formal lessons have been terminated.

Duke writes that the small number of players who "survive musical education with an ability to improvise contrasts sharply with the large number of improvisors who have undergone no

formal music education." Perhaps we are not only failing to produce improvisors, we may be preventing their development (9, p. 180-181). The aim in teaching improvisation today is the attainment of fluency, discipline, and control, and its importance lies in the opportunities this activity provides for the creative education of all students of music (15, p. 34).

Eliciting Creative Behavior

Children are potentially creative. This realization has prompted leading educators to recognize and encourage individual creativity and to promote the establishment of an environment within the classroom and studio that is conducive to creative behavior (4, p. 235). Today, studies of creativity and prescriptions for its nurture are being contributed by psychologists and psychiatrists of diverse schools, as well as by philosophers, theologians, and existentialist writers (11, p. 244).

Although the creative process remains a mystery to scholars, it is generally felt that creative thinking is similar to the problem solving process. This implies that basic creativity is not confined to the fine arts, but appears in any field of human endeavor and is therefore not limited to the gifted person (10, p. 67). Groch states that creativity is a product of genetic qualities, formative childhood experiences and an environment which offers the opportunity to develop and demonstrate ability (11, p. 299).

Children learn best when teaching methods are tailored to their past experience, and their creative capacity is particularly subject to motivation, maturity, and such variables as the ability to concentrate. The ideal climate for creativity is one which provides both stimulation and reasonable security; however, it is emphasized that creativity is not haphazard self-expression, nor does it thrive in an atmosphere of self-indulgence or permissiveness (11, p. 294, 299).

Andrews concluded from his findings that social and psychological factors do have an important influence on the process by which creative ability is translated into innovative outputs (1, p. 125). For example, the chance for innovation improves if innovation is expected. It was also observed with reasonable consistency that a student is more able to make creative responses when he has some power in decision making, when he feels secure and comfortable in his role, when his teacher "stays out of the way," and when his motivational level is relatively high (1, p. 126). Research indicates that children engaging in creative attempts have often been treated along punitive lines by their teacher and are considered to have "silly" or "senseless" ideas (13, p. 19).

While the teacher can and must be creative, his function is to stimulate not dominate, to encourage not control, to

question far more than to answer. Discovery may be guided but never dictated (19, p. 23). Research shows that the more children are allowed to manipulate, explore, experiment and discover, the more creative behavior they feel free to exhibit (13, p. 25). The teacher should offer clues and suggest possibilities to stimulate the exploration without controlling it. He must be as unintrusive as possible and resist the impulse to inflict his expertise on the student. He must be a guide, a creator of problems and a resource person.

In warming up pupils for creative thinking, Torrance advises avoiding the giving of examples or illustrations which will freeze or unduly shape their thinking (33, p. 18). However, Nash and Nye stress that certain restrictions are essential for the well-being of the young student. Lack of specifics often causes the learner to flounder and withdraw. Lack of boundaries often takes away his willingness to explore and lessens his security (24, p. 6; 25, p. 62). When creativity is regarded as making choices, Duke feels that a logical procedure designed to teach a person to make those choices should begin with a small number of possibilities. As a student acquires confidence in his ability, the number of alternatives may be increased (9, p. 132). For example, students may be required to maintain a certain rhythmic pattern while making melodic choices, or the

harmonic choices may be predetermined and the student is required to invent rhythmic patterns.

Motivational tensions are a prerequisite to eliciting creative behavior. Motivation can be natural or contrived by the teacher, and both can have some highly creative results (13, p. 15). Self-initiated learning is encouraged and excessive conformity is discouraged. The release of the tensions, along with the aesthetic satisfactions that come with the creation of a new product or with the working through of a problem make the creative process cyclic (13, p. 11, 24). Duke agrees and writes that providing encouragement and the opportunity for improvisation is probably the most important part of the teacher's rôle (9, p. 222).

Group effort heightens the individual's involvement, and his being part of the group makes possible results that he cannot achieve individually. Students are less inhibited in expressing themselves when they are among other students rather than alone with the teacher. Approaches should be designed so that several students can improvise simultaneously with a minimum of notice and criticism. As part of a group, a student's first attempts at improvisation are not as subject to criticism as they might be if he were playing alone (5, p. 44; 9, p. 133).

In an environment conducive to experimentation through improvisation, each child will have the opportunity and time to discover, investigate, and explore music in all its phases. Torrance advises making assignments which call for original work, independent learning, and self-initiated projects. He recommends that teachers provide progressive warm-up experiences and include procedures which permit one thing to lead to another, and initiate activities which make creative thinking both legitimate and rewarding (33, p. 14-15).

The teacher should encourage his students to inquire, explore, search, experiment, analyze, plan, summarize, generalize, and evaluate. He should encourage diversity of thought rather than conformity (3, p. 121). The teacher must be willing to let things "happen," to let one thing lead to another, but always with adequate guidance. The Manhattanville Project report stresses that it is far more important that learning activities follow the course of inquiry of the students than that they follow the teacher's plan book (19, p. 11). Improvisation is an active, not a passive pursuit. The student and teacher must both learn to face the unexpected without anxiety or nervousness. Teaching is working in ensemble. Welsh calls for teachers to work in ensemble with their students in order to establish complete musicianship from the earliest beginnings

(35, p. 41). Children will flourish and grow as problem-solvers, learners, and accomplisners to the degree that their teacher is able to create a climate that makes stimulating demands without threat and explicitly appreciates the process. (27, p. 265).

Music Reading and Creativity

Educators involved in the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Project observed that creative exploration with primary focus on conceptual understanding has had a most interesting effect on the development of some skills. Notational skills in particular appear to be assimilated easily by the student when the musical concepts and frame of reference are established first. In addition, the Yale Seminar Report notes that creative activities are a sure means of not only developing musicality, but also of teaching reading (23, p. 53).

All too often the busy work of naming notes and drawing clefs has little to do with actual musical experience. Mursell states that "the symbols of notation must always be taught in terms of their musical meanings and in application to musical situations and experiences, never merely in terms of verbal definitions and arithmetical designations" (22, p. 153). He goes on to say that much of the hostility toward the teaching of the notational symbols probably arises from the tendency to teach them in and through verbalisms.

Teachers must not think of learning to play the piano as synonymous with learning to read music. For children, a piano is a sound-making instrument, not an object to which one transfers notes read from a printed page (30, p. 32). Mehr, Sheehy, and others concur that children should not wait to play the piano until they can read the printed word, nor should the growing student's playing be limited to pieces in which he can "figure out" all the notes (21, p. 14).

Many teachers are afraid to allow the child to play by ear because they think he will not learn to read music. This reflects a wrong conception of what reading music really is. Real music reading (as contrasted with mere note spelling) occurs when "notation serves as stimulus to the player's ear, memory, to all his musical powers" (21, p. 18). The musically literate individual reads music because he is able to translate visual symbols into sounds (6, p. 219). The child's ability to grasp and use musical concepts progresses much faster than his muscular development or notational skills. In fact, when he is dealing only with sounds, his intuitive musicianship in improvisation far outstrips his ability to put his musical ideas into graphic notation (19, p. 19).

Why should his musical expression wait for his reading to catch up? If allowed to learn through creative activities such

as improvisation, he will develop coordination, knowledge of the keyboard, and the ability to analyze in the process (21, p. 18). Aronoff suggests that the most effective approach is to focus on the children's personal experience of the sound that is the music, and provide the symbolic representation in the context of directions and comments. She feels that music notation should be evolved as needed with rich musical experiences always preceding its introduction (2, p. 133-4). Problems of notation will be discovered as children attempt to devise symbols for the sounds in their improvisations. Such projects are important in the study of musical elements and structures, and Landis and Carder propose that these projects may have important value in building attitude toward less creative learning experiences (16, p. 115).

Contemporary Idioms in Improvisational Activities

The artistic and educational rationale of some current music programs includes not only discovery, conceptual learning, and the importance of total musical experience, but also the music of our time as the logical place to begin instruction (19, p. 20). The twentieth century gives rise to new sounds and new styles which result, to some extent, from exploratory improvisation. Tone clustering, triadic movement, and other new sound techniques develop from experimentation. Jazz and rock are the

most outstanding examples of contemporary "sounds" which rely upon improvisation in the performance (15, p. 32). Indeed, in our present culture, the bulk of activity in improvisation is in jazz music (7, p. 2). The Yale Seminar Report states that "jazz / . . . is one of the finest vehicles for the improvising-composing-performing complex" (23, p. 10). One of the major contributions made by jazz has been the keeping alive of traditions of collective and solo improvisation (9, p. 136).

Much has been written about the birth of jazz and the importance that improvisation plays in jazz. In fact, Duke writes that the two words -- jazz and improvisation -- have been used together so frequently that they have become almost synonymous in the minds of many persons including jazz players themselves (9, p. 15-16). Gunther Schuller has correctly called improvisation the "heart and soul of jazz" (29, p. 58); however, jazz is not the heart and soul of improvisation and they are not one and the same. Some musical elements recognized as common to jazz such as particular rhythmic or harmonic patterns may be employed successfully in teaching improvisation to young beginners; however, as Duke notes, the problems of the teaching of jazz style should not be compounded by adding the problems involved in the teaching of such fundamentals as how to count, how to produce musical tones, or how to play notes (9, p. 216).

The Manhattanville Project Report states that the music of the twentieth century is truly relevant artistically and educationally, and that the artistic frame of reference which the child develops should be grounded on the here and now, that the "unity, logic, and meaning of music be viewed through a perspective which is compatible with the viability of the art" (19, p. 20).

Summary

Years ago, creativity in general and improvisation in particular were regarded as impossible to teach and considered to be functions of "gods, madmen, or geniuses" (12, p. 19). It has been realized, however, that not only can creativity be satisfactorily taught, but it is a natural means of approaching music and its use as a teaching method in the elementary school is becoming more common each year.

A basic principle of creativity is that all children are born creative and that its development depends largely on the environment into which it is placed. Hallman defined creative abilities as natural, normal, and a part of personality structure, and therefore subject to educative processes. Studies by Petzold and Bradley have shown that the use of the creative potential aids the child in developing an aural understanding

of musical sounds. Vaughan concurs and describes four levels of energy that typically accompany creative behavior: acquisitional, combinatorial, developmental, and synergistic. She postulates a developmental sequence based on this idea of energy levels.

Educators have written that including improvisation in the music program gives the student an opportunity to make musical judgments, permits him to draw on all he knows about music to fulfill assignments, provides him with a greater chance of success, and helps the teacher assess what the student knows. Furthermore, improvisation frees the student from a preoccupation with mechanical fingerwork and imitation, and provides him with insights into the structure of the art and its symbolization.

In order to elicit creative behavior from students, the teacher must stimulate, not dominate; he must guide discovery, but never dictate. The teacher should offer clues and suggest possibilities to stimulate the children's explorations. Research has shown that while the teacher must be unintrusive, he must be a guide and a resource person and offer certain restrictions and boundaries to prevent floundering and a lessening of security on the part of the student. The release of

motivational tensions and the satisfaction that comes with the working through of a musical problem tend to perpetuate the creative process. The teacher who stimulates the student's imagination through creative problem-solving is the teacher who prepares the student for a life of continued growth and learning (31, p. 22).

It has been noted that creative activities not only develop musicality, but also teach music reading skills. Notation appears to be assimilated easily by the student when the musical concepts are established first. Music notation should be evolved as needed to provide the symbolic representation for the musical sounds experienced by the children.

The artistic and educational rationale of some current music programs includes the music of our time as the logical place to begin instruction. The twentieth century gives rise to new sounds and styles which result, to some extent, from exploratory improvisation. In our present culture, the bulk of activity in musical improvisation is in jazz music, and some musical elements common to jazz music may be employed successfully in teaching improvisation to young beginners.

A properly balanced curriculum should require creativity, not to ferret out the creative artists of the future, but for what the act of "making" can do for the student. The creative

process itself "is not only a truly high-gain manner of learning, but the surest means of getting to know music" (31, p. 59). If there is any one over-riding reason for teaching improvisation, "it is that people who learn to use this marvelous, versatile tool, tend to keep on using it all their lives. Isn't that what music teaching is all about?" (14, p. 44).

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CHAPTER IV

TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING AND EVALUATING IMPROVISATION

Children's ability to perceive musical relationships aurally provides the foundation upon which musical concepts can be developed through musical activities. It is possible to structure lessons so that while children are playing the piano, they are also facing musical questions, finding answers, and using their solutions to attack further problems (29, p. 35).

Procedurally, the idea is to begin with sounds. McMurray suggests introducing theoretical or cognitive materials within a situation of first-hand experience with the raw materials of sound. He says, "Let the music become known for its sounds and its felt qualities" (23, p. 56). Through this type of experience, students are enabled to discover many of the most basic concepts in music. For example, the effects of imitation, crescendo, diminuendo, ritardando, accelerando, contrary melody, opposing rhythms, and many more can be discovered if situations can be invented which summon the student to develop such responses. Lowder maintains that if a particular musical element is analyzed in class, creative use of that model in an improvisation can

often make the concept clear enough that the student can use it again in the future (20, p. 56).

From the outset, teacher and students can explore together sounds in various registers, combinations, dynamics, tempi, and textures before describing or discussing them. First year activities may be question and answer, variation, free individual improvisation and group improvisation. Students create rhythmic and melodic patterns, accompaniment figures, introductions and codas. While engaging in these class activities, they are acquiring tools that will enable them to be successful in their attempts at individual creative endeavors. Such tools may include diatonic and whole tone scales, chromatic and artificial scales, a simple harmonic vocabulary, expressive qualities contributing to gaiety or solemnity, ability to distinguish between like and unlike phrases and to sense pulse and meter, possess a rudimentary grasp of simple forms, and many others. To this list one may add touch, style, modality, tonality, augmentation, diminution, bass patterns, and intervals (22, p. 35).

The activities which follow in this chapter help to develop musical literacy and beginning improvisational skills. The activities do not, however, exhaust the possibilities and are only a guide for the development of initial activities in improvisation in early elementary piano classes. The teacher and student must

expand upon each concept and activity in developing creative potential. The following ideas are not necessarily new, but may prove helpful to others interested in encouraging student potential for creative expression.

Optimum Age for Improvisation Instruction

Statements on what a student should know before attempting improvisation indicate that many teachers believe that a student should be able to read notation well and know the fundamentals of music in advance. Consequently, instruction in improvisation is likely to be postponed, so much so that it is often begun too late or not at all (7, p. 175-6). In music education programs adhering to a philosophy of learning through experimentation and discovery, improvisation is the beginning of music instruction and in such programs there are no prerequisites. Duke proposes that the elementary experience in improvisation is crucial. He has stated in his study that once the "tyranny of the page has worked its spell on the learner, he is resistant to learning a new mode of response" (7, p. 209).

Zimmerman feels that the critical age for serious study of piano seems to occur at about seven years (due to the development of the important kinesthetic sense), but that playing by ear and improvising should occur prior to the serious study of any instrument (45, p. 26). It is possible for pupils at

various stages of musical and chronological development to be guided to make discoveries about music and to conceptualize their learning experiences. Smith, nevertheless, states that spontaneous creativity is less often found in classes with older children, a phenomenon he attributes to the lack of a flexible and diversified program to challenge sufficiently the children's imagination, curiosity, inventiveness, and critical thinking (35, p. 189).

Most of the creative thinking abilities as measured by tests show growth from the first through third grade and a sharp drop at about the beginning of the fourth. Torrance reports that studies involving deliberate attempts to keep alive creative growth in the fourth grade and studies of the development of the creative abilities in cultures outside the United States all suggest that the drop which appears in the fourth grade is a man-made rather than a natural occurrence (38, p. 11).

Whitmer maintains that children should be taught to improvise from the very beginning of playing an instrument and that it should be approached as fun (42, p. 1). The problem of sequence, that is, of the order in which topics and material are presented, necessarily arises in all curriculum construction and organization. A regulated curriculum with immediate goals that vary as age increases, should be offered which will match intellectual

development and maturity of the child. Both in philosophy and methods, Whitmer's approach is similar to the Carl Orff method for classroom instruction.

The ability of subjects to identify variations in the musical elements improves with increasing age, and Beer states that by the time children reach the ages of seven, eight, or nine, they should be able to perceive obvious contrasts in the music and to demonstrate that perception through some form of observable response (1, p. 21). These abilities will be discussed later with regard to the grade levels pertinent to this study.

Groch agrees that this stage of childhood is an important time for this type of musical experience and believes that it is the time when children can afford most gracefully to be imaginative, honest, and wrong. Far from wasting time, she feels that "these early years of play and experiment on the child's own terms and for purposes which are intrinsic to what he is doing, are essential training in a way of perceiving and thinking which in our competitive culture are ordinarily short-lived" (10, p. 248).


Rhythmic Improvisation

Mehr writes that rhythm is the "heartbeat of music. It possesses vitality. It is organic, not mechanical;" therefore, the child must experience and feel rhythm before he learns to "count

time" (24, p. 14). Welsh advises that, since rhythm is the main energizer in music, all piano sessions should begin with a period of rhythmic exercises (41, p. 40). Wunsch also believes that the point of departure for all music study is rhythm, which he describes as "that basic element underlying all music" (44, p. 22). Duke agrees with these writers and finds the neglect of the study of rhythm difficult to understand. Especially in improvisation, he feels, the development of the feeling for "where we are" rhythmically should receive great attention (7, p. 175). In addition to these statements on the important place occupied by rhythm in music study, Nash writes that rhythmic experience even aids coordination and freedom of expression (26, p. 21).

Many of the initial activities in rhythmic improvisation rely upon a clapped call and response; however, body movement and rhythm instruments, as well as exploration and experimentation with various keyboard sounds may be included in the study of rhythm. In the beginning, the child might play a steady pulsation with one finger on any key or perhaps a cluster position. He may enrich the pulse with an open fifth, then exploit the high and low ranges of the keyboard, slow-fast, loud-quiet, and combinations of these. Alongside this pulse, the teacher may provide a melody, or a rhythmic call and response with another child.

The need for repetition in childhood experience can be found in their repeated patterns of speech and in their play. Short repeated patterns called *ostinati* are a musical device using repeated sound and action patterns capable of generating organization and form (26, p. 3). *Ostinato* patterns are used extensively in Orff and help to develop independence and interdependence of parts. The combination of several *ostinati* is a frequently used device which involves several players and encourages ensemble playing (17, p. 77).






Smith suggests that the child should understand the difference between the terms meter and rhythm and should begin early to distinguish between duple and triple meter (35, p. 103). Dittermore states in his study that there is evidence that the capabilities for distinguishing duple and triple meter, as well as mixed meter, are well developed in the average student at the second grade level and those for distinguishing unusual meter by the third grade. Beer also suggests that by the ages of seven, eight or nine, children should be able to perceive contrasts in rhythm such as fast and slow, long and short duration, repeated patterns, accent or no accent, and steady beat or no beat (1, p. 21). In addition, the average third grade student recognizes simple 2-1 relationships within rhythmic patterns () and shows increasing awareness of accent grouping in relation to

common meters, and the fourth grade student recognizes 3-1 relationships ($\text{♪♪} = \text{♩}$) and syncopated patterns (♪♪ ♩) (2, p. 16-17).

Thackray notes that an important difficulty for many children is that of isolating a rhythm from its melody (36, p. 81). A familiar tune such as "Are You Sleeping" can be utilized to allow children to separate melodic contour from pulse and rhythm patterns. For example, this tune has three rhythmic ideas:

1.  2.  3. 

The children should discover these by singing, clapping, using instruments, and chanting rhythm syllables, and then draw on the chalk board some symbols to represent the different note values, such as:

----- or:     

The rhythm patterns can be rearranged in various sequences or repeated and used in rhythmic canon:

Student 1:		
Student 2:		etc.
Student 3:		etc.
Student 4:		etc.

Then the original or rearranged sequence of the patterns may be used by the students to improvise a simple melody on three tones or on a five finger pattern with a classmate providing a steady pulse on an open fifth in the bass or on a rhythm (non-pitched) instrument. Other tunes suitable for this sort of treatment may be found in the basic series used in the elementary school. Of course, seven-, eight-, and nine-year-olds are capable of inventing their own rhythmic patterns, often quite complex, usually using their own system of notation. These may be used as the basis for other improvisations.

Although rests are not introduced into the child's literature at the beginning, they may be utilized in early rhythmic exercises in improvisation. Schafer writes that "silence in music is like windows in architecture; it lets the light come through" (32; p. 38). Exuberant children sometimes find it difficult to be silent even for a single beat; however, they may occasionally want to use beats of silence in their rhythmic canons and improvisations.

A group activity to encourage this might involve passing out three or four cards on which rhythmic cells have been drawn, then asking the children to arrange them in any order they wish (some cards should be blank indicating that the child may do

anything he wishes -- even be silent! -- for the indicated number of counts) and then performing the rhythm rows they have arranged by clapping, playing single notes or intervals on the keyboard, or rhythm instruments in concert.

Since, as Smith states, the ability to read rhythmic patterns depends upon previous rhythmic experiences (35, p. 103), the teacher should endeavor to present more difficult rhythmic ideas in improvisation exercises as the children progress and before they appear in the child's literature. Mosher points out that throughout all improvisational activities, playing must be done "in time" without breaking the rhythm or skipping a beat (25, p. 54).

Melodic Improvisation

The exploration and use of different pitches for rhythmic activities and creative stories leads to the discovery of melody. Before actually beginning melodic improvisation, students can practice matching tones or tonal patterns in response to those played by the teacher, first using no more than three tones in stepwise movement and later within the five finger patterns and adding the use of skips. As the students gain proficiency, the number of notes can be increased to an entire phrase, utilizing other intervals. All activities in improvisation must be carried out to a steady pulse which may be clapped or chanted in advance.

Matching leads to the forming of consequent and antecedent phrases, also known as call and response or question and answer. The teacher asks the students to give a parallel answer phrase to the question phrase given them. Burns stresses the importance of the parallel answer because it appears to be of more benefit in training the ear than does the non-parallel or contrasting answer, since the student must match exactly the beginning of the question phrase with the beginning of his answer phrase (3, p. 45).

Beer writes that by the age of seven, eight or nine, children should be able to perceive contrasts in melody such as upward or downward movement and high or low (1, p. 21). Musical growth charts agree and indicate that by the second grade, children generally can identify melodic movement in terms of step, skip, and scale-line pattern (2, p. 16).

Musicologist Bruno Nettl has written that there appear to be characteristic compositional techniques and devices in those musical products which are said to be improvised. Among them are "repetition, simple variation of short phrases, melodic sequences, and the tendency to start two successive sections with the same motive" (27, p. 9-10). Mehr believes that the child must learn to experience music by phrases, and that since the phrase is "the smallest organic unit in music," the continuity of music must not be broken by separating it into measures or

other artificial divisions (24, p. 14). Creating melodies by phrases is a natural exercise in beginning improvisation since, as we are told, second grade students reflect growing awareness of phrase structure in creating melodies (2, p. 24), and that the third grade child is able to readily recognize melodic repetition and contrast in short compositions (2, p. 16).

To give children the confidence that they can produce their own music, the teacher may restrict students to using only a few tones. For example, the teacher may instruct each student to use only the group of three black keys and play them in any order they wish, taking turns to a count of four and maintaining a steady pulse and count. The children may be restricted to using only stepwise movement, or perhaps they may be asked to include some repeated notes. This activity may be done in five finger position when the children have attained some confidence.

Next, children may be paired, one being assigned the role of the questioner and the other that of the answerer. An explanation at this point would include directions to the responder to match his answer as closely as possible to his partner's question in notes, rhythm, and touch (connected or detached sounds). Roles should be reversed and all children allowed to play both "parts". The teacher may ask children who are playing the question to finish on any one of the four upper notes of the five

finger pattern (producing a feeling of ongoing movement or tension) and those playing the answer to end their phrase on the lowest key of their pattern (producing a feeling of rest or conclusion). Students should now begin to gain a feeling of cadence, of the phrases coming to a temporary or permanent stop. As the children gain experience, their phrases should be increased to eight beats, and their pitch restrictions modified to include artificial, pentatonic, or whole tone scales.

Wunsch emphasizes that the student must not make up a melody in his mind and then play it. Rather, he should let his fingers move at will, guided by the ear alone (44, p. 23). After a short melody has been played, the children may shape the phrase in the air with the hand to reinforce the patterns visually. After each student has made several questions for the others to answer and the children can easily respond to all parallel patterns, allow the responders to make contrasting answers. Burns feels that contributions to this type of problem solving give the creative effort great impetus because of the many ideas available (3, p. 44).

Children learn how a melody is made by using variations such as repetition, sequence, reversal, and other techniques. Schwadron advocates playing original, freely created tunes, always to a steady, predetermined pulse, and exploring the broad

variety of possibilities. These should be short but exhaustive. He feels that this activity can develop concepts of "musical repetition and contrast, of simplicity and complexity, of motion by step and by leap, of tendency tones, and of antecedent-consequent phrasing" (33, p. 114). Later, as new concepts are introduced, the students experiment with them in several short question and answer activities. Short exercises can reinforce the understanding and skills in using each concept, foster new knowledge, and aid in the evaluation procedures (discussed in the last section of this chapter).

Another way to utilize melodic improvisation with children is to encourage them to create variations on a given melody by altering melodic contour or rhythm, or by adding a descant or a melodic ostinato using two or three tones. The technique of altering or varying a song begins as the student is becoming more familiar with the potential variety of melodic and rhythmic patterns, and experimenting with the number of ways in which variation can occur.

McClusky suggests offering a short four to eight measure period and stimulating curiosity with questions like: "How would it sound if you changed the shape a little in the measure with repeated notes? What shape would you choose for measure ____? Which bars would you like to keep as they are? or What would

happen if you used some passing tones instead of the chord tones?" She recommends that many such variations be played before attempting to notate them (22, p. 34). The teacher initially sets limitations upon how much may be changed within a given phrase line. Kolar feels that, at the beginning, the best results occur when the same rhythm is maintained but melodic patterns are changed (16, p. 69).

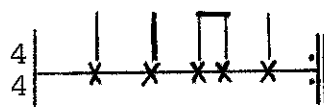
Keeping the melodic rhythm, with some students clapping or tapping the beat, the teacher may have one student play a variation by reversing the initial melodic direction and performing the remainder of the song as it is, or by starting the song on a different tone. The student might also add a countermelody, change the tonality from major to minor or vice versa, or change the dynamics (16, p. 70-71). Other ideas in melodic improvisation for use with young children might include making a short tune to a given time pattern, creating melodies based on verbal rhythms and on more general rhythmic requirements such as meter and tempo (36, p. 76).

Harmonic Improvisation

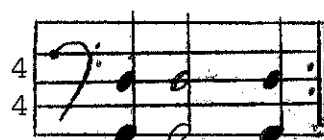
Parallel and contrasting question and answer phrases should continue to employ the learned rhythmic and melodic patterns with the addition of harmonic patterns. Improvised melodies in five finger patterns may be harmonized with an open fifth drone

bass or a chord built on the tonic tone. A group activity might now involve establishing the basic beat, introducing a repeated rhythmic pattern as a background (ostinato), playing the fifth on tonic as the harmonic base, and improvising a question and answer as melody.

Child 1: claves



Child 2:



Child 3: Two measure question phrase in G major five finger pattern

Child 4: Two measure answer phrase in the same pattern

When independence is attained with either hand on each part, each student should take over the task of playing both the fifth or chord and the melody himself. Of course, interchanging the parts between the hands aids in facility as well as providing another source for variation.

Since the average second grade student reveals awareness of the need for chord changes in song accompaniments (2, p. 16), the next experiences in harmony might be in the form of adding the dominant sound, and later the sub-dominant sound for the

accompaniment of the melody. Even before the child is capable of forming the V_5^6 chord or the IV_4^6 chord, he can produce the sounds by changing either the upper or lower tone of the open fifth on tonic and forming a sixth:



I IV V

We are told that by the fourth grade children can generally recognize the I, IV, and V chord qualities in major keys (2, p. 17). Mehr advocates the teaching of harmony with the tonic chord as soon as children have the coordination to play it, and to add the dominant seventh (V_5^6) and later the subdominant (IV_4^6) as soon as they are able to manage them (24, p. 29).

Now the simple ostinato of previous exercises may be replaced by the basic progression of the tonic and dominant sounds. Harmonic rhythm will be discovered by the improvisors in the course of their "play" as well as a variety of simple accompaniment figures.

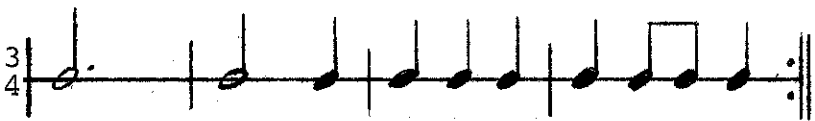
Burns suggests that playing well-known folk songs by ear which are playable within a five finger position gives the

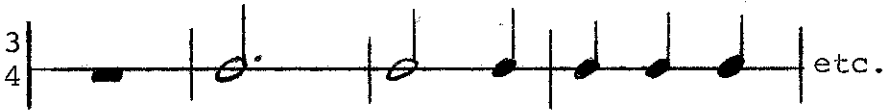
beginning student something tangible to which he can relate the sounds he is hearing. Allow each student to pick out the melody notes. After each pupil has found the melody on the keyboard, the class can be divided in half; one half plays the melody, the other half finds by ear the appropriate chords with which to accompany the melody. A rhythmic ostinato or descant may be added (3, p. 44-45). The group situation permits each child to concentrate on the improvisation of a melody during his turn, since others are providing the harmonic continuity. When good habits are well-established, the pupil may take over the bass accompaniment with the left hand and the melody with the right hand. Of course, the hands may be reversed.


Children often discover non-harmonic tones as they experiment creatively with melody and chords. They find that melodic patterns may include tones which "don't belong" with the chord being sounded. These usually include passing tones and upper and lower neighbors; however, some children may want to experiment with suspensions, appoggiaturas, and anticipations. Their improvisations now can be enriched with these non-harmonic tones, not merely accidentally, but purposefully.


Canons may be used a great deal to achieve harmonic and textural diversity. This can be highly successful in the pentatonic mode without substantial dissonances. The technique of

canonic entrances has been described by Coker (4, p. 29-30) and may be adapted to the piano class as follows: 1) a rhythmic row is established to be played by all players with an improvised melody on the black keys only; 2) the basic beat is set and tapped by the class; 3) each child enters at the distance of one measure and plays his row twice; and 4) parts should be spread over different registers of the keyboard.

Student 1: 

Student 2: 

Student 3: 

Student 4: 

Kolar suggests that each student play questions and answers and free improvisations which are polyphonic. They may begin with slow moving (whole note) rhythms in the bass against a faster moving upper voice (16, p. 137). This may be accomplished in any five finger pattern as long as each player uses the same pattern and is aware of the rhythmic requirements of his part. Other scale systems besides major and minor may be used.

A variety of ostinatos using simple chord progressions may be developed by the students. For instance, give the children the basic beat and two chords such as G major and F major and assign them to produce an ostinato for use with a white key melodic improvisation (they will discover which white key feels like tonic in the melody). This same activity may be done with D minor and C major chords. The students don't need the terms mixolydian and dorian or a lesson on the structure of these modes to develop very satisfying improvisations based on them.

Formal Improvisation

Unity and variety, or repetition and contrast, are the two underlying principles of form. When the student plays a complete question and answer, he is performing a short free improvisation. When he combines two different questions and answers, he is performing a longer improvisation which may be A-B in musical form. The A section may be performed by one student and the B section by another. If the student returns to his first question and answer the form is expanded to A-B-A, or three part song form. Of course, the sections do not have to be question and answer, but should be four measure phrase units with a basic pulse. The B section may be developed by changing the melodic and rhythmic patterns of the phrase unit, by changing the mode, or by changing an accompanying ostinato. Burns and Kolar suggest

planning and using other ostinatos and question-answer phrases to play duets in A-B or A-B-A form. The students should plan patterns together and then switch parts (3, p. 45; 16, p. 102).

The students may begin their piece with a two measure ostinato introduction after selecting a meter, ostinato, and melodic patterns. Orff uses the simplest of motives, extracted from the melody itself, to create the introduction and the accompaniment, the same way he intends that students create their own settings (17, p. 77).

Landis and Carder describe a favorite simple form for class improvisation -- the rondo. Its structure becomes a useful framework, with the theme performed as a set pattern for all, alternating with contrasting episodes improvised by different class members (17, p. 87). Children may also begin to use the rondo form by transforming and extending a familiar song in A-B-A form. For example, the children may play by ear the tune "Go Tell Aunt Rhody" with either a drone bass using the open fifth, the tonic and dominant chords, or any ostinato of their choosing. Then they may create contrasting B and C sections alternating with second and third performances of the familiar tune. This may be extended to include a D section if they wish. Of course, a short improvised introduction and coda may now be within their capabilities.

Children can take one given element of music and rearrange or change it in some way to compose a satisfying piece of music. Variation format provides many different clear illustrations of improvisational possibilities at the level of young students' technical facility. The average third grade child is conscious of variations in tempo and dynamics as contributing to musical expressiveness (2, p. 16), and since by the fourth grade students are able to demonstrate recognition of repetition and contrast in planning melodic and rhythmic accompaniments (2, p. 21), the variation format proves very useful in allowing children to discover for themselves the various possibilities in music. The fourth grade pupil is also aware of the expressive qualities of tonality (2, p. 17), a trait which lends itself to programmatic improvisation.

Each variation attempted adds to the student's concept of range, harmony, accompaniment, style, modality, as well as rhythmic and metric changes (15, p. 44). The teacher may introduce several activities to help the child discover original ways to apply variation form to musical composition. For example, the class may create a simple theme, choose one or more rhythmic patterns, and add harmonic accompaniment. Then as the children wish, they may change musical elements to provide variations of the theme, such as transforming a march theme into a waltz by simply

substituting a pattern in groupings of three for one emphasizing patterns of two (35, p. 205).

In playing variations, Kolar advises that all rhythmic and harmonic patterns be kept the same and vary only one element at a time, such as the starting notes of the patterns, the predominant intervals, or the accompaniment pattern (16, p. 87).

Children may add interesting effects by using the damper pedal to produce shimmering sounds or by playing the accompaniment in different locations, including higher than the melody.

Schafer reminds us that when improvising in variation form, you must have some features remaining the same as the original or it ceases to be a variation (32, p. 36).

Anyone who has attempted to teach anything which calls for a creative response from students can appreciate the value of what Duke calls a "way in," or a method of overcoming initial shyness (7, p. 132). Obviously, simply asking children to "make something up" or even explaining methods is not enough. Schafer reports that an expedient method to relax the students and prepare them for some subtle improvising experiments is to rely on the trick of imitating nature with keyboard sounds (32, p. 19). Wax suggests relating assignments to aspects of nature with which the children are familiar, such as a flower growing from a tiny seed (*crescendo*), a hopping bunny getting tired (*ritardando*),

snowflakes falling (pianissimo), or a giant or elephant (lento). Examples are endless (40, p. 17). These ideas can be incorporated into the students' variations to make them very expressive. For example, the teacher might suggest that the children make variations on a "zoo" theme which describe the various animals one might see on a stroll through the zoo. Their imaginations as well as their theoretical knowledge and technical facility would be brought into play.

Variations of familiar songs may be used to bring melodic, harmonic, and expressive concepts into perceptual focus. Pupils should be given ample time and opportunity to improvise their own variations. For instance, use a simple eight measure tune easily learned by the children such as "Hot Cross Buns" (they already know the tonic and dominant chord sounds). A variation of the original may be performed by the teacher for the class. They listen and describe how the example played was different or how it varied from the original (range, style of accompaniment, change of mode, rhythm, meter, combinations of these or others). Then each student tries a variation using his own ideas. New harmonic sounds will undoubtedly be "discovered" (15, p. 44).

A child who has developed his own theme and variations will perhaps have deeper interest in those of Beethoven and other masters. Landis and Carder also feel that a child who

has just engaged in this type of do-it-yourself project will be more likely to give contented attention to less active music projects (such as studying new repertoire) (17, p. 115).

Stylistic Improvisation

Music educators must provide their students with a variety of experiences with musical styles to build the foundation for ongoing creativity (16, p. 28-9). Harmonic, melodic, and formal characteristics of different periods and styles of composition will become more meaningful (35, p. 206).

Experiments with contemporary music at the elementary school level have shown that young children become absorbed in twentieth century compositional techniques. Smith feels that they are equally interested in discovering ways to "make music" in other musical styles as well (35, p. 189).

The use of contemporary compositional techniques in the elementary piano class might include accompanying an improvised melody with tone clusters, or the use of polytonality. The students might find dissonance in contemporary music more easily understood as they play a theme in one key and an accompaniment in another. This is also fascinating to play and hear if they try adding an Alberti bass effect characteristic of the classical period (35, p. 204). The use of various scale systems (whole tone, chromatic, blues scales, and others) will expand the child's

creative vocabulary and provide a contrast to accompaniments in a classic style.

The question of stylistic influences arises very often in children's creative work. Hood writes that there need be "no fuss about derivation or even plagiarism. Improvisors naturally bring out the sounds they are hearing. As they mature, they may develop a very personal style of expression, but at first the influences are likely to be apparent" (14, p. 44). She goes on to state that students are quick to appreciate and identify style, and music history will come alive if they have come to "know the master composers with the ears and eyes of improvisors" (14, p. 44). In this regard, Coker writes that improvisation, like composition, is the product of everything heard in past experience, plus the originality of the moment. As he states, "the contents of even a very accomplished improvisor's solos are not all fresh and original, but are a collection of clichés, established patterns, and products of memory, rearranged in new sequences, along with a few new ideas" (4, p. 36). This is an excellent reason for exposing children to a wide variety of styles and enriching their imaginations with limitless stylistic possibilities for the solving of improvisational problems.

Additional Activities

The teacher and the student should use as great a variety of ideas within the level as time permits to increase awareness of the musical possibilities. A child learning to improvise should be exposed to as many different types of creative keyboard experiences as his theoretical background allows. Wax, Kolar, and many others concur that, with a little imagination, the possibilities are enormous (16, p. 130; 40, p. 17). In addition to the ideas previously mentioned, there are a few more suggestions which might prove helpful in the piano class.

One class member begins an ostinato outlining the main beat. This may be any bass pattern of the child's choosing. Another student then enters with a contrasting rhythm and tonal pattern in another register of the keyboard. Then the other class members, in turn, improvise two or four measures over the bass ostinato. McClusky suggests that a predetermined rhythm pattern be used with students improvising only the melodic line, and that all participants tend to remain alert if the next improviser's name is not called until a beat before his turn begins (22, p. 33).

Similar to this is the process of having each child but one devise a simple ostinato which fits into a tonal key pattern. The players enter one at a time at the direction of a "conductor" and adds his part to the whole. Finally, the last child improvises a tune freely in the key pattern established for

about eight measures. Then each member drops out according to cue until only one remains who will be responsible for bringing the piece to a suitable finish on tonic.

The "creative story" technique is useful for stimulating the children's imagination and exploring the ranges, various dynamic levels of the piano, and, of course, non-traditional sounds capable of being produced on the wood or the strings of the piano. The technique involves assigning each child a character for which he is to develop a characteristic sound or motive as in Peter and the Wolf. As the teacher reads or tells the story, each student supplies the sound effects appropriate to his character as it is mentioned. A holiday theme may also be used to stimulate unique expression. Each child creates his own theme to interpret a chosen descriptive or action phrase. Each time his word phrase recurs in the narration, its interpreter "goes into keyboard action" (22, p. 34). Wunsch suggests that programmatic improvisation may also be attempted in which a mood is expressed (44, p. 23).

An improvisation may be produced by developing a motive based on fourths, fifths, or triads, or one may be suggested by contrasts such as walk-run, or happy-sad. In addition, Schafer suggests that the students, in order to explore the expressive qualities of the piano as well as their own resourcefulness, try

to converse with one another using only the keyboard sounds. Everything they may wish to convey to each other must be done by means of the piano. He reports that at first the students tend to be abrupt, self-conscious and formless, but that within a few minutes they become more extended and contain "snatches of character" (32, p. 33).

Students may improvise a melody to the rhythm of a favorite folksong and add harmonic interest with parallel chords on I, ii, and iii. This activity may also be done in reverse, whereby the harmonic framework is kept from the original and the rhythm is changed to a syncopated or rock style. Use of the Twelve Bar Blues progression (I, I, I, I, IV, IV, I, I, V, IV, I, I) allows the students to experiment with various rhythmic patterns and chord changes simultaneously. An interesting activity involves three children playing only one note of each chord (either root, third, or fifth) while the fourth child improvises a melody on the chord tones.

These and the foregoing examples serve only as a guide and the possibilities for expansion are numerous. The teacher and the student must investigate activities suitable to their needs and abilities and the children should continually find new ways to use their musical skills. Mehr states that skill and coordination will grow as comprehension develops. He feels that as

musical insight is gained, crude patterns of response are replaced by more effective ones (24, p. 12).

Duke writes that regardless of the type of improvisation studied or the level of the students' advancement, "one thing is essential -- thorough familiarity with the musical vocabulary to be employed and the ability to express that familiarity" in a manner appropriate to his musical experience (7, p. 162). Individual differences will manifest themselves very quickly among the students, but all will be capable of improvising to some degree (43, p. 73). Each activity must be so constructed that success is assured. Every student must have the opportunity for achievement and must know for himself when he has achieved (21, p. 36).

Evaluation

Leonhard has defined evaluation as "the process of determining the extent to which the objectives of an educational endeavor have been attained" (18, p. 310). He also differentiates between measurement and evaluation. He places the emphasis in measurement upon aspects of subject matter achievement or specific skills and abilities, whereas he considers the emphasis in evaluation to be upon the formulation of educational objectives, the determination of the status of the student in relation to those same objectives, and the appraising of behavioral and personality

changes which result from the educational program. Schafer sees the evaluation of truly creative teaching and learning as difficult, if not impossible, a situation in which there are "no known answers and no examinable information as such" (25, p. 241).

Regardless of the difficulty, Leonhard and Thorpe, among others, agree that evaluation is an integral part of the educational process, indeed "of any intelligent human endeavor" (18, p. 311). Thorpe states that every normal individual is interested in knowing more or less specifically the progress he is making toward an objective. He feels that absence of such knowledge results in rapidly declining motivation (37, p. 192). Furthermore, he has described systematic evaluation of pupil progress as a positive form of guidance which can be made to contribute substantially to the learner's desire to achieve objectives (37, p. 193). Leonhard writes that even though a student may identify himself with an objective, "he cannot be highly motivated unless he is constantly aware of his progressive status in relation to the objective and is encouraged by steady progress toward that objective" (18, p. 313).

Evaluative Problems

It is generally felt that the evaluation of the affective domain is the most difficult in the educational framework because "affective" indicates "opinion, belief, response, attitude,

interest, appreciation, empathy, and value" (5, p. 125). In a learning situation which encourages and stimulates children's creativity, perhaps attitude, interest and appreciation may be indicated by their choice of materials and styles for improvisation, and their desire to improvise.

While a student's feeling of security in the classroom or studio is increasing through experimentation and discovery, the teacher's may actually be decreasing, for in an atmosphere of creative teaching and learning, exact outcomes are unpredictable. Hickok has noted that because the products of such experimentation are unique, individual or new, the teacher cannot know to a full degree exactly what they will be. Outcomes in this situation are never completely assured (13, p. 18). This may be a partial explanation for some teachers' reluctance to employ improvisation in the regular piano class.

Torrance believes that constant evaluation, especially during practice and initial learning makes children afraid to use creative ways in learning (38, p. 16). The making of honest errors during the early stages of learning should be made less damaging to the child. Hickok agrees that excessive evaluation may be construed by children as disapproval and may inhibit the "creative flow". Teachers and students should evaluate early creative efforts in terms of whether or not those efforts fulfill the

assignment, not in terms of their own worth. In creative work, the "process is often more important than the product" (1, p. 122). It is important to provide chances for children to think and discover without threats of immediate evaluation.

Evaluative Procedures

While simultaneously conceding both the difficulty and the importance of evaluation in this approach to teaching it is apparent that the results may have to be evaluated in other than traditional ways. Duke writes that the necessity of grading often produces instructional programs which can be measured and graded. Since creativity is difficult or impossible to grade objectively, it is frequently neglected in such programs (7, p. 166). Guilford notes that teachers have no way of knowing whether something a person plays is original, spontaneous, or unique. These are elusive qualities, but they continue to be thought of as goals for the improviser (11, p. 381). Many facets of musical understanding are not subject to paper and pencil testing. The principal means to the evaluation of this understanding lies in the "direct and continuous observations of the musical behavior of students when they are confronted with musical problems (18, p. 325).

In determining the effects of this type of learning, one might ask: What gains have been achieved in the cognitive area

of learning? In the affective area? To what extent has the child's inventiveness been challenged, expanded, and shared?

The presence or absence of musical understanding is demonstrated by the type of behavior a person exhibits when confronted with a musical problem. This provides one of the clues for evaluation. Are the students aware of the problems before them? Do they approach musical problems systematically and intelligently? Do they apply their accumulated knowledge and skill to the solution of problems? If so, Leonhard suggests that learning leading to musical understanding is taking place (18, p. 324).

Evaluation occurs on two levels: 1) the teacher's evaluation of the student, and 2) the student's evaluation of himself. Leonhard states that evaluation by both teacher and pupil is the only possible way to determine the success of musical experiences provided in the music program and of the teaching tools and techniques used to stimulate student progress toward instructional objectives (18, p. 312). Hickok and Smith propose that a set of criteria be worked out with the child for evaluating ideas so that he understands that any criticism of his work is made because an idea is not appropriate or best for the solution to the problem at hand, not because he himself is unworthy (13, p. 23). Leaders in the Orff method advise critical

listening and self-evaluation as well as experimentation when children are improvising. They feel that careful listening and a degree of aesthetic judgment are developed in this process (17, p. 87).

Self-evaluation occurs simultaneously with the teacher's evaluation. The student should determine the quality of each improvisation according to the material used, expression, technical execution, and so forth. He should often be encouraged to express an evaluation of his performance with the teacher or his classmates (16, p. 35). Torrance emphasizes, however, the necessity of avoiding the use of critical peer evaluation during trial and error sessions, especially above the third grade (38, p. 19).

Hickok points out that the work of many researchers now recommends that evaluation and criticism of ideas be postponed until all ideas are out. This is often referred to as the principle of "deferred judgment" (13, p. 23). Guilford reports that the value of this delayed criticism has been confirmed by experiments in creativity (11, p. 380-392).

Educators working on the Manhattanville Project concluded that the student must be the principle evaluator of his own learning experiences, and that he should assess what he has done and what he is learning. Their report states that "it is

the student much more than the teacher who needs to recognize achievement, identify learning problems, and assess personal growth. It is the student who should have the opportunity to practice the process of rational thought, evaluation, analysis, and judgment making" (2, p. 12).

Improvisation as an Evaluative Tool

Beyond the knowledge and skills it provides, Kolar proposes that improvisation itself is a tool for evaluation (16, p. 35). Tosi wrote that improvisation was often his deciding factor in evaluating musicians, and stated that without "varying the music, the knowledge of the performer could never be discovered" (39, p. 95).

Many music educators agree that a child can have a concept without verbalizing it, and that the creation of a music example by a student is undoubtedly one of the best ways to demonstrate his understanding of a particular element or concept (20, p. 56). Any response or example which shows that the child has used his musical experience in a musical way, and which leads to further inquiry is a good response (30, p. 53). In addition, an improvisational activity indicates whether a student has developed the technical skill necessary to execute his musical knowledge and understanding. Kolar points out that the teacher may evaluate the student's technical growth on isolated exercises; however,

improvisation is the active application of technical skills to creative activities (16, p. 35).

Improvisational experience is a way for the student to use and test complex musical ideas on a level at which he can not only perform, but can also assess his performance. Perhaps both achievement and evaluation may effectively take place through the use of improvisation in piano study whereby a student may pursue his own musical objectives and identify and take pride in his own accomplishments.

Summary

In these days of great progress and achievement at all levels of education, Welsh asks why the teaching of piano must remain static and unchanged to the detriment of the beginning student (41, p. 40). While there is no short cut to musicianship, perhaps there is a direct approach through music making from the very first lesson. Hartshorn states that a person learns what he himself does, not what anyone else does, even including his teacher (12, p. 215).

The teacher must guide each child into successful accomplishment each day. Success builds upon success; each success releases energy for the next try, and Nye points out that these successes and accomplishments must be genuine (28, p. 89). A keyboard teacher may nurture the student's development of

improvisational skills and provide the setting for success and accomplishments through 1) the facilitation of learning with clearly presented musical concepts, 2) the provision of a variety of materials and experiences, 3) the employment of a sequence of creative activities in an open atmosphere, and 4) the encouragement of self-evaluation.

In addition to the general goals of nurturing creativity, developing skills, improving keyboard awareness and musicality, every improvisational activity should have a definite emphasis. Beginning students can learn to improvise melodies according to specific directions, using repeated notes, passing tones, and sequences, and employ an appropriate accompaniment. They learn what drone and ostinato basses are, and they improvise over these patterns and experiment with parallel triads. The student learns how to play well in all tempos equally, on all dynamic levels, in all registers. He learns that improvisation really is the bringing together of all these elements. When he has experienced and concentrated on each one separately, within time they begin to function together, simultaneously (40, p. 19). Ultimately, the student should be able not only to improvise in all major and minor keys, but to make his own music using the pentatonic scales, the Greek modes, the whole tone scales, and more.

There are varying degrees in man's ability to think and consequently in man's ability to create music. Even though improvisation and creativity are considered to be learnable traits, they are apparently individual and very personal matters and perhaps not measurable by traditional methods of testing. In the beginning piano class, every creative effort must be treated with respect and must be given serious consideration by both teacher and students.

Schafer has described his efforts to make the enthusiastic discovery of music by his students precede the ability to play an instrument or read notation (32, p. 225), and Mehr has warned against confining music making to the standard notation that the children already know. He strongly advises teachers to let the children learn the notes as a result of music making, not as a condition for such experience (24, p. 25). Groch believes that in order to convert creative potential into performance, one simply has to refrain from destroying it by means of educational procedures which drill compliance and conformity (10, p. 229). The adoption of a method which involves learning through creative discovery could result in the development of self-motivated musical interest and in the achievement of deeper and longer-lasting musical understandings.

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CHAPTER V

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES FOR USE IN TEACHING IMPROVISATION

It is in the nature of the music educator to continue to search for new methods of presenting materials which he feels are necessary to the development of young musicians. This chapter focuses attention on that aspect of teaching: the search for appropriate resources and methods for use in beginning piano classes of young children.

"How-to" books of the past on the subject of improvisation contain many pages of text and numerous tables and charts which show examples on how to improvise by such musicians as Leopold Mozart (1719-1787), Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788), Pier Francesco Tosi (1646?-1732), and Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773) (by far the most extensive and detailed treatment of the subject). Contrary to books of earlier times (eighteenth century primarily) which included sections on improvisation as part of works covering all aspects of performance, twentieth century methods are usually written as separate books devoted exclusively to teaching improvisation. Exceptions are the texts for adult class piano by such authors as Guy Duckworth,

Elise Mach, Paul Sheftel, James Lyke, Elisabeth Hartline, and Ron Elliston, to name a few (see Appendix A).

Despite increased knowledge about creativity, twentieth century methods of teaching improvisation reflect little progress in applying such knowledge (6, p. 167). Perhaps due to the lack of information on improvisation in books devoted to general discussions of music, books on improvisation have been written out of necessity; however, these are usually concerned with only one particular type of improvising (i.e., those written for jazz performers or professional organists). In addition, growth of interest in musical improvisation has encouraged many universities to develop methods to fit their particular needs.

The largest number of books and courses related to musical improvisation are concerned with jazz performance; however, these sources of information on the art are of limited use with children (see Chapter III, p. 54). Another group of materials containing valuable contributions involves organ improvisation for church services. Since methods of teaching jazz improvisation have primarily centered attention upon the vertical aspects of composition, and organ approaches tend to emphasize a linear contrapuntal mode of playing, the two approaches should complement one another and provide expanded knowledge on the general topic of this aspect of a musician's art (6, p. 151).

There are few published resources available to the teacher of the elementary age child which may serve as guidelines for structure and material development. For the teacher of improvisation, the problem of selecting the most appropriate goals and methods is a real one. Most writers admit the importance of intuition, imagination, confidence, and aesthetic perception in connection with improvisation. Duke feels that while there seems to be unanimous agreement that such factors are essential elements in the process of developing innovative modes of response, methods offer little help on these matters and focus attention mostly on technical aspects of improvisation (6, p. 166). Most recent methods on improvisation include writing. Schuller has suggested that over-emphasis on notation might tend to reduce music to only that which can be notated. The overuse of writing in the teaching of improvisation, then, "could reduce a player's skill to the level of his ability to write down what he plays" (17, p. 80).

Careful selection of improvisation materials makes it possible for the teacher of young elementary age students in a class piano setting to cover and interrelate all areas of musicianship. The scope of the class will depend on the children's maturity and background as well as the class size and time available.

Teaching Materials

A survey of selected books dealing with improvisation is included in this chapter. These materials have been reviewed with regard to their suitability for use with seven-to-nine year old children (i.e., level of vocabulary used), extent of teacher helps including suggestions for group activities, and student helps (guides enabling him to work independently), the elements of music covered (logical sequence as well as number of elements of music included), any additional material such as appendices, glossary of terms, or other items of useful information, and any remarks or recommendations of the author, editor, or this writer. In addition, when choosing materials for use with children, teachers are advised to note such aspects of the format as size of the book, typography, illustrations, and quality of paper and binding (see Appendix B).

The list of materials discussed should not be considered complete and the teacher is advised to search continually for new materials and integrate the best of the new with the best of the old. Teachers may find it appropriate to adapt existing materials to special teaching situations.

Burns-Graham Method

The series by Betty Burns and Jackie Graham entitled You Do It: Jazz, Rock, Pop and Blues Piano Improvisation (3) was

published in 1972 by General Words and Music Company and is available for \$1.50 for each of six volumes which are about twenty-two pages in length. It is regarded by the authors as a "complete course of instruction presenting new creative ways to engage the student in enjoyable upper level cognitive functioning." While this series certainly is suitable for students in the earliest stages of study, its appeal may be greater to junior high through adult ages.

On the first three pages of Book I (six volumes are available), concepts of high and low, keyboard geography, finger numbers, sharps and flats are introduced. The student then learns all twelve major five-finger patterns on the basis of whole- and half-step arrangement. Using only the black keys, students are directed to pick out some familiar pentatonic tunes and to improvise over teacher accompaniment in the Twelve Bar Blues progression. Further suggestions for improvisation are offered using various intervals, the dorian mode, and so forth. Some historical information on the beginnings of notation is included followed by the definitions and symbols of simple note values, ledger lines and the grand staff.

In Book II, the eighth note, the I, IV, and V chords are explained and simple accompaniment styles are explored (still in the Twelve Bar Blues progression). The student then meets the

natural sign and "blue" notes and uses all these concepts and devices in improvisations.

Next, Burns and Graham present the circle of fifths and key signatures and scales with fingering (one octave), but there is no explanation of these and students are directed to memorize them. Dotted rhythms and time signatures are described (the terms simple and compound meter are used), and students are then asked to harmonize scales (both legato and staccato) using the three primary chords.

Very few directions are intended for the teacher; however, most of the musical examples of the first book and some of the second book seem intended for teacher demonstration purposes and not for student reading. No suggestions are given for group activities.

Kahn Method

Marvin Kahn's series entitled Guidelines to Improvisation: Quick Steps to Pop Piano was published in three volumes in 1966 by M. Witmark & Sons of New York. Each book of the series is about forty pages in length and sells for \$1.95. Kahn's method is directed toward the student who has already acquired some rudiments of music in the usual course of piano instruction. In Book I the student is introduced to major, minor, diminished and augmented triads, including how to build them on each of the twelve tones

of the chromatic scale in both root position and inversion. Various types of bass patterns are presented. Book II concentrates on seventh chord formation and more accompaniment styles. Book III presents ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords and 4-3 suspensions as used in both harmonization and melodic improvisation. Pedal point and playing from a lead sheet are discussed.

Numerous musical examples are given as well as suggestions for practice procedure and written drills. The series includes arrangements of popular tunes of the past several decades as illustrations which, due to their vintage, are likely to be unknown to most young students of today. These books are probably of little value in teaching children due to the advanced level of vocabulary used and the complexity of musical concepts in Books II and III. Most of the suggested activities require a full-sized hand. No ideas for group activities are included.

Mack Method

Adventures in Improvisation at the Keyboard by Glenn Mack is a single volume method published in 1970 by Summy-Birchard Company of Evanston, Illinois. It is fifty-four pages in length and is available for \$4.95. Very clear directions are given in this book for the beginning improviser. Suggested activities for the first few chapters are in five-finger position, using simple note values and rests, stepwise movement, and with many

musical examples on white keys only. Mack recommends exploring the effect of pedal in high and low registers, using slow and fast tempos, and simple repeated ostinatos.

Later on the use of skips, contrary motion, black keys, and clusters are suggested along with experimentation with pentatonic, whole tone, and artificial scales. Simple improvisations using melodic fragments, chord inversions, passing tones, chords built with fourths, and other devices are also explored.

Mack introduces the concept of the motive as a very short melodic fragment used as a basic material for improvisation and includes many examples for embellishing, expanding rhythms, shifting accent, and changing meter. Other "elementary techniques" that he feels may prove useful in experimenting with improvisation are the extending of five-finger patterns and extended ostinatos, sustained melody notes with other voices moving, the quality of intervals used to vary moods, and borrowed ideas to create new musical situations from existing music.

Instructions are clear and ideas plentiful. For example, Mack suggests trying an improvised duet with a friend by using "follow the leader" devices of imitation at the distance of one measure. Vocabulary used such as "consonant," "dissonant," and other words which are unlikely to be understood by young children is rare and easily demonstrated by a closely supervising

instructor. Reading the musical examples might frustrate the beginning pianist and further necessitate the presence of a helpful teacher.

Also included in this volume are a glossary, techniques for harmonizing unfamiliar melodies as well as familiar ones, ideas for sound effects and instructions for preparing the piano, a chapter on improvisations for rhythmic activities and dance with some practical "do's" and "don'ts" for the dance accompanist (these include suggestions applicable to any improvising activities).

The author's General Suggestions are written to the student. He encourages improvising and composing, but not mixing the two. "Trying to learn" an improvisation is discouraged. Once an approach has been decided on, he suggests varying the key, the tempo, the mood, the meter, and the register.

McLean Method

Improvisation for the Pianist by Edwin McLean was published in 1976 by Myklas Press of Boulder, Colorado. It contains thirty-one pages and may be purchased for \$2.00. It is described by the author as being intended for young pianists as well as experienced players. He says that knowledge of music theory is not necessary to build some skills in transposition and ear training; however, vocabulary such as "optional, sustaining

idea, consecutively, distant registers," as well as the difficulty of some of the musical examples make this book less suitable for use with young beginners except as a possible teacher resource.

McLean's book begins with some easy ostinatos (bagpipes, tom-toms) and goes on to triads and ostinatos that span an octave (impossible for many young players), then introduces ABA form, minor mode, and "concept" pieces in which an entire piece is built on a simple idea such as using only black keys, only low tones, and so forth.

The whole tone scale, strumming and plucking inside the piano, experimenting with sympathetic vibrations, various chord progressions in major and minor modes, and some accompaniment styles utilizing jazz, rock, and blues idioms are recommended as bases for improvisations. The author suggests inventing new scales and chords as well.

In addition, he included excerpts from the literature for purposes of illustrations such as Satie's Three Gymnopedies and offers some historical asides. Four original solos and one duet are incorporated into the musical examples. Finally, he has included "Machine Music," short fragments of music to be played by one or more pianists in any order desired and at any tempo chosen -- not for beginners.

Rabinoff Method

Musicianship Through Improvisation at the Keyboard (Book I) and its companion book entitled The Improvisor were written by Sylvia Rabinoff and published in 1969 by Theodore Presser Company of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. The principal book is eighty pages in length and sells for \$3.00 and the companion book is sixty-five pages and may be purchased for \$2.75. The stated objective of this method is "not simply to teach students how to improvise, but to revive the lost art of keyboard improvisation so that it can be used as a tool in building effective musicianship."

This method departs from the tradition of teaching keyboard improvisation either from a harmonic basis with chordal sequences governing the student's melodic invention, or from a melodic basis, supported by harmonic progressions. It is based instead on the structural aspects of music, and proceeds from simple rhythmic and melodic patterns to the larger and more complex sectional forms. Harmonic and contrapuntal principles are introduced gradually. The author advises making the improvisation experience as simple and natural as possible and to sustain each student's confidence in his own abilities throughout the course of study.

Included in Musicianship Through Improvisation is a thirty-one page section entitled "Key (Theory and Exercises)" which is

aimed at teaching the fundamental first steps in theory directly at the piano. The lessons in this section are correlated with Section A and instructions are given for going from Section A (Improvisation) to Section B (Key) and back. The sections of the companion book The Improvisor are published separately. Because of the duplication of material in the two books, the acquisition of both seems unnecessary.

This method can be used with either individual or group piano instruction on all levels (particular suggestions for class teaching are included) and can be given as a course in itself. Stated prerequisites include ability to play simple Grade I pieces using both hands, knowledge of pitch names and the accidentals, time signatures and values of notes and rests, and the ability to play the C major scale with both hands up and down one octave, with standard fingering; however, it seems that many of the activities in these two books can be handled quite readily without having accomplished the stated prerequisites before beginning the course.

Suggestions for student's include establishing an effective practice routine and "do's" and "don'ts" in improvising, and students are provided with clearly stated assignments. Pedagogical helps include the proper manner to address a class and ideas for ensemble playing. Written assignments are indicated throughout.

An aspect of this method not commonly found in other works on the subject of improvisation is the inclusion of a section on conducting in rhythm. While the method can be used with elementary level students, the presence of a teacher is absolutely essential due to the level of vocabulary used (i.e., "In harmonizing melodies, fullest coordination of improvisational technic requires the development of a knowledgeable application of harmony in conjunction with melody" p. 43). Musical examples are plentiful and progression of difficulty as well as sequence of musical elements seem logical and orderly.

Karp Method

David Karp has written a text entitled An Approach to Jazz and Rock Stressing Modal Scales: Presented Through Keyboard Improvisation with References to the Repertory of Music Literature (8). Though not in general publication at this time, the text is available through the Division of Music of Southern Methodist University and is currently being used at the school with students and teachers in training. The plan of the book is to present the basic concepts of melody, rhythm and harmony through jazz and rock improvisation. The material has been used with pre-college students; however, adaptation would be required for use with younger beginners. Although the subject matter is treated in a fundamental manner, Karp has attempted to provide

a conceptual approach in order to develop the student's creative abilities and performance skills as well as to stimulate his intellectual curiosity. The author states that the difference between elementary and advanced materials is in the level of difficulty, not in the process of learning and that the process of exploring and discovery, which is encouraged in this text, allows the student the freedom to experiment while minimizing his fears and inhibitions concerning the risk of failure. Included are numerous exercises for the student and suggestions for group activities which are directed to the teacher.

The musical concepts presented through improvisation in this text are tonal and modal scales, triads and seventh chords, chord and non-chord tones, and jazz and rock melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic vocabulary. Dissonance and consonance, touch controls, dynamics and form are also presented. The material is organized into ten chapters and it is not necessary to work through the chapters in sequence. There are many musical examples and explanations are clear and concise. Special note should be made of the sections entitled "For Further Study." Information of historical interest, definitions, and suggestions for analytical listening are included for the purpose of encouraging the student to investigate some of the resources available for aid in becoming a more comprehensive musician.

Pedagogical Resources

There are a few texts available for teachers which focus on improvisation as a teaching method and offer helps in learning and understanding the basic nature and capability of the improvisational skills and in expanding the relationships that exist between familiar techniques and materials and the new ideas and approaches encountered in using improvisation as a teaching tool. There are also some texts which are intended for use with older students, usually adults on the college level, but which also may serve as valuable resources for the teacher of improvisation who is involved with students at earlier stages of study. These books generally focus on a basic plan to apply the theory of harmony texts to the keyboard in a practical and useful way.

Texts for Teachers

Improvising Jazz (4) by Jerry Coker is based on the format of read, write, apply to instrument, then create. It is regarded as one of the most compact sources for knowledge on jazz improvisation (6, p. 132). This book offers a solution to a problem often found in improvisation classes -- shyness. Coker's method of canonic entrances seems to be an effective way of combatting this shyness or fear of "doing something wrong."

Music Improvisation as a Classroom Method (9) by Bert Konowitz was published in 1973. The author's approach is one

of "making music your own," not merely performing someone else's music. He suggests some specific techniques for working with children in the class which include creating improvisations with skills and perceptions the students already possess (however simple), and expanding basic skills and perceptions through improvisational experiments. Strategies include examples for carrying on sample lessons. Konowitz confronts the notion of music improvisation as the spontaneous act of creating, varying, and performing, not merely the product of highly trained musicians, and he gives numerous suggestions for using it as a tool for learning.

Whitmer's book, The Art of Improvisation (19), contains practical advice on learning to improvise and a well-organized sequence of exercises. His attitude is reflected in these words: "Improvisation is but the natural bubbling over of instinctive musical creation and is a talent that lies dormant in nearly every music student" (19, p. 1).

Texts for Adult Beginners

Sol Berkowitz's book Improvisation Through Keyboard Harmony (2) was published in 1970 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., of Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. It contains simple melodies which require accompaniments at first limited to tonic and dominant chords and later requiring a larger harmonic vocabulary. Many accompaniment

patterns are illustrated and discussed. Throughout the book the student will find numerous opportunities for free improvisation based on germinal ideas. In fact, the final chapter deals entirely with extended improvisations in a variety of musical styles. The text also includes a chapter on figured bass and one on jazz notation.

Keyboard Musicianship: Group Piano for Adults (11), written by James Lyke, Elisabeth Hartline, and Ron Elliston was published in 1974 by Stipes Publishing Company of Champaign, Illinois. This text is designed for the older beginner and is structured to correlate musical skills, techniques and understandings which are basic to a comprehensive musicianship at the early level of study. The book, however, contains ideas for group and individual improvisation which are quite suitable for use with elementary students, and including both pedagogic directions and patterns for teacher accompaniment in all major and minor keys. For example, students are asked to make up a melody within the confines of a major five-note pattern while picking up the spirit and rhythm of the teacher-provided background. Each student is instructed to recall his use of steps, skips, and repeats as well as the note values used. Later, each student is asked to use a minor five-note pattern and respond to the meter, rhythm, and style of the teacher accompaniment before beginning to play

and to unify the melody through repetition and contrast. Eventually, scale melodies, pentatonic and whole tone melodies are improvised. Ostinato patterns to be played by the instructor or another student are provided.

The sequence of material presented is logical. This text also includes a glossary of musical terms and signs and many pieces appropriate to early level sight reading. In the area of resource books for teachers with beginning students of any age, Keyboard Musicianship by Lyke, Hartline, and Elliston may be one of the most comprehensive and valuable on the market.

Summary

Music educators continue to search for appropriate methods and materials for use in teaching. "How-to" books are not a new phenomenon, but have existed for centuries. On the subject of improvisation, one finds texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by such musicians as C. P. E. Bach, Pier Francesco Tosi, Leopold Mozart, and Johann Joachim Quantz. Twentieth century methods on improvisation are rare, and those directed toward children are virtually nonexistent. Generally, books on improvisation being written today are concerned with only one particular type of improvising, such as jazz or organ performance. However, jazz centered vertical aspects of composition and the linear contrapuntal mode of organ playing

should complement one another and provide expanded knowledge on the general topic of improvisation.

Writers seem to agree that factors such as intuition, imagination, confidence, and aesthetic perception are essential to the development of an innovative mode of musical response; however, current methods that deal with improvisation at all tend to focus attention primarily on the technical aspects with an over-emphasis on notation.

Careful selection of improvisatory materials makes it possible for the teacher of young elementary age students in class piano to cover and interrelate all areas of musicianship. Existing materials will need to be adapted to specific teaching situations according to the children's maturity and background as well as class size and time available.

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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is growing interest in the study of creativity as it relates to music education. Few teachers, however, are aware of the historical significance or the educational possibilities of the art of creative keyboard improvisation. Changes in teaching methods seem to be coming about as a result of several factors and music educators are recognizing the difficulties involved in eliciting creative behavior in young children, evaluating their creative responses, and selecting and adapting materials for improvisation in the piano class. Therefore, the need has arisen for a synthesis of thought concerning the teaching of improvisation to young beginners and the use of this type of creative activity as a vehicle for the teaching of basic music concepts.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to survey and collect ideas on the use of improvisation as a teaching and learning tool in elementary piano instruction and to prescribe specific activities and exercises for the implementation of these ideas with seven-

to nine-year-old children in a piano class setting. The following areas were examined: philosophies and learning theories influencing traditional piano instruction, the effects of creative keyboard activities on children's musical development, specific teaching strategies using improvisation, and materials and resources. This report was concerned with the elementary age child (grades two to four) in the first year of piano study and having no prior keyboard experience. It was decided that the answers for the problems could be determined from published and unpublished materials of music education specialists rather than employing normative survey techniques.

From the earliest primitive beginnings, improvisation has been a factor and impulse in the development of the art of music. Some probable products of improvisation were the chant of the eighth through the eleventh centuries and the polyphony that arose about the twelfth century. Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries great emphasis was placed on improvisation and it was regarded as an essential tool of the keyboard player. The prelude, toccata, and fantasia were only some of the many compositional forms originating in improvisatory practice. The art of keyboard improvisation reached its high point in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Despite its rich history, the art of improvisation declined dramatically during the last century and came to be regarded as a vague, nebulous act, only done well by a few gifted, inspired individuals. The last two decades have seen renewed interest in improvisation and educators have begun to consider it as having integrity as an idea and validity as a teaching tool.

A review of recent literature reveals that the two most prominent theories of learning are the stimulus-response theory and the cognitive theory. The latter is basically a Gestaltist view and involves learning by insight. Association is regarded as one of the most important mental activities connected with creativity in learning, with the trend toward discovery and conceptual organization of music a major aspect of modern teaching.

There seems to be a consensus that one of the main purposes of music education should be to provide all children with a means and an outlet for creative expression. Orff pointed up many shortcomings in the teaching of children. He advocated leading them to make their own music on their own level as a means of developing each child's creative faculties.

In 1966, Manhattanville Project participants observed that true discovery of the nature of music demands involvement in creative activities. At this same time, the report

of the Pilot Projects of the Contemporary Music Project in Baltimore, San Diego, and Farmingdale presented convincing evidence that children respond favorably to the challenges of various creative experiences.

Research studies have suggested that greater motivation and musical growth may result when the student is involved in a total musical experience in which he uses and manipulates each musical element and relates it to the total concept of music. Authorities in the field consider ample opportunity for creativity to be an essential element in a child's musical experience if he is to develop the concepts that permit him to make comparisons and organize sounds, to generalize and apply emerging concepts to new musical situations.

Method books, pedagogy texts, articles, and unpublished research studies dealing with the subject of improvisation were examined for attitudes and ideas on the inclusion of creative keyboard activities in traditional piano study, how and why these attitudes have developed, and their relationship to current theories of learning and teaching. Ideas regarding methods for eliciting creative behavior, the relationship of music reading to creative activity, and the use of contemporary compositional techniques in the improvisations of elementary age students in grades two through four were collected.

Guidelines for teaching and evaluating improvisation in classes of young piano students were presented as were theories on the optimum age for beginning the study of improvisation. Specific strategies for the teaching of certain musical concepts to young children through the use of creative keyboard activities were examined. Finally, selected printed materials and resources for use in teaching improvisation were surveyed.

The collected data were classified according to information pertinent to each sub-problem, then presented as current thoughts concerning the feasibility and practice of using keyboard improvisation with young children.

Findings

The implications of creativity for music education, and particularly keyboard instruction, are extensive. The potentials of interrelated cognitive and affective growth through the discipline of music cannot be ignored. The child is learning all the time. He can be helped to discover ways of generating his own meanings from his improvisational experiences. Since the creative experience seems to be directly related to the knowledge and background of the child, the need for spiraling growth in musical literacy corresponds to the spiraling of his creative activities. If the child can express in musical terms what he himself feels and understands, he may be more able to understand and interpret

the piano literature he meets at ever advancing levels with not only technical skill, but with aesthetic sensitivity and insight.

Attitudes Affecting Use of Improvisation
in Traditional Piano Study

Improvisation has long been absent from most aspects of music education, and yet it is a typical and characteristic mode of musical expression in today's world. Several factors have contributed to the decline of the art of improvisation and of the teaching of this area of musicianship during the last century and the early part of this century.

It was the practice some years ago to discourage improvisation as a distraction, even a harmful influence. It was a common theory that students should know the fundamental rules of harmony and melody before attempting to create or compose. Research, however, has shown that the "logical fundamentals" are not really fundamental as far as experience is concerned. For learning purposes, a fundamental is something that is first experienced. The function of logical fundamentals (which are actually secondary) is to explain experience, not to make it possible. Mehr has stated that a child must experience music before he learns about it, just as he learns to use language before he learns the rules of grammar.

Some early learning theories were successful in discouraging creativity in the piano studio, especially those that regarded the authority of text and teacher as absolute, and under whose influence divergent thinking was unwelcome. Behaviorist learning theory failed to promote creativity or encourage the inventive child by overlooking important positive internal motivations.

Unfortunately, the notion has persisted for many years that the improvisation of music is basically outside the control of the "inspired" creator and that the power of improvisation is a gift rather than a skill that can be developed or taught. Studies have shown, however, that practically every child is capable of making original pieces of music in the presence of encouragement and guidance.

Traditional piano study was and is based on a mechanistic view in which learning is a matter of forming correct habits of response, and in which stored knowledge is acquired by drill. There is no room in this philosophy of piano study for any creative activities which elicit inventive responses from the children or permit them to share in the creative process as an important part of musicianship. Of course, most present-day teachers are a product of this system of education and are often reluctant to employ improvisation in their classrooms and studios due to their own limited background in this skill. Gradually,

performance oriented piano study is giving way to, or at least is being supplemented and enriched by, classical Gestalt and other cognitive psychologies. Creativity has been found to be subject to the molding influences of education and there is currently a growing tendency among teachers to encourage students to explore the vast resources of music, and particularly the keyboard, rather than to learn to play a few pieces for recitals.

Today many scholars of psychology and education believe that conceptual understanding is the main goal of the music curriculum. They have stated that the conceptual approach is fundamental to the development of the ear, eye, and mind for musical improvisation, and that since a musical concept is a mental image of music, it is an absolute requirement that it be based upon a direct experience with music, and a conscious awareness of music that calls for something more than merely hearing it or performing it, more than only duplicating music written by another.

Improvisation as an Educational Tool

Improvisation is the experimentation with a musical concept to gain a working understanding of that concept. Musical concepts lie at the source of musical understanding and research has indicated the relevance of improvisation as a part of basic musical learning. Only with concepts of meter, duration, tempo, melodic movement, and formal design is the organization of music itself

possible. Authorities in the field have concluded that the music program must include a variety of creative activities designed to stimulate and challenge the child if he is to develop an aural understanding of musical sounds. Participants at the Yale Seminar in 1963 proposed that the creating of music should be a part of music instruction from the outset to help children become inventive, to gain facility in combining the materials of music, and to serve him as a vehicle for learning. While only a portion of what goes on in a piano class will involve improvisation, other aspects of the program may be enhanced by spending a few minutes of each class lesson utilizing improvisational activities.

The rationale underlying the teacher's introduction of improvisation has been shown to include the following.

1. Suitable improvisational exercises allow the child to organize his perceptions into concepts of music, to acquire basic skills, to develop positive attitudes toward music perception and participation, and to relate theory study to relevant practice. These perceptions and skills allow creative exploration and offer numerous opportunities for reapplication.

2. Improvisation promotes technical security and allays psychological fear, especially when in a group situation or through the interaction of two or more people.

3. Improvisation explores the potentialities and resources of the instrument.

4. Improvisation stimulates the child's imagination and develops his powers of concentration and hearing.

5. Improvisation provides direct and spontaneous means of musical expression.

6. Finally, educators have reported that notational skills appear to be assimilated easily by the student when the musical concepts and frame of reference are established first. Music notation should be evolved as needed with rich musical experiences always preceding its introduction.

Improvisation has been found to provide for the continuous, imaginative, reapplication of learning and can be the vital bridge relating literacy to creativity and vice versa, by providing students with an outlet for experimentation which can illuminate abstract thinking (literacy) and, at the same time, offer them the opportunity to express themselves (creativity).

The ideal climate for the eliciting of creative responses in an improvisational activity is one which provides both stimulation and reasonable security, one in which the teacher offers clues and encourages, but does not dominate or control. Improvisational procedures can evolve from the students' experimentation with the raw materials of sound. Various techniques can be

identified and developed for use on an early elementary level. Some beginning activities found to be effective with seven to nine year old children may be used to introduce the concepts of rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and style.

Regarding rhythmic improvisation, Mehr writes that the child must experience rhythm before he learns to "count time". Welsh, Wunsch, and others concur and advise that all piano sessions should begin with a period of rhythmic activities such as a clapped call and response or rhythmic canon.

The exploration and use of different pitches for rhythmic activities and creative stories leads to the discovery of melody. Before actually beginning melodic improvisation, some tone matching and imitation activities are recommended. All exercises must be carried out to a steady pulse. Question and answer phrases, restricted at first to only a few tones, help the child begin to perceive music in phrases. He may also learn how a melody is made by using variation, repetition and sequence, reversal, and other techniques.

Students should then continue to employ the learned rhythmic and melodic patterns with the addition of harmonic patterns. The simple ostinato of previous exercises may be replaced by the basic progression of tonic and dominant sounds. Canons continue to be useful to achieve harmonic and textural diversity.

Unity and variety, or repetition and contrast, are the two underlying principles of form. Improvisations by the children may be developed into short A-B, A-B-A, or rondo form. A short improvised introduction and coda may now be within their capabilities. Variation format also provides many different illustrations of improvisational possibility at the level of young students' technical facility.

Educators concur that each activity must be so constructed that success is assured. The students' individual differences will manifest themselves very quickly, but all will be capable of improvising to some degree. As skill and coordination grow and musical insight is gained, crude patterns of response are replaced by more effective ones.

The evaluation of truly creative teaching and learning is difficult, if not impossible. Conscientious teachers faced with the problem of evaluating a course of study or pupil progress, nevertheless, seek to know to what extent the objectives of an educational endeavor have been met. One of the clues for evaluating this may be the presence or absence of musical insight and understanding as demonstrated by the behavior a person exhibits when confronted with a musical problem (cognitive). In a learning situation which encourages and stimulates the students' creativity, perhaps attitudes, interest and appreciation

(affective) may be indicated by their choice of materials and styles for improvising. The result of this type of teaching may have to be evaluated in other than traditional ways, since creativity is difficult, or impossible to grade objectively and is not subject to pencil and paper testing. This is probably a partial explanation for some teachers' reluctance to employ improvisation in the regular piano class.

Evaluation was found to occur on two levels: 1) the teacher evaluation of the student, and 2) the student's evaluation of himself. Early creative efforts should be evaluated in terms of whether or not they fulfill the assignment, not in terms of their own worth. Authorities agree that the principle of deferred judgment (or delayed criticism) is of great value as confirmed by experiments in creativity. Leaders in the Orff method encourage self-evaluation and critical listening when children are improvising. In addition, many pedagogues agree that improvisation itself is an effective evaluative tool. A child's own creation of a musical example is probably one of the best ways to demonstrate his understanding of a particular element or concept. An improvisational activity will also indicate whether a student has developed the technical skill necessary to express his musical knowledge and understanding. Perhaps both achievement and evaluation may effectively take place through the use

of improvisation in piano study whereby a student may pursue musical objectives and practice the process of evaluation, analysis and decision making, and assess what he has done and what he is learning.

Improvisational Materials and Resources
for the Beginning Piano Class

Many teachers today are seeking to implement goals for furthering students' improvisational skills and for promoting internalization of the basic materials of music by guiding each child on a meaningful, creative, and individual adventure. The effort toward this goal for older students is being aided in varying degrees by piano methods calling for creativity as well as technical facility and interpretive ability. Several texts for class piano designed for college piano minors are probably meeting those students' needs satisfactorily. In addition, there are a few books available on the market that deal exclusively with learning to improvise and these, too, are directed toward the college or pre-college student by virtue of the level of vocabulary used and the suggested activities requiring full-sized hands. Generally, books on improvisation today are concerned with either jazz performance or organ playing for church services. Some of these publications may serve as adequate, even excellent, resources for the teacher of young children.

In the light of an increased awareness of child development and knowledge of the potential of creative teaching and learning, the absence of a method for teaching improvisation to young children in beginning piano class and for using improvisation as an educational tool of learning and evaluation is quite apparent. It is a void that clearly needs to be filled.

Such factors as intuition, imagination, confidence, and aesthetic perception are widely regarded as essential to the development of creative responses in students; however, current materials that deal with improvisation at all tend to ignore these factors in favor of the technical aspects of playing and usually focus excessive attention on notation. In the absence of child-oriented materials, it is necessary, therefore, for the instructor of second to fourth grade beginners who desires to incorporate the teaching of improvisation into his lessons to do one of the following:

1. He must develop from his experience and training adequate improvisational activities which present and use the musical elements in a logical sequence and relate these exercises to the other aspects of his curriculum. In developing his plan, the instructor should take into account the current theories of the musical and intellectual capabilities of seven to nine year old children.

2. He must choose one of the published texts and use it as a supplementary book for the children, as an idea and resource book for himself, as a point of departure and a guide in planning the weekly class to insure the inclusion of creative activities on a regular basis. The teacher of young elementary age children in a class piano setting may cover and interrelate the various areas of musicianship aided by a careful selection of improvisatory materials. Materials existing at this time will require some adaptation to specific teaching situations taking into consideration the maturity and background of students and the class size and time available.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are offered as a result of this research.

For Teachers:

1. A balanced curriculum should be developed for young beginners which places equal emphasis on the cognitive and the affective areas of learning.
2. The basic curriculum should be flexible enough to provide for experiences in improvisation on a regular basis.
3. The teacher should begin improvisation instruction at the beginning of piano study before the dependence on notation

causes the student to be resistant to learning a new mode of response.

4. The teacher should encourage and guide each pupil in meaningful, sequential learning that will help him make effective choices for his own improvising.

5. An effort should be made to involve students in group improvisation experiences in which the effect of pupil interaction and idea sharing tends to lessen inhibition.

6. The piano curriculum should include improvisational techniques common to twentieth century music as an artistic frame of reference.

7. The teacher should expose the student to a wide variety of styles and enrich his imagination with various stylistic possibilities to build the foundations for ongoing creativity.

8. A set of criteria should be worked out with the student for evaluative purposes so that he will understand that any criticism regarding improvisatory products is made because an idea is not appropriate or best for the solution to a particular problem, not because the child himself is unworthy.

9. The teacher should practice the principle of deferred judgment during the trial and error period of improvisation and avoid the use of critical peer evaluation in the group situation.

For Researchers:

1. Further research is needed in the area of evaluation of students' cognitive and affective development in a program employing improvisation as an integral part of musicianship training.
2. Further research is needed on the apparently culturally induced phenomenon of decreased creative productivity among children at about the fourth grade level.
3. Further research is needed on the development of an appropriate and usable method in improvisation designed specifically for seven- to nine-year-old children in the first year of piano study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SELECTED MATERIALS FOR USE IN TEACHING IMPROVISATION

1. Berkowitz, Sol, Improvisation Through Keyboard Harmony, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.
2. Burns, Betty and Jackie Graham, You Do It: Jazz, Rock, Pop, and Blues, Books 1-3, Park Ridge, Illinois, General Words and Music, 1972.
3. Chastek, Winifred Knox, Keyboard Skills: Sight Reading and Transposition, Harmonization, Improvisation, Belmont, California, Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1967.
4. Coker, Jerry, Improvising Jazz, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.
5. Covello, Stephen, The Little Avant-Garde, New York, Schroeder and Gunther, Inc.
6. Duckworth, Guy, Keyboard Musicianship, New York, The Free Press, 1970.
7. Earle, Eugenia, How to Add Melodic Ornamentation, Lee Roberts Music Publications, Inc., New York, 1973.
8. Fornuto, Don, Tricks With Triads: Harmonic Variations With Diatonic Triads, Set 1, Katonah, New York, Lee Roberts Music Publications, Inc., 1970.
9. Fornuto, Don, Tricks With Triads: Harmonic Variations With Diatonic Triads, Set 2, Katonah, New York, Lee Roberts Music Publications, Inc., 1971.
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11. Kahn, Marvin, Guidelines to Improvisation: Quick Steps to Pop Piano, 3 vols., New York, M. Witmark & Sons, 1966.
12. Karp, David, An Approach to Jazz and Rock Stressing Modal Scales: Presented Through Keyboard Improvisation With References to the Repertory of Music Literature, available through the Division of Music, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
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14. Konowitz, Bert, Music Improvisation as a Classroom Method, Port Washington, New York, Alfred Publishing Co., 1973.
15. La Porta, John, A Guide to Improvisation, Boston, Massachusetts, Berklee Press, 1968.
16. Lieberman, Maurice, Keyboard Harmony and Improvisation, vol. I, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1957.
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20. Mack, Glenn R., Adventures in Improvisation at the Keyboard, Evanston, Illinois, Summy-Birchard, Company, 1970.
21. McLean, Edwin, Improvisation for the Pianist, Boulder, Colorado, Myklas Press, 1976.
22. Metis, Frank, Rhythm Factory, New York, Piedmont Music Company, Inc., 1970.

23. Pace, Robert, Piano for Classroom Music, 2nd ed., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971.
24. Palmer, Willard A. and Amanda Vick Lethco, Creating Music at the Piano, New York, Alfred Publishing Company, Inc.
25. Pelz, William, Basic Keyboard Skills, 2nd edition rev. by Richard D. Osborne, Boston, Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1968.
26. Rabinoff, Sylvia, Musicianship Through Improvisation at the Keyboard, and The Improvisor (companion book), Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Theodore Presser Company, 1969.
27. Schlieder, Frederick, Lyric Composition Through Improvisation, C. C. Birchard & Company, 1927.
28. Sheftel, Paul, Exploring Keyboard Fundamentals, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.
29. Verne, Mary, Modes in Miniature, New York, Lee Roberts Music Publications, Inc., 1976.
30. Wollner, Gertrude, Improvisation in Music: Ways Toward Capturing Musical Ideas and Developing Them, Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Company, Inc, 1963.

APPENDIX B

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING MATERIALS ON IMPROVISATION TO BE USED IN CHILDREN'S PIANO CLASSES

1. Readability

The vocabulary used should be appropriate for the age level of the children in the class. The typography should be clear and not too small.

2. Format

The pages should not be cluttered with unnecessary illustrations or details. The binding should be sturdy and attractive. The size of the book should be small enough to be handled easily by the children.

3. Content

There should be a logical sequence of the musical elements presented and adequate musical examples. Practical pedagogical helps are valuable as are usable suggestions for group activities. There should be clear, easily understood directions to the student with some instructions for independent work. Helpful additional material such as a glossary of terms, teacher accompaniments, and suggested listening lists may be included.

4. Cost

The costs of materials currently on the market vary considerably. This may be a factor when choosing books to be purchased by each child in the class.

5. Availability

Even in a large city, materials on improvisation may need to be special ordered from the publisher. Plan ahead.

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