

IMPROV



~~IMPROVISATION~~

IMPROVISING

Improvising is a *verb*, improvisation is a *noun*. Improvising is something we “do”, not something we “have”.

Improvising is a **dynamic process**.

Improvising, requires **skill**.

Improvising requires deep, **practical understanding** and facility in executing forms and materials.

Improvising may be addressed mechanically, but is best developed with **spirit, personality**, and a sense of **fun** and **serious application**.

On Practising: summary advice regarding the day to day practice for jazz improvisors...

On Practicing (Version 7) by Simon Purcell
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ON PRACTISING ...

1 Prepare

Jazz isn't simply about how many licks you can play. Aspiring musicians often enquire as to the best book, the best lick or best course of study. There are many answers to these questions, but the first question must be:

What do I want to achieve?

It is essential that we utilise practice time effectively, this will only be as effective as the consideration accompanying it. Practising technique or an improvisational skill without awareness of a likely or actual outcome wastes time and effort, and will result in the rehearsal and internalisation of unwanted habits and ultimately low morale and loss of motivation.

Aims and Objectives

In *How To Improvise*, Hal Crook alerts us to the "ready, fire, aim" approach to playing – or how we only become aware about what we're playing after the event. Clearly, thinking can start before we even begin to practice. You are serious enough about music to want to practice, so why not make a plan?

first...

Brainstorm all the things you want to achieve, anything at all, from appearing at Ronnie Scott's to learning the mixolydian mode. It is worthwhile doing this over a few days. Live with it, jotting things down, becoming more aware of the different facets of your relationship with music. If you wish to use your time well, you must have a sense of where you are going.

Artists don't get down to work until the pain of working is exceeded by the pain of not working...
Stephen DeStaebler

then...

Identify **Common Themes**. Gradually combine ideas you have written down into a manageable collection of general headings. Devise practice methods which combine skills and will save time. If in doubt, ask a teacher or friend.

then...

Identify **Tangible Goals** (short, medium and long term), begin to work out what is practical for you. Consider the amount of time you might set aside to practice, remember the value of repetitive practice, reinforcing knowledge etc.... (See cycle of knowledge sheet.)

finally...

Plan your practice, become a good diagnostician, visit a teacher who can help you gain perspective on your development.

2 Know What You're Dealing With - the "Body of Knowledge"

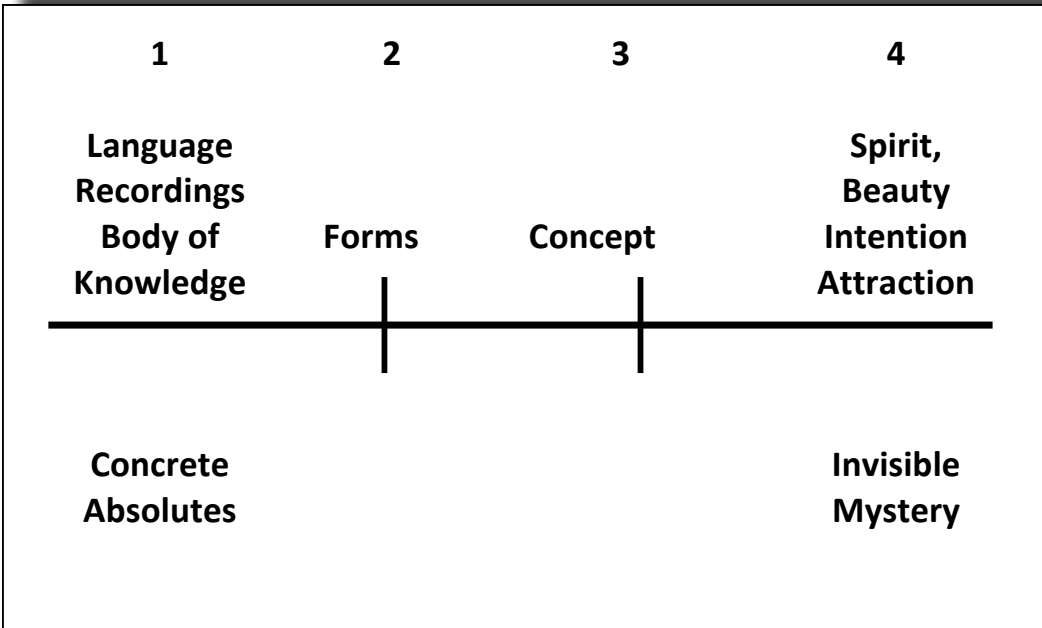
Some people think that improvisation is intangible and mysterious and that conscious awareness might inhibit or obstruct our creative process. Understanding our relationship with the *Body of Knowledge* is essential for a productive use of practice time. Understanding any artistic and educational (learning) principles that might be present will assist us in appreciating the value and necessity of different types of practice, as well as preferences and resistances that influence our productivity.

Four Reservoirs of Creative Activity

You may find it helpful to see the process of jazz as drawing on 4 reservoirs of knowledge:

Language
Forms
Concept
Spirit

Most fluctuations and blocks in our practice and performance are traceable to the preference for, or neglect of one or more of these areas. This may be the familiar avoidance of repetitive practice required for the internalisation of new skills. There may be uncertainty about experimentation, issues surrounding self-belief, or the all too common feeling of being too overwhelmed by the simple mass of things to do.



Examples of The 4 Reservoirs: Language, Forms, Concept, Spirit.

1 Language/recorded performance.

Totally concrete, literally “set in CD”, immutable, a reproduction of what is possible. CDs as representations of artistic or technical perfection. Note the inherent contradiction that improvised music (music in flux), once recorded may be perceived as absolute.

Example: *Recording of Oscar Peterson playing “On Green Dolphin Street”, complete with transcribed improvisation.*

2 Forms

Absolute in outline - less absolute in execution or interpretation. (E major having four sharps, the chord sequence of “On Green Dolphin Street”, or Rumba clavé),

Example: *The form of “On Green Dolphin Street”, key of C, 32 bars, ABAC, modulations to Eb major and C minor.*

The manifestation of form is determined by - Concept....

3 Concept

The “how and why” of forms and the articulation of personal aesthetic and expressive choices.

Example: *Why Oscar Peterson and Bill Evans sounds so different when playing “On Green Dolphin Street”.*

4 Spirit, the heart, attraction

The motivating force to play, to create and express.

Example: *The fact that anybody plays “On Green Dolphin Street” and we love it!*

Be vigilant in your practice, reflect regularly and check whether you are attending to all aspects of your musical growth. Where are your strengths? Which weaknesses are you avoiding? Can a friend or teacher assist? What does *concept* mean to you? Are you aware of the conceptual differences between your mentors? Do you possess sufficient concrete musical fact and technical skill in order to express yourself effectively?

3 How it works: The Improvisational Practice Cycle¹

Improvisatory activity, especially working with models, licks or exemplars, may be represented as a continuum of 7 stages (mirroring language acquisition), process of **internalisation** and degrees of **use**.

7 Stages:

- 1 Attraction
- 2 Reproduction
- 3 Application
- 4 Manipulation
- 5 Modification
- 6 Transformation
- 7 Readiness

1 **Attraction** – an *attitude*. From the *heart*, - beauty. There are 2 types of beauty - jaw-dropping beauty and “the beauty of usefulness” - ie a minor II V I phrase or a particularly effective fingering.

2 **Reproduction** – a *skill*. Manufacturing the desired object exactly and reliably, literally becoming that thing in its most basic, material form. Notice how this stage requires attraction to have taken place alongside a commitment to accuracy. There is no improvisation here at all.

3 **Application** - a *skill*. Make it useful. Apply the desired object to real musical situations, beginning with the original context. This is skill building or training, becoming adept, thoroughly researching all possible applications of the object.

4 **Modification** – a *skill* and a *process*. More flexible application. The object remains pretty much the same, but may be adapted (modified) to suit different keys, tonalities, rhythmic contexts and tempos.

5 **Manipulation** - a *process*. Freely and deliberately changing elements of the object while still referring to it in its original form - ie altering the ending. Note that curiosity and improvisation are now necessary.

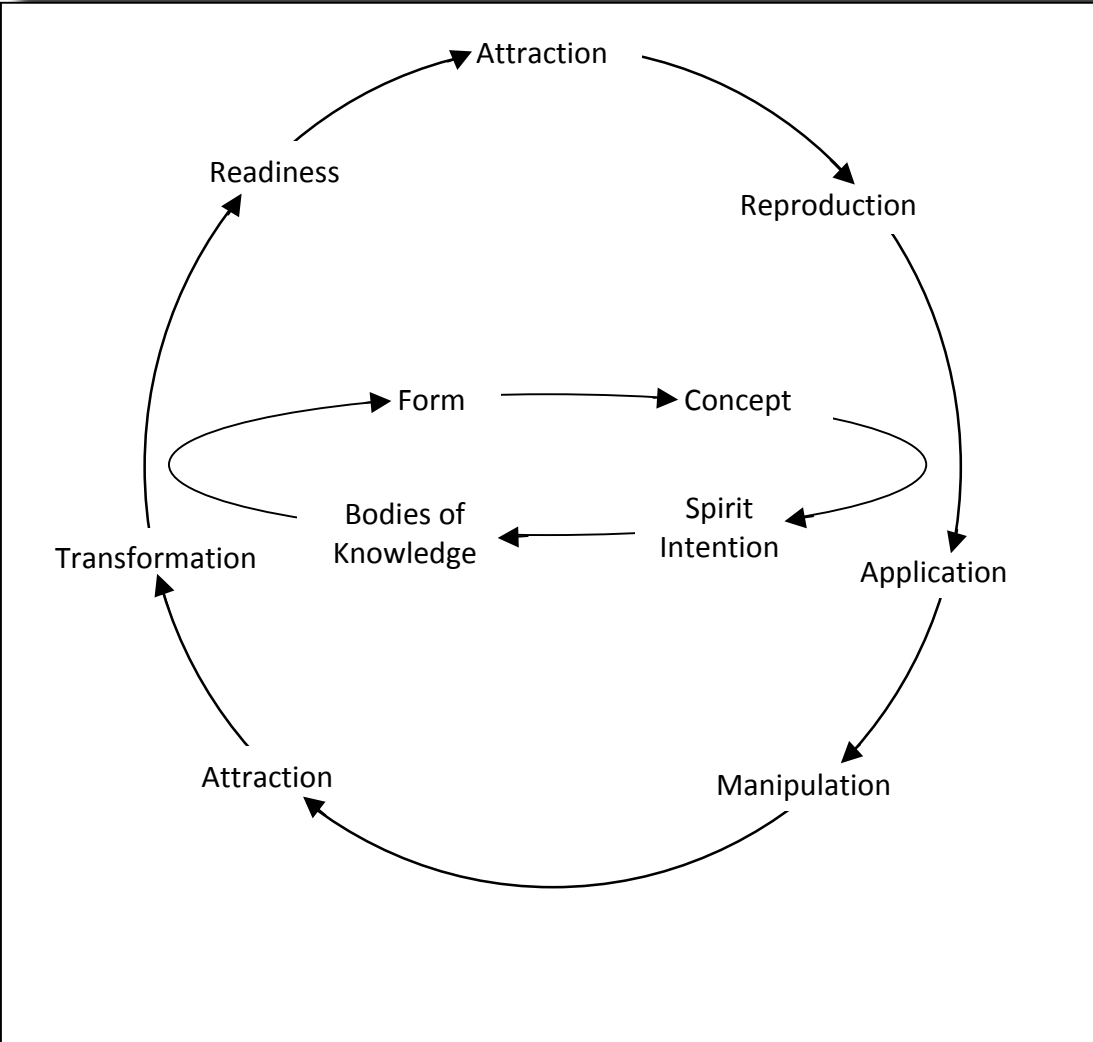
6 **Transformation** - a *process*. More extreme manipulation - the object may now remain as a prompt, a springboard or an echo. Gesture may become more important than the detail, contour more useful than exact replication of intervals, feeling more important than the spelling or the concept itself, forming new materials. The deeper meaning interests us now.

*Imitate,
assimilate,
innovate...
Clark Terry*

7 **Readiness** - an *attitude*. You will have now absorbed both the beauty and the detail of the original, desired object, **thoroughly**, achieving reliability and adaptability and moving towards use that is informed yet personal, forming new material as a result of the improvisational practice cycle, which now begins again...

¹ From Simon Purcell *Musical Patchwork: Teacher-research within a Conservatoire*, London: Guildhall Press, 2002.

Co-relationship of the Improvisational Practice Cycle and the 4 Reservoirs of creative activity:



*Creation is only the projection into form of that which already exists.
Shrimad Bhagavatam.*

*The most fulfilling musical moments can happen when you are able to reach beyond your technical limits of the instrument and just let the music flow out of you
Keith Jarrett*

*Improvisation, the seat of jazz, is a remorseless art that demands of the performer no less than this: that night after night he/she spontaneously invent original music by balancing, with the speed of light - emotion and intelligence, form and content and tone and attack, all of which must both charge and entertain the spirit of the listener.
Whitney Balliet*

4 Self Diagnosis

Developmental stages as cycles: Learning, creation and reflection.

Practice is only as effective as our awareness of its outcomes. The *Learning, creative and reflective cycles* are diagnostic tools (borrowed from school-teachers), useful when we feel that our practice isn't productive. Perhaps we're bored with scales and need to be more curious and playful. Perhaps we're full of energy but unable to manage tricky corners. Use learning cycles in order to *review, adjust* and *balance* your practice. Don't be shy to discuss it with a teacher or fellow musician.

Fig 1 Learning cycle

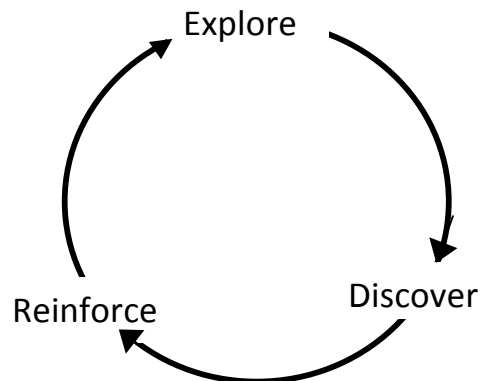


Fig 2 Creative cycle

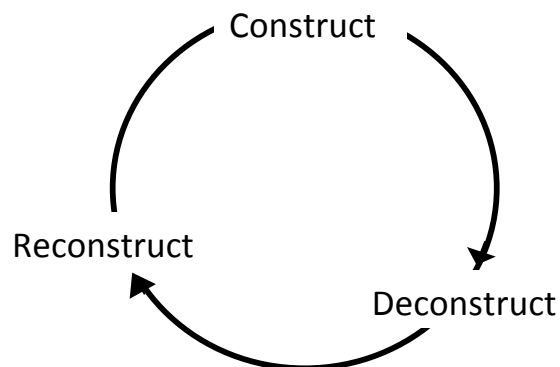
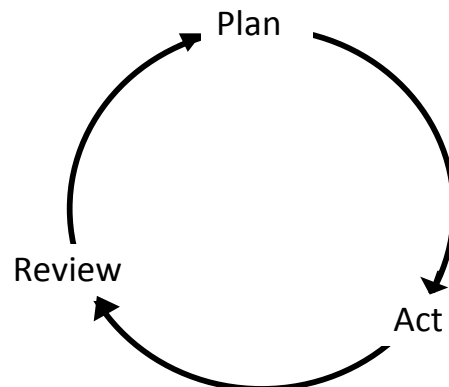


Fig 3 Reflective cycle



The creative process is sometimes perceived as in fig 2. Does this assist us in developing our

practice? To what extent do we deconstruct our process? Do we ever reassemble it? What state are we in today? What timescale does this apply to in practice and preparation for performance?

Keep a diary.

Teachers prepare and evaluate their classes, similarly, we must monitor our progress regularly. A diary assists us in observing whether our practice methods are having the intended outcomes. While we intend to express ourselves personally, there is a rigour to practice, whatever our individual artistic intentions. There is no hiding place from the tape recorder (a diary of our playing) or the diary that records and reviews our practice routines and records our perceptions.

The thing that makes jazz so interesting is that each man is his own academy.
Cecil Taylor

Record yourself- every day!

The tape/hard-disk recorder doesn't lie!

In the same way that mirrors show us how we look, the tape recorder is an invaluable aid in making our practice effective. With it we have the *benefit of hindsight* and time to hear the good bits we didn't hear, those ideas that were only granted fleeting attention as well as those corners that we didn't know we needed to address.

Here are some ideas to get you started.

1. Decide what you want to achieve - *this is the most important decision.*
2. Select a context - a tune (or part of a tune) that needs some work, a manageable II V or "modal bit."
3. Play and record for a while. Stop, listen.
4. What do you notice
5. What do you like?
6. What don't you like - be specific. Rest a while and decide what steps to make.
7. Play and record again.... This time decide to focus on one point alone - feature it your improvisation - whether reinforcing a good point, developing a good idea that had slipped through your net, or focussing on the change that gets away....
8. Repeat 4.
9. Do this as often as possible for at least a month. Are there any developments in your practice?



5 Practising Tunes

This is a common sense approach to internalising songs and forms, based on approaches to practice employed by Lennie Tristano, Bill Evans, Sonny Rollins (apparently!) and many other players. Significantly, this approach emphasises the use of melody.

Objectives:

- A thorough understanding and awareness of the harmonic and structural detail within the form.
- Awareness and utilisation of the fundamental properties of improvisation – information/content and use.

Principles:

- Always reduce learning objectives to bite-size bits.
- Know the form (absolute) then embellish and manipulate (process).

Drill the skill – then manipulate

- Approach all improvising as manipulation of melody.
- Always learn by ear.
- Practice very slowly.
- Be aware of *cognitive overload* – work with a manageable amount of information and reinforce until it becomes automatic.
- How and where you practice affects the outcome - so apply the skills learnt in practice to realistic situations:
 - a. practice routine
 - b. play-along context,
 - c. practice with friends
 - d. rehearsal/play-through.
 - e. Always approach “exercises” with commitment and feeling.
- Memorise/transcribe examples (solos) that model your objectives.
- Reinforce, reinforce, reinforce.

First things first... The Song.

The first time we hear music we hear the tune and feel the beat, so as improvisers we must begin with these most tangible and audible parts of the form.

Tip: Lennie Tristano advised that we improvise with total commitment and expression. Make the melody a convincing statement, without embellishment.

Step 1 Memorise and improvise with the melody.

1.1 **Know the tune first** – don't skimp on this stage... then, improvise with the melody - **melody notes alone**. The discipline of focussing exclusively on the melody notes causes you to develop powers of concentration

1.2 **Manipulate** - stretch the rhythm of the melody – accelerate, delay, alter the rhythm.

1.3 **Embellish** the melody, a) Rhythmically – repeat notes, b) melodically – sing neighbour notes

Tip: Learn the lyric, then sing the song with the lyric and simply manipulate the rhythm.

Step 2 Memorise the “root movement”.

2.1 Learn the root movement **as a melody**

2.2 Improvise rhythmically with roots only (as in 1.2)

2.3 Embellish the roots with neighbour notes (as in 1.3 above).

Tip: Think of the root movement as a tune!

Step 3 Improvise with - roots and 3rds.

3.1 Learn the roots and 3rds **as a melody**

3.2 Improvise rhythmically with roots and 3rds only (as in 1.2)

3.3 Embellish the roots and 3rds with neighbour notes (as in 1.3 above).

Step 4 Improvise with roots, 3rds and 5ths (triadic improvisation).

4.1 Learn triads **as a melody**

4.2 Improvise rhythmically with triads only (as in 1.2)

4.3 Embellish triads with neighbour notes (as in 1.3 above).

Tip: “Enclose” the first note of each phrase.

Step 5 Improvise with roots, 3rds and 5ths and 7ths – the “chord tones”.

4.1 Learn triads **as a melody**

4.2 Improvise rhythmically with triads only (as in 1.2)

4.3 Embellish triads with neighbour notes (as in 1.3 above).

Tip: *You don't have to sing/play all notes in the triad. Don't attempt more than you can manage!*

Step 6 Establish resolutions with “guide-tones” (advanced).

6.1 Learn guide-tone lines as melodies.

6.2 Improvise rhythmically with guide-tone lines.

6.3 Embellish guide-tone lines with neighbour notes (as in 1.3 above).

6.4 Embellish guide-tone lines with chord tones.

Tip: *Target the guide tone at the beginning and end of each bar - “make the join.”*

Step 7 “Join the dots”. Chord-tone improvisation again, this time joined-up with *parent scales*. Maintain the “chord frame” by emphasising/featuring the chord tones.

Tip: *Be sure to start and end each phrase on a chord-tone (1,3,5,7).*

Step 8 Comprehensive guide-tone improvisation.

8.1 Charting 3rds and 7ths

8.2 Locate 5th and 9ths, 9ths and 13ths.

8.3 Chromaticise guide tone lines: 5 – 9 – 5 becomes b5 – b9 – 5

Step 9 Improvise in the *general spirit* of the work above.

Tip: Have a short break then return to the song. Improvise with the “echo” of the exercises you practiced earlier – *sensing* instead of *thinking*.

Learning Tunes Thoroughly

Shock horror – jazz genius recorded “Nardis” 41 times (as far as we know)...



I wonder why? Perhaps he wanted to go deeper!

I have heard many famous jazz musicians advocating the necessity to learn a lot of repertoire. *Esteemed artist "number one"* recently encouraged students to know at least 100 tunes, while *esteemed artist number two* advocated just 20 – and stated that some musicians are just “tune nerds” (not very helpful).

"Number two" misses the deeper and more useful point which is about memory and the need to be sufficiently thorough in our practice that song-forms present as few problems as necessary while we deal with the principal issues of improvising and expression. Many aspiring jazz musicians struggle with the repetition necessary for internalisation, often losing focus and moving their attention to another new tune, the next good idea or something they have heard at a gig or on *Spotify*. It is worth noting that Bill Evans recorded “Nardis” at least 40 times, and quite possibly played it on most gigs. Welcome boredom with a form, and see it instead as indication of the right time to go deeper.

Learning tunes, thoroughly and usefully.

A method for tune learning that combines the memorisation of forms with application of improvisational skills. Core principal is repetition and rotation of repertoire.

1. Carefully select 4 – 6 tunes to work with for a month (or longer), in effect a set-list. Consider what will be both useful and enjoyable, perhaps core repertoire, a composer (i.e. Monk or Cole Porter), tunes for your band, tunes you like playing with your mates, or for a forthcoming performance. Discuss your choice with friends and teacher.

2. Construct a set-list with varied tempos and moods (a good opener, ballad, latin, bop head etc).

3. During this hour of practice, work on no more than 3 tunes a day, for 20 minutes on each tune (no longer), utilising the tune-learning methods explained above.

4. Reinforce and rotate tunes daily, like this:

Monday:	tunes 1, 2 and 3
Tuesday:	tunes 2, 3 and 4
Wednesday:	tunes 3, 4 and 5
Thursday:	tunes 4, 5 and 1
Friday:	tunes, 5, 1 and 2...

and so on...

5. Utilise these tunes (or parts of them) as contexts for your improvisational practice.

6. Next month – select another 4 – 6 tunes.

It is essential that you work on the tunes for at least a month in order to allow our brain sufficient time to learn in depth, to engage in the higher levels of improvisational activity, and for skills to become embedded in the deeper levels of our memory (there is a different technique for speed learning repertoire in terms of familiarisation). After a while you will notice the material becoming very familiar. At this point don't be distracted and fall into the trap of trying out a new tune. Instead, this is the critical point at which you can go deeper, applying and developing improvisational skills and approaches without having to worry about memorising the material.

This is a highly effective way in which to practice/learn because it combines depth (repetition) with context (the song), if you are prepared to learn deeply rather than approximately! It is also just one hour.

PART 2

PRACTICING IMPROVISING: THE IDEA OF “3 VISITS”

Practice time might be limited, even as a full-time music student. The following approach to practice is based on the idea of a daily routine of 3, one-hour, practice sessions – or “visits” (some of you may and definitely should do more!). The objective is to **combine** and **balance** musical knowledge, creative processes, physical technique and mental attitude that form the essential aspects of improvising.

5 Core Elements to the Practice of Improvising:

1. **Technique.** The alignment of mind and body, *intention* and *use*. This must become a given.
2. **Vocabulary.** Right brain, non-verbal, rote learning through copying, modelling and attuning. Served by transcription, application, manipulation and transformation of licks.
3. **Forms.** Left Brain, cognitive, analytical, constructive, labelling and generating vehicles with “absolute” clarity and accuracy *Practicing Tunes* – type activities.
4. **Process** of improvising. Whole-brain. *Play - Rest*, Stages 5 and 6 of *Improvisational Practice Cycle* and *Aspects of Design*.
5. **Play** – uninhibited play, an attitude - this is why we want to improvise: Served by periods of free play “in the vibe” of a practice method as distinct to targeted, cognitive goals.

If you're going to teach [or practice] jazz, you must abstract the principles of music which have nothing to do with style.... It ends up where the jazz player, ultimately, if he's going to be a serious jazz player, teaches himself.
Bill Evans

These 5 components may be combined into 3 daily “visits” to your instrument, alongside complimentary activities. While you will benefit most by beginning with a warm-up and physical technique, once you have experienced and fully understand the practice of improvising, you may prefer to progress through activities in a different order and allot different amounts of time. The important issue is balance, continuity, awareness of outcomes and the ability to review and adjust your practice accordingly. Remember that your practice is only as productive as the awareness accompanying it.

3 Visits – Examples:

1st Visit: Technique.

1 Warm Up:

- 1.1 Physical stretching, setting mind, focusing in.
- 1.2 A couple of very slow scales, out of tempo: Motto: “*Minimum tension, quick release, body-check/relax*”.
- 1.3 Objective is alignment of mind and body, the rehearsal of relaxed physical state alongside an alert mind. “Good use”.

2 Scales: (crotchet = 70 – 100), one scale exercise per semitone, 12 keys.

- 2.1 2 x 8ves 8th notes. Up a semitone: 3 x 8ves triplets. Up a semitone: 4 x 8ves 16th notes. Up a semitone: 5 x 8ves quintuplets. Up a semitone: 3 x 8ves sextuplets. This covers 5 semitones. Pianists: hands separately, horns, tongued etc...
- 2.2 As above on next 5 semitones. Vary articulation.
- 2.3 Remaining 2 semitones: mixed metre, 2’3, 3’s, 4’s, 5’s.

Consider practicing scales, grouping 8th notes in 3s, 5s, or 7s – for a month or two.

Between each and every scale, return to the relaxed physical state.

3 Arpeggios and/or wider shapes:

- 3.1 Arpeggios or 4ths: 4 semitones: 2 x 8ves 8th notes, up a semitone: 3 x 8ves triplets, up a semitone: 4 x 8ves, 16th notes.
- 3.2 Jazz pattern #1, 4 semitones.
- 3.3 Jazz pattern #2, 4 semitones.

Be sure to return to the relaxed physical state between each and every exercise, utilising repetitive practice to rehearse and internalise good posture and relaxed alertness.

Between each and every arpeggio/pattern, return to the relaxed physical state

4 Chord-scales:

- 4.1 Select a scale system for 2 weeks (ie melodic minor).
- 4.2 Arpeggiate chord-types in conjunction with chord scales.
- 4.3 Run chord-scales as various melodic patterns.

[Note: Stages 2 and 3 cover 12 semitones, twice. Start a semitone higher each day.]

2nd Visit: Vocabulary.

Licks: *Pick 4 – 8 licks, minimum of 2x II V I major and 2 x II V I minor. Play these licks in all keys every day for at least a month, until they become as familiar as spoken language.*

1. Play the licks in all keys, attending to articulation at different tempos.
2. Insert licks into tunes from your personal set-list.²
Note, this is non-improvised.
3. Improvise in spaces between licks.
4. Play in the general manner generated by the vocabulary, mimic.

Sure jazz is made up before you play it, but usually a second before.
Duke Ellington

Remember to return to the relaxed physical state at regular intervals between repetitive activities.

Much debate surrounds the use of licks. Beware of adherents of either persuasion as an unbalanced view is likely to be ill-considered and the deeper issue is about *use*. See the *Improvisational Practice Cycle* (above, page 4) and *Licks – Use and Abuse* (handout), and note that melodic, harmonic and rhythmic qualities are incorporated subliminally, within the practice of vocabulary.

² Personal set-list: By selecting a set of 4 to 6 tunes for up to 6 weeks, you will create a musical context in which to place improvisational learning points, achieving continuity in practice as well as learning repertoire.

3rd Visit: Improvising and Repertoire:

The process of improvising and developing harmony and arrangements.

Bill Evans, Lennie Tristano, Sonny Rollins, Philly-Joe Jones and many other improvisors have placed great importance on memorising melodies and improvising with the melody itself.

- 1 Apply the “Practicing Tunes” method to new repertoire or revision of forms. This is harmony in action, generating functional lines from chord progressions in time (as distinct from melodic or developed motifs).

I've always preferred to play something simple...
Bill Evans

- 2 Loop several licks through the “Improvisational Practice Cycle”:
 - a) in simple context ie one chord or a single cadence
 - b) within repertoire or simplified section of form
 - c) within whole song form. Be sure to complete all 3 stages.
- 3 Improvise within repertoire using a number of *process-based/play-rest* and *design* techniques³. As above, within progressive contexts.

Employ the play-rest idea in order to return to the relaxed physical state at regular intervals.

- 4 All improvisers should work on the memorisation and presentation of melody; harmony instruments, chord-voicings and arrangements within repertoire.

³ See Hal Crook “*How to Improvise*” Advance.

Complimentary Activities

Many activities enhance our improvisation, perhaps research through transcription, or further musical investigation through active listening, or the delight of free improvisation or musical sketching. Transcription is perhaps the most often employed, although students and aspiring musicians frequently under-utilise this activity, generally because they are in too much of a hurry. It is critical that you engage with the process in the right order. Dave Liebman has written extensively on the subject (see the essays "My Philosophy of Education" and the shorter "Summary of the Transcription Process"). My own (very short) advice is as follows:

1 Transcription:

If approached in a complete with regularity and in the 4 stages outlined below, this is probably your most useful tool at this stage in your development.

- 1.1 Select a solo for its usefulness. Transcribe in 3 stages:
 - a. **Memorise** a segment and **sing** along with recording. Gradually increase up to 8 bars, 16 bars, a chorus. Don't move on until you have memorized and can **sing** a whole chorus with and without the CD. This will measure your retention.
 - b. As (a) **on your instrument** – with and without the CD.
 - c. Now **transcribe the first chorus**, select and write out at least 4 favourite/useful licks. Write at least 4 variations on each one.
 - d. Memorise the 4 licks and your variations and apply to you daily practice as described in the "2nd visit".
- 1.2 Transcribe every day.⁴

2 Listening:

- 2.1 *Attune* - listen wisely, as this "attunes" your ears.
- 2.2 *Reinforce* your practice by listening to recordings that model your improvisational targets.
- 2.3 *Research* - check out players who influenced your favourite musicians.
- 2.4 Listen for *fun and inspiration*.

⁴ See Dave Liebman's essay regarding transcription at www.daveliebman.com/Feature_Articles/index.htm

3 Complete the picture - Harmony:

- 3.1 Learn simple complete voicings (includes bass note) for chosen repertoire. Check voice leading from chord to chord. Memorise.
- 3.2 Apply comping rhythms to voicings.
- 3.3 Play freely in the general sound-world generated by the voicings.

4 Complete the picture - Rhythm:

- 4.1 Play “air-drums” with recorded chosen transcription, good examples of repertoire and great grooves.
- 4.2 Purchase some brushes and hand-percussion and play along with recordings. Join a samba-school or African Dance group. Go jive-dancing.
- 4.3 Practice rhythmic placements/displacements along with a CD.

5 Complete the picture - Free Play:

- 5.1 Play whatever you want! Be free.
- Or... use conceptual/thematic frameworks:
- 5.2 Contrasts
 - 5.3 Complete performance ie three minutes with a beginning, middle and end.
 - 5.4 Combine a time-no-changes approach with melodies from a standard song.

*I guess it comes from getting into this... trance-like state. It's like you're tapping into something that's going by...
Kenny Wheeler*

6 Most important of all... be sure to monitor your practice.

- Are you balancing the various elements?
- Are you achieving and maintaining continuity?
- Are you able to retain skills, content, processes?
- Share your practice with a friend or teacher.

Recommended Reading

Paul Berliner. *Thinking in jazz: the infinite art of improvisation* University of Chicago Press, Ltd., London 1994. Academic treatise on improvisation containing numerous of personal accounts, highly detailed musical examples and references. Thorough, but heavy going if you're not used to academic style.

David Buswell. *Performance Strategies for Musicians* MX Publishing 2006. Practical advice regarding performance, informed by strategies drawn from *Neuro-Lingusitic Programming* and Sports Psychology.

Jerry Coker. *How To Practice Jazz* publ. Aebersold. Concise and practical book about *practicing* jazz.

Jerry Coker. *The Teaching of Jazz* Rottenburg: Advance 1989.
Concise and practical book about *teaching* jazz.

Hal Crook. *How To Improvise - A Guide to Practising Improvisation*. Rottenburg: Advance, 1991

The best book available, a book about improvising rather than the more common compendium of information. Hal Crook stresses the importance of *design* and *control*. Information serves process here, with dozens of practice routines. Suitable for all improvisors - including drummers and singers.

Hal Crook. *Ready, Aim Improvise! Exploring the Basics of Improvisation*. Rottenburg: Advance, 1999. Excellent, practical and comprehensive, essentially a summary of a 2 or 3-year undergraduate course.

Betty Edwards. *Drawing On The Right Side Of The Brain*. London: Harper Collins 1979, 1993.
A stunning revelation of how left/right brain (hemispherical) theory transforms drawing and painting. While written for artists, this is well worth a read.

Galloway and Green *The Inner Game of Music* New York: Pan 1986, 1987.

Sequel to the *Inner Game of Tennis*, straightforward psychology of performance, widely used by sports professionals and musicians.

Carl Gustav Jung. *The Undiscovered Self* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1958. Jung's distinctions and perspective on dogma and doctrine – a lateral and useful angle on stylistic adherences and artistic development.

Mark Levine. *The Jazz Theory Book*, Sher Music.

Compendium of jazz information, mainly *bebop and modern*. Excellent presentation, but lacks guidance on improvisation.

Stephanie Judy. *Making Music for the Joy of It*. New York, Tarcher 1990.

Self-help book designed for amateurs, yet full of important reminders of the principles and purpose of practice.

Stephen Nachmanovitch. *Free Play - Improvisation in Life and Art*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam 1990.

Beautiful, readable and highly insightful treatise about improvising, drawing upon, amongst others William Blake, Einstein, Martha Graham, Stravinsky. A must!

George Odam. *The Sounding Symbol*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes 1995.

Teaching and learning music, by one of the UK's leading educators with deep insight into how we learn.

Joe Riposo. *Jazz Improvisation: A Whole Brain Approach*. Aebersold. 1989.

An approach to practicing improvisation that utilises left/right brain theory. The material is orthodox but the approach is useful.

Mark Steinell. *Building A Jazz Vocabulary, A Resource for Learning Improvisation* Milwaukee, Hal Leonard Corp, 1995.

Thorough guidance on assembling and developing jazz vocabulary - mainly for playing “changes”.

Philip Sudo. *Zen Guitar*. A beautiful collection of lessons aligning musical practice with the philosophy and psychology of Eastern spiritual/martial arts. Philip Sudo was a graduate of Berklee College.

Kenny Werner. *Effortless Mastery* New Albany: Jamey Aebersold, circa 1998. Yoga/meditation meets jazz improvisation, by leading jazz pianist Kenny Werner.

Video:

The Universal Mind of Bill Evans. Rhapsody Films.

American Public Services TV documentary. Bill Evans explains his personal philosophy about music, demonstrating at the piano.

SOFTWARE

Transcribe! from www.seventhstring.demon.co.uk.

Excellent transcription tool available from This really is “essential tackle”.

INTERNET DOWNLOADS:

Emusic.com at www.emusic.com.

An inexpensive and legal download site (\$10 per month for 40 tracks), great for searching out numerous versions of standards or new music from dozens of jazz labels (as well as classical, pop, world, soundtracks etc). *Emusic* currently offers the entire *Prestige* and *Fantasy* catalogues, all the Coltrane on *Pablo*, the entire Bill Evans catalogue (minus *Verve*).

PRACTICE RECORD

Week Starting.....

	begin	end	at the instrument	how	complimentary work	how
Mon			Language Key competence Repertoire Improv techniques Free creative work	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no	Transcription Active listening Repertoire research Composition Other	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no
Tues			Language Key competence Repertoire Improv techniques Free creative work	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no	Transcription Active listening Repertoire research Composition Other	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no
Wed			Language Key competence Repertoire Improv techniques Free creative work	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no	Transcription Active listening Repertoire research Composition Other	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no
Thurs			Language Key competence Repertoire Improv techniques Free creative work	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no	Transcription Active listening Repertoire research Composition Other	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no
Fri			Language Key competence Repertoire Improv techniques Free creative work	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no	Transcription Active listening Repertoire research Composition Other	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no
Sat			Language Key competence Repertoire Improv techniques Free creative work	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no	Transcription Active listening Repertoire research Composition Other	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no
Sun			Language Key competence Repertoire Improv techniques Free creative work	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no	Transcription Active listening Repertoire research Composition Other	yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no yes/no
Total hours						

Feedback

1. Am I achieving any routine this week? YES/NO
2. Am I reinforcing skills and processes? YES/NO
3. Ideas for development...