

Excerpt from Mäder, Urban; Baumann, Christoph; Meyer, Thomas (2013): Freie Improvisation – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Vermittlung. (Forschungsbericht der Hochschule Luzern – Musik 5). Electronic document. Downloaded 7. Oktober 2016 from https://zenodo.org/record/31339/files/2013_5_Maeder-Baumann-Meyer.pdf, p.63-64.
The book deals with the didactics of free improvisation teaching in both theory and practise.

Mäder, Urban; Baumann, Christoph; Meyer, Thomas: Short suggestions

A short suggestion for improvising is a preparation for a group improvisation. It only influences the principle of 'free improvisation' (that is, playing without previous agreement) to a minimal extent. It is rather an aid for observing during the process, or it provides an impulse for the playing attitude.

For becoming conscious

- 1) Be conscious of the energy in your own breathing in and out, at first without playing, then during playing. Be conscious of the musical energy cycles of the group.
- 2) When you notice that the energy of the group is decreasing, or you are getting bored, then utilise the moment and play with more energy, that is, more clearly, provokingly. This way, you will experience how the others react.

Concerning listening

- 3) At first, listen especially to one or two fellow players
- 4) Listening does not have to be complicated. Simply listen more to the way in which sounds emerge.
- 5) Attempt to listen consciously to as many things as possible.
- 6) Next time you play, listen especially to one fellow player.
- 7) Listening does not require any special reaction. Simply let the ear receive what you hear.
- 8) Listen with all your body and spirit!
- 9) Choose moments in which you listen without playing along.
- 10) Try to listen as if you were situated outside of the group and were listening to the totality.
- 11) Do not listen just to pitch and rhythm, listen also to the articulation of the tones and to the timbral process of your own instrument and those of the others.
- 12) Observe how much the less usual forms of tones and noises occur in the playing material.
- 13) Attempt to be equally aware of the less usual sounds and noises as of the 'materials' played the 'normal' way.
- 14) Listen to the weaving together of differing timbres and articulations, and discover a universe of details.

Concerning deciding whether to play or not play

- 15) Playing and not playing are of equal value.
- 16) Strive to become conscious of whether you would like to play in a supportive/accompanying manner, or assertively/influencing, or not play at all.
- 17) Play according to your impulse and try to perceive quickly where this impulse would like to lead.
- 18) Observe the first playing idea of a fellow player! Does he invite to playing along, or has he something important to say by himself first?
- 19) Have confidence in the support (energy) of the group especially when you (unexpectedly) become a soloist.
- 20) Allow often for soloists or small groups (two or three players) to play sections of extended duration.

Concerning the collective creation of form.

- 21) Observe which kind of playing material you use.
- 22) Observe the shape and the effect of all initial ideas or 'materials' more actively.
- 23) Attempt to create a good relation between your individual playing ideas and your observation of the common sound.
- 24) Be aware of the developmental potential of your musical material
- 25) Observe whether the music currently is static or changing. Which role do you take in relation to that?
- 26) Try to be aware of the possibilities that both a longer, continuous piece as well as several shorter ones, separated by pauses, may arise.
