

Here are some exercises that have helped me get into a whole different way of approaching improvisation. I have found that this approach has helped me to -

- Be able to continually generate new material as I play while being coherent and intelligible.
- Become exceptionally good at fitting in with the others' ideas/information that are being played while more importantly, make sense of those ideas and give them direction.
- Be able to help or to be a catalyst in creating a coherent form within each improvisation.

These are the things that I think are essential in free improvisation.

One of the biggest turnoffs for me, in listening to all improvised music is that the music created very often gets into a rut and often doesn't move forward. Too much noodling (which is always bad) and searching without finding (which is great for the player but is pretty boring for the listener), and not enough intensive commitment to playing/working together, which prevents a creation of a coherent, intelligible piece that strikes some kind of emotional chord for the listener.

So...I strongly believe that this can be an effective solution for these pitfalls for free improvised music.

#### ASSIGNMENT -

1) Please memorize the 12-tone row by Alban Berg. If you can, also memorize the row's retrograde, it's inversion, and the retrograde of the inversion.

Freely improvise on the row, adhering strictly to the order of pitches, whether it's the primary, retrograde, etc.

Use a metronome and put it on quarter note = 30 (or 40 if that's the lowest that your metronome can go to)

2) Practice, using the row, coming up with the motive forms that I've written about (AB, AAB, Statement/Transition).

Focus on melody. Try to make melodic phrases.

You can write them out too which is a great way to slow the process down so that the brain can really internalize this way of thinking into the subconscious.

Quarter note = 30.

Get together with one other player and play duos in this manner with each contributing to the creation of each motive form.

3) Check out the Brahms mp3 and try to identify as many of the motive forms as possible (along with the composite motive forms).

4) For chordal instrumentalists, explore the row (again, adhering strictly to the order of pitches) and come up with tri-chords (3 pitches), tetra-chords (4 pitches), and penta-chords (5 pitches, although penta-chords should be used sparingly...for instance only when the improvs are sparse and less dense). Make sure that they really appeal to you and not just randomly through them together.

You can experiment/explore displacing the octaves and voicing of the selected pitches to come up with chords that appeal to your ears.

5) Flood your listening/hearing with the Schoenberg mp3s