

Group Improvisation

- **Long tones:** You pick a note and sing it as long as you can. If you come in on a note and it sounds off, usually going up or down by a half step will make it work. Remember that sometimes silence is the best way to contribute to the ensemble sound.
- **Looping:** You take a minute to choose some melodic material to loop. It could be very little, it could be a lot. As everybody else enters with their material, adapt to what you hear without altering the fundamental character of your material.
- **Parallel:** somebody begins with something resembling a melody. Another voice enters and moves parallel, but at whatever interval they would like. After a few more voices do likewise, then the piece opens up to completely free improv.
- **Complexity:** a relatively simple 'melody' is presented (by either the teacher or a willing student). Students gradually enter with a slightly more complex version of the melody. Gradually complexity increases until there is a cacophony of sound. Teacher cues a sharp cutoff. Better with a smaller class.
- **Overlap:** One student enters with a long held note. The next student in line enters on whatever pitch they want, overlapping slightly with the previous. This continues around the circle. If energy is lower, begin another overlap on the opposite side of the circle. Now students are listening to more than one pitch and are attempting to fit in with it. Better with a smaller class.
- **Themes:** The teacher gives a theme or title only, and the ensemble improvises based on this theme or title. This may be a single word ("tired"), an idea ("tribute to Ella Fitzgerald"), a story ("walking to school"), or something completely abstract ("blowing whales from glass bottles"). This exercise can only be successful after many improvisation experience within the ensemble.
- **Scat:** Teacher writes up root of 12 bar blues harmonic progression. Students sing pitches on simple [half quarter quarter] rhythm. Add beatbox. Individual students take turns scat singing over progression. If a small class, everyone can take a turn. If a large class, only some volunteers. If more time and interest, have the "combo" develop their accompaniment a bit more: complete the chord, make the rhythm more complex, begin a walking bass line, somebody beatbox some percussion. Singers can trade fours with each other (this could even be a separate day of improv all by itself; practicing responding on the fly to another person's improv).
- **Timbre:** stark variations in timbre.... Keep working this one

Group Composition

Feelings

Google survey, "How are you feeling right now?", students list as many adjectives as they are feeling. Quickly copy all the results and paste into a word cloud generator. Take the three largest words (the most repeated) and write them up on the board. These are the three main sections of the group composition. Discuss their performance order. Discuss each one individually. "What could _____ sound like?" Rehearse it for a bit. Don't try to determine too much; just rough ideas that can be improvised later. Do this for each section. Discuss transitions (how to cue, who will cue, what will happen between sections). Discuss the ending. Perform the group composition.

Dr. Saville style

Students give four random pitches. This is now the material for our A section. Discuss how this 'melodic' material will be treated. Only rehearse if necessary. Students give three random sounds (not pitched). These become the basis of the B section. Discuss how this 'rhythmic' material will be treated. Only rehearse if necessary. Let the C section be less guided. Discuss how the C section could go. Discuss how it will start and stop. Perform the group composition.

Twinkle Variations

Forlorn. Exuberant. Exasperated. Urgent. Precise. Vague. Regal. Disgusting. Enormous. Unusual.

- Theme and Variation: In groups, students will compose a theme and three variations with each variation being as different from the others as possible (flexibility). Do the same but with each variation being more complex than the previous ones (elaboration).

Indeterminate compositions

In C (adapt for vocalists)

Bach (Again) - Come Sweet Death

Write my own creative concepts