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ENABLING COLLECTIVE FREE MUSIC IMPROVISATIONAL PRACTICES**Abstract:**

Free music improvisational practice involves the construction and reconstruction of musical material unbounded by extant musical forms and traditions. It utilizes whatever tools, skills and experiences the improviser may have at hand to create music that is bound to one's personal context for music-making. Due to this, it allows communication and expression of one's thoughts and feelings spontaneously and reactively through music in response to one's evolving circumstances. To achieve the same immediacy when improvising in a group, free music improvisors need to acquire ways to socially and musically interact and communicate with each other effectively in evolving situations. This paper reviews literature which illuminates how collective free music improvisation may be enabled through socio-musical communication, and discusses the value and implications this has to musicians and music learners. Grounded theory method was used to identify codes, concepts and categories across literature pertaining to collective free music improvisation and music improvisation. This revealed how collective free music improvisation can be enabled through socio-musical communication via three strategies - by developing ways of interacting among improvisors socially and musically, developing a personal musical language as a tool to converse fluently, and establishing shared understanding among improvisors as the foundation for musical interaction. In professional free improvisation ensembles and music classrooms, these strategies may be synergised to nurture expressive and confident improvisers rooted in the immediacy of the musical conversations with oneself and others. They enable collective free improvisation to break down cultural and stylistic barriers to establish understanding and empathy among diverse and unique musicians - through music as communication. This has significant national and cultural ramifications in free improvisation ensembles and in music classrooms comprising participants of diverse races with diverse musical backgrounds, as it imparts the importance of negotiating social and cultural differences through communication while respecting individual musical trajectories.

Keywords:

Free music improvisation, music education, music improvisation, social constructivism