

Module Specification

Module Title: Contextual Studies 3: Extended Improvisation

Module code:	TBC	NQF level:	Level 6
Credit value:	20 credits	Semester of study:	1 and 2
Applicable pathways:	Classical, Film Music, Folk, Jazz, Popular, Production and Songwriting	Pre-requisites:	None

Module overview

Students will be introduced to a range of artists whose approach to improvisation can be considered to be at the forefront of the discipline. Theoretical issues to be studied include modality, use of chromaticism, angularity, tone clusters, rhythmical complexities such as polyrhythms and hockets. 'Extended' techniques that may open up the expressive range of the instrument will be studied. Aesthetic considerations will be highlighted through the analysis of various practitioners. Artists whose work will be critiqued include pioneers such as Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, Eric Dolphy and Sun Ra, as well as more recent artists such as Evan Parker, Barry Guy, John Zorn and Matthew Bourne. Practice and research will be balanced as musical concepts, techniques and styles are contextualised practically. In addition to musical analysis, sessions will highlight social and cultural movements that can provide further context in which to view this work.

Aims

This is a collaborative module that is designed for performers who wish to increase their performance practice by using extended performance techniques and encourages contextual-based experimentation. The module is suitable for all performers and performing composers.

The module aims to:

1. Bring students together from different pathways/musical backgrounds, to develop their improvisation skills.
2. Introduce students to a range of practitioners well known for working in a field of improvisation that moves beyond more standard modal, harmonic and rhythmic frameworks.
3. Introduce students to models that facilitate an exploration of improvisation through practical research.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate and document the learning process.
2. Acquire improvisation techniques through research, analysis, and through cross-genre collaboration.
3. Create original music via advanced improvisation.
4. Present improvised music in an appropriate format (e.g. production; documentation of live performance).

Learning and teaching methods

In weekly **seminar/workshops**, students will analyse music from a range of musical disciplines in order to facilitate discussion of stylistic and technical aspects of improvisation. Stylistically, there are no limitations, and students will be encouraged to consider a wide range of aesthetic approaches. The module will be delivered through seminar/workshops to introduce students to seminal improvisers who are well known for breaking down barriers between genres. Ideas encountered will be analysed, evaluated and put into practice via workshop activity. Weekly sessions will consist of 45 minutes of seminar, during which artists, concepts and techniques are discussed, followed by 45 minutes of workshop activity during which ideas are contextualised practically.

Contact hours and directed study (over semesters 1 and 2)

Delivery type	Student hours
Indicative hours for learning and teaching activities	30 hours
Indicative hours of directed study	170 hours
Total hours (100hrs per 10 credits)	200 hours

Opportunities for formative feedback

Students will undertake a mid-year platform in the form of presentations in order to receive formative feedback on their approach to extended improvisation.

Assessment Method

Description of assessment	Length/Duration	Weighting	Module LOs addressed
myPortfolio submission documenting the learning process and video documentary	2000 words (myPortfolio submission) 5 minutes (video documentary)	50%	1, 2
Performance	6 minutes	50%	3, 4

Re-Assessment Method*

Description of assessment	Length/Duration	Weighting	Module LOs addressed
myPortfolio submission documenting the learning process and video documentary	2000 words (myPortfolio submission) 5 minutes (video documentary)	50%	1, 2
Performance	6 minutes	50%	3, 4

*Where practicable, assessments may be delivered through the conservatoire's VLE or by video to ensure that overseas students are not disadvantaged or incur unnecessary travel costs. Assessments delivered through the VLE will be timed and invigilated.

Indicative Reading List

- Bailey, D. (1993) *Improvisation: its nature and practice in music*. Da Capo Press.
- Crook, H. (2006) *Beyond time and changes: a musician's guide to free jazz improvisation*. Advance Music.
- Peterson, L. (2006) *Music and the creative spirit: innovators in jazz, improvisation, and the avant garde*. Scarecrow Press.
- Prévost, E. (1996) *No Sound is Innocent, Copula - an imprint of*. Matchless Recordings and Publishing.
- Watson, B. (2004) *Derek Bailey and the story of free improvisation*, Verso
- Zorn, J. (2000), *Arcana: musicians on music*, Granary Books. Hips Road.