

*“It Usually Takes Me More Than Three Weeks
To Prepare A Good Impromptu Speech.”*

Mark Twain

Il seguente è un breve passo tratto dall'Introduzione del libro “Jazz Improvisation 1. Tonal and Rhythmic Principles” di John Mehegan. Da esso si comprende che la creazione del nuovo, l'innovazione, la creatività, non sono fenomeni sporadici che nascono dal nulla, ma richiedono una profonda conoscenza delle tecniche e delle competenze di base.

INTRODUCTION

This book is an attempt to describe the process that occurs when a jazz musician improvises. This process is not a mysterious and esoteric rite arbitrarily enacted without discipline or precise knowledge. Rather, it is a concise application of logical and comprehensible musical concepts, which attains amazing heights of expression when utilized in conjunction with a trained and imaginative talent.

To do anything well, some intuitive knowledge of the material at hand is required; this intuition we often call talent. But talent without knowledge and hard facts is nothing. Talent does not need to be described; the facts do need to be set forth and that is the function of this book.

This book analyzes the basic musical facts utilized by every jazz musician from Buddy Bolden to Dizzy Gillespie. These facts, strangely enough, can be expressed in the eternal trinity of all music (1), Melody; (2) Harmony; (3) Rhythm.

Gli stessi identici concetti sono riportati nel seguente testo ripreso da un sito dedicato all'improvvisazione nel jazz (www.jazzadivice.com), le sottolineature sono mie. Di nuovo, viene evidenziata la criticità delle conoscenze di base e, dunque, l'importanza di una dura attività di apprendimento delle stesse come mezzo indispensabile per acquisire la padronanza dei materiali che successivamente consentiranno alla fantasia di esprimersi liberamente.

In any art form in which creativity is the main source of construction, there exists a duality between spontaneity and predetermined structure.

The artist, regardless of chosen medium, must produce new material with an inspired vision or creative freedom, however to achieve this feat, a concrete method and conscious structure is required.

Herein lies the gap that every creative person must bridge. For the improviser this means the divide between the mechanics of music (instrumental technique/theory) and the creativity of music (expressive elements/feel/phrasing). Technique is useless without a musical vision and a musical vision cannot be realized without technique.

The irony of improvisation is that freedom and creativity in performance requires hours of structured preparation in the practice room.

When you first attempt improvising, you'll want to be creative right away. You might even expect to close your eyes and instantaneously create long flowing lines over a chord progression as if you were struck by divine inspiration. It'd be akin to the Oracle at Delphi or a clairvoyant fortune teller, musical lines would be instantly channeled from the beyond.

Sorry to break it to you, but this is a fantasy...yet this is exactly how many players approach the practice of improvisation.

To the outsider, improvisation appears spontaneous, intuitive, and even strangely magical. A musician on stage creating music out of thin air with no rehearsal or preparation. This one-sided perception can throw many beginners off track and contributes to the "you either have it or you don't" mentality when it comes to taking a solo.

The audience hears the end result, but nobody sees the hours of practice and study behind the scenes in the practice room.

In practice improvisation is not all creative intuition and freedom, to succeed an organized and structured approach is necessary. Remember, the players that sound the best in performance are the ones that have worked the hardest in the practice room.