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IMPROVISING MUSIC / IMPROVISING RELATIONSHIPS: MUSICAL IMPROVISATION AND INTER-RELATIONAL ETHICS

Abstract: Improvisation and ethics have often been linked together, resulting in questions about what kind of social work musical improvisation does. Drawing upon Alfred Schutz's conception of 'making music together' and Hans-Georg Gadamer's conception of festival, this article explores the social implications of improvised performance, both in the relationships of performers and listeners. If ethics is conceived of as emerging from relationships, many similarities can be found between musical improvisation and social relationships. The process of improvisation, as the negotiation of contingencies with our own historicity and responsibilities to others, is not just common to all music performance, but is also common to relationships. It is in providing a place to improvise relationships that ethics is found within improvised music.

Key words: Improvisation, ethics, relationships, Gadamer, Schutz, festival, phenomenology, jazz, making music together

What does improvisation have to do with ethics, if we conceive of ethics as emerging from human relationships? What ethical responsibilities are created in improvisation, and what might an ethical response to them be? Can improvisation create and mend social relationships? In other words, can musical improvisation do social work, and if so, what kind?

For those who believe that musical improvisation can do social work, there are three main responses. The first is that music has a special power 'in itself' to change people, and that improvisation is a source of this power. The second argues that improvised music creates a model of social relationships that can be applied to larger social structures. The third, and the position I take in this paper, is that in the process and experience of improvised music, social relationships are created, and these relationships, being part of society, in turn shape society. In the exploration of these three positions, what improvisation is and what improvised performance involves need to be examined in closer detail.

Musical Improvisation and Conceptions of Musical 'Power'

Heinrich von Kleist's fable *St. Cecilia or the Power of Music* tells the story of a group of 16th-century iconoclasts who planned to burn down a church. When they entered the church with the intent to destroy it, however, they became transfixed by the music being performed by the nuns. The attackers were converted on the spot, and lived out the rest of their days in the church.

Though a fable such as this may be considered ‘just a story’, the conception that music has a power to alter people is often accepted as the main social impact of music, and improvised music is thought to hold such a power.¹ Common ‘powers’ attributed to improvised music (and specifically jazz improvisation) include the ability to alter people and the world, and the ability to communicate. John Coltrane states that:

If one of my friends is ill, I’d like to play a certain song and he will be cured; when he’d be broke, I’d bring out a different song and immediately he’d receive all the money he needed ... The true powers of music are still unknown. To be able to control them must be, I believe, the goal of every musician.²

As Coltrane believes his quest as a musician is to search for musical power, we can infer that for him improvisation is the way in which the power to change the world can be discovered. Malcolm X finds that improvisation holds the key to the power of communication:

The white musician can jam if he’s got some sheet music in front of him. He can jam on something he’s heard jammed before. But that black musician, he picks up his horn and starts blowing some sounds that he never thought of before. He improvises, he creates, it comes from within. It’s his soul; it’s that soul music.³

¹ The history of the social power of music can be traced through Greek discussions about which musical modes would be most beneficial to warriors, to the fear of the early Christian church that certain musical instruments have the power to deceive from the ‘truth’, to the Romantic notions of music as an ineffable power. It is this Romantic notion that is most often transposed into current conceptions of the social meaning and usage of music, from the claim of music therapy that oftentimes ‘the client’s needs are addressed directly through the elements of music’ [See: Kenneth E. Bruscia (ed), *Case Studies in Music Therapy*, Phoenixville, PA, Barcelona Publishers, 1991, 5], to theologian Jeremy Begbie, who seeks to transform theology through the understanding that ‘music interacts... bringing its own distinctive powers to bear’ [See: Jeremy Begbie, ‘The Powers of Music in Worship’, in: Hans_Boersmam (ed), *Imagination and Interpretation: Christian Perspectives*, Vancouver, Regent College Publishing, 2005, 111], to Katherine Higgin’s claim of ‘music’s psychophysiological power to influence the listener’s outlook, its ability to develop capacities of value to ethical living, and its capacity to serve in metaphoric and symbolic roles that can assist our ethical reflection’ [See: Kathleen Marie Higgins, *The Music of our Lives*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1991, 139], to the example of improvised music – and jazz in particular – as the prime example of a social democracy.

² Quoted in: Lewis Porter, *John Coltrane: His Life and Music*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1998, 211.

³ Quoted in: Jacques Attali, *Noise*, Minnesota, The University of Minnesota Press, 1985, 139.

For Malcolm X, improvised music has the power to communicate directly from the soul, which is a transference of Romantic concepts of musical agency to jazz improvisation. In other words, jazz improvisation takes over the role of music that can express beyond reason and conventional language. For Malcolm X and others, improvisation is conceived of as free, as something individually created with no preconceived systems or conventions. It is the hope of people like Jacques Attali that a new music free of conventions will be able to foster new relationships and transform society.

While I am sympathetic to the draw of such a conception of free improvisation and the way that it breaks down the established boundaries of musical practice and understanding, I do not think that the concept of free improvisation as being socially transformative is viable, largely because it rests on an idealized notion of improvisation as being completely free. There are many limits to improvisation, notably in musical training both on an instrument and in cultural absorption. Everything that we listen to constitutes part of our musical training, as it becomes part of the horizon of interpretation that forms the way in which we view the world. The concept that improvisation is completely free, or an easy way of making music, is a common but misguided one, as Homer Simpson learns in this excerpt from the television programme *The Simpsons*:

Homer: Jazz, pfft. They just make it up as they go along. I could do that: dee dee-dee dee dee dee, dee dee dee --

Marge: That's 'Mary Had a Little Lamb'.

Homer: OK, then, this: doo doo-doo doo doo doo doo, doo doo doo --

Marge: That's the same thing; you just replaced 'dee's with 'doo's.

Homer: D'oh!⁴

Our own historicity forms our view of the world; that is, our experiences of being in the world, or what Hans-Georg Gadamer terms our historically effected consciousness, forms our view. Things do not come from nowhere. We do not create *ex nihilo*; there is always something given that we start with. Free jazz is not completely free, but the negotiation between our past experiences and emergent contingencies.

The approach of Coltrane and others towards the application of musical improvisation to social relationships is problematic in that it relies upon the 'mysterious power' of music either in its ability to be an agent of communication or enable freedom. Of course, the power that music holds is not quite as mysterious as it is made out to be. The power that music holds comes from our cultural understanding of music, and

⁴ Joshua Sternin, Jeffrey Ventimilia, Al Jean & Mike Reiss, *Simpsons* episode 2F32, 'Round Springfield', first airing 30 April 1995. Transcription of the episode from *The Simpsons Archive*, <http://www.snpp.com/episodes/2F32.html>, accessed 5 January 2007.

while music surely has a cultural power, the power it holds to alter people does not emanate from the music itself but through the relationships created in making and listening to music.

Improvising Music Together

While phenomenologist and sociologist Alfred Schutz examines the process of making music to explore its applications elsewhere in life, he draws out many important aspects of relationships created in music making. In his article *Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationships*, Schutz's purpose is to 'investigate what might be called the 'mutual tuning-in relationship' by which the 'I' and the 'Thou' are experienced by both participants as a 'We' in vivid presence'.⁵ His main point is that in musical performance relationships occur, and those social relationships are enabled by the sharing of a Bergsonian inner time. Schutz's argument is particularly applicable to improvisation, as improvisation is performative. As Nicholas Cook and Bruce Ellis Benson have noted, there are improvisatory aspects to all music making.⁶ Eric Clarke states that all musical activity 'contains an element of improvisation, since a degree of indeterminacy at some level of the performance, requiring 'invention' by the performer, must always exist'.⁷

Schutz recognizes that any performative experience has a social dimension to it, and that in entering into this social/musical experience we limit ourselves both consciously and unconsciously. First, Schutz recognizes the limit of historicity, what he terms collective memory:

The player approaching a so-called unknown piece of music does so from a historically . . . determined situation, determined by his stock of music experiences at hand in so far as they are typically relevant to the anticipated novel experience before him.⁸

Even though Schutz is not specifically writing about improvisation, his description is apt because in improvisation something novel is created out of the negotiation of past experiences with the present situation. The limitation of historicity is influenced by already being in social relationships that create

⁵ Alfred Schutz, 'Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationship', in: Janet L. Dolgin, David S. Kemnitzer, and David M. Schneider (eds), *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1977, 108.

⁶ See: Nicholas Cook, 'Making Music Together, or Improvisation and its Others', *The Source: Challenging Jazz Criticism*, 1, 2004, 5-25; Bruce Ellis Benson, *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: A Phenomenology of Music*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003. Cook links Schutz's arguments with improvisation, and Benson makes an extended argument that all musical creation and performance has improvisatory elements.

⁷ Eric F. Clarke, 'Improvisation, Cognition and Education', in: John Paynter, Tim Howell, Richard Orton, Peter Seymour (eds), *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought*, Vol. 2, New York, Routledge, 1992, 787.

⁸ Alfred Schutz, op. cit., 112.

meaning corporately: ‘the bulk of musical knowledge – as of knowledge in general – is socially derived’.⁹ In a performance where there is more than one person performing, limits are also imposed by other performers: ‘Either’s freedom of interpreting the composer’s thought is restrained by the freedom granted to the Other’.¹⁰ Whether in jazz improvisation or in the interpretive work of a string quartet, performers limit their own freedom to allow others to have their voice be heard. This may be the situation which translates best from musical situations to other social situations, but it may be the exception rather than the rule in musical practice, as there are many examples where performers are very limited in their interpretive/improvisational roles. Schutz does not take situations where performers are extremely limited as his case study, for its application to larger social relations might result in dictatorship-like relations.

Schutz intends to show that his study of music ‘may lead to some insights valid for many other forms of social intercourse’, so he locates musical examples that are amenable to his end goal, which is problematic in any study that sets out to adequately explore relationships in making music together.¹¹ But even the example of strict control may be instructive to our discussion of musical improvisation and ethical relationships. In situations where there is central control taken by one individual, other performers make the decision to be more self limiting than in other performance situations. It may be argued that performers only stay in this situation so that they can receive their pay cheque, but situations where leaders take strong control of a musical situation sometimes result in music that is widely acknowledged as excellent, and may not have been possible without such strong, almost dictatorial, leadership. Rather than understanding free and controlled music as opposites, it is important to see them as being at two points on a continuum. Performers always have some limitation and improvisation; it is only a matter of degree. The key is that these performers have placed themselves in a situation where they are limiting their musical freedom in one way or another. There is intention on the part of the performer to limit themselves, and while the possibility of improvisation exists, it is limited to the degree that it must be appropriate to the situation.

A more subtle difference in the examples used by Schutz (though not pointed out by him) is the relationship between group size and self limitation. In a quartet, there are only three others for whom I must limit myself. This still allows some improvisation/interpretation on my part, especially as it is likely that I will be the only one playing my part and there will likely be no one playing the same instrument as me. In a large group, there are many others I must limit myself to, and there will likely be others playing the same instrument. This requires a higher degree of self limitation. A large group also requires more central control, so it is much more likely for such a group to have more delineated plans than a smaller group would need

⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 107.

(although exceptions include the double rhythm section improvisations of Coltrane and Coleman).

The relationship between numbers of people and systems of organization is found in musical and social organization, but it would be problematic to judge music based upon preferred social structure, or to structure society based upon which musical organization seems to work well at the time. This is what Schutz tacitly does, though, as he attempts to draw social relations out of music that can be applied to non-musical social situations, and in the process selects only musical examples that allow a high level of freedom to the performer. What is the difference between the concept of improvised music I am moving towards and the application of performance undertaken by Schutz? While Schutz (like others), uses music to prove his social theses, my primary investigation is the ethical relationships *within* the performance and reception of improvised music. While Schutz has successfully shown how some aspects of performance can be applied to social relationships, as well as pointed out aspects of music making that often go unnoticed, his primary use of music is as a model or metaphor. He idealizes the musical experience to explicate his main point, which is beyond music. I wish to stay within the musical experience and examine the human relationships *within* music making.

The ‘mutual tuning-in’ relationship is another example of the idealization of musical experience. Schutz makes the assumption that all involved in a musical performance share the same time. By this he means not a shared measured time (*kronos*), but a shared inner time (*kairos*); that is, time as experienced, or the flux of the music. Such a shared experience creates the common ground in which social relationships can take place. Yet a shared time is not always common in musical performance. While a sax player may be swept up in his improvisation on *My Favorite Things*, the bass player’s thoughts may be drifting in other directions. And while knowing that the E pedal she has been playing for the past five minutes is the proper function for the piece at this time, she may be wondering when the saxophonist will finally finish his solo. Granted, there are times when there does seem to be something like a more tuned-in relationship. Sometimes rehearsals or performances feel like they pass more quickly, or that there is a really strong connection between the performers. There is an analogy here to other performance oriented events as well, including other performing arts and sporting events. Musicians and athletes will both agree that instances of heightened ‘mutual tuning-in’ occur, but not always, and not predictably.¹² Making music together is social and different every time: in this way it is improvised. While Schutz identifies a phenomenon that takes place in group performance, he simplifies it to make it applicable outside of music. Yet it is a more complicated situation of group performance dynamic that is able to help reveal something about social relationships, not as merely a metaphor but as an enactment of social relationships. Schutz realizes that music is a social

¹² The similarities of team athletics and group musical improvisation is an interesting one and deserves more study.

experience: ‘making music together occurs in a true face-to-face relationship’, and it is the complexities of a face to face relationship that are helpful in musical improvisation in/as human relationships.¹³

A further difficulty with Schutz’s understanding of music is that he, like many others, gets caught up in the idea of music as a work that is separate from those making the music. While Schutz locates a completed piece outside of the life of the composer, he problematically links the performance back to the composer through his concept of inner time flux: ‘Although separated by hundreds of years, the latter [listener] participates with quasi simultaneity in the former’s [composer’s] stream of consciousness’.¹⁴ Schutz makes the argument that the listener has a shared time with the composer, the author of the ‘work’, and parallels this with face to face social relationships. But this is not a face to face relationship, and here he ignores the face to face relationships of music making in favor of examining the composer/listener relationship, even though he acknowledges the separation between composer and piece when the piece is completed. A more fruitful approach is to examine the face to face relationships in music making instead of continuing on with a ‘work centered’ concept of music. While Schutz has helped begin an examination of the social relationships of music making, the concept of improvisation as festival moves away from the study of music as a work and towards music as performance and relationships.

Musical Improvisation as Festival

In moving towards a discussion of improvisation that examines the relationships created in musical performance, it may be helpful to introduce a term that is more intentionally inclusive of human relationships: festival. I utilize the term ‘festival’ to include any experience of music, not just what are commonly called ‘music festivals.’ Festival is performative, and includes many layers of relationships, including musicians and listeners. Improvisation is at the heart of festival, for improvisatory relationships are not only found in the creation of musical sound but in the social relationships created. It should be noted that Bakhtin’s exploration of ‘carnival’ raises several similar aspects to festival, but as Bakhtin is more concerned with the ritualistic and historical practices of festival (in a more formal sense of the term), I utilize Gadamer’s more philosophical conception of festival as a touchstone for the exploration into social relationships within the entirety of improvisational musical experience I describe as festival.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid., 117.

¹⁴ Ibid., 114.

¹⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Characteristics of genre and plot composition in Dostoevsky’s works’, in: David Sandner (ed), *Fantastic Literature*, London, Praeger, 2004 [1963].

1. *Festival has common intention*

In festival, people come together for a common purpose. In this case, this purpose is to experience music. Musicians come together to make music for other musicians and the audience, and the audience comes to listen to the music. Even those attending primarily to be with friends or some other reason still recognize the main intention of the event. This intention may not be the sole intention, but there is at least some overlap of intention with all who make the effort of attending. Gadamer states that the common ground in festival 'is not simply the fact that we are all in the same place, but rather the intention that unites us and prevents us as individuals from falling into private conversations and private, subjective experiences'.¹⁶ While the premise of coming together is intentioned, what results from the experience of festival cannot be predicted and is beyond the intention that enables the event of festival.

2. *Festival is characterized by contingencies negotiated through improvisation*

While intention enjoins people in festival, there are many contingencies of the occasion that must be negotiated. Alongside the contingencies of the production of musical sound, there are also contingencies of the listeners, the physical location of the event, and all the contingencies that arise when people with diverse historicities interact. All of these contingencies are negotiated in a way that is improvised in some manner, as all involved (performer, listener, etc.) utilize what is at hand to negotiate meaning and relationship in this occasion. All aspects of festival are thus performative, and aesthetic views that assume music to be a hermetically sealed work are not appropriate in discussion of festival. This separates festival from spectacle, a concept which treats the musical performance as highly structured and non-contingent, and treats listeners as spectators to the spectacle, voyeurs who look on but have no impact upon the event. But is there really such a thing as spectacle? The concept of music as pure spectacle is just that: a concept. There are always contingent aspects to a performance that attempts to be a spectacle, from the riots at Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, to the lip syncing fiasco of Ashley Simpson, to the fan that jumps onto the stage. In fact, it is these contingent elements that often get remembered the most. Fans compare set lists and concert stories online to find out the minute differences between performances that are intended to be identical. It is in these contingencies that the personal is found, and the improvised negotiation of these contingencies takes place in any performance.

While a drum circle, a jazz group in a café, and a sing-along evening may be examples where

¹⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, 40.

contingencies and interaction are embraced, *all* performance is improvisation. While it is clear that some music (e.g., free jazz) makes more space for contingencies to be improvised upon than others (e.g., Boulez), all aspects of performance have an improvisatory character to them. Thus the discussion of improvisation in music should not be limited to what is done by the performers, but should also extend to the improvisatory elements of performer to audience, audience to audience, as well as performer to performer.¹⁷

3. *Festival is improvisation and/of social relationships*

A music festival brings people together with a common intention, and brings these people together into social relationship. Together, listeners and performers negotiate relationship and meaning to varying degrees. While festival enables a multiplicity of meanings, there is also a sense of socially negotiated meaning which has the same character of self-limitation previously discussed. A closer look at the nature of these social relationships that musical festival characterized by improvisation brings into existence needs to be taken. While Gadamer's aesthetics sometimes fall into the concepts of 'the work of art' and art as 'text',¹⁸ the following discussion will isolate some of the aspects of his conception of art that draw out the improvisational and inter-relational aspects of festival, including (a) improvisation as playing-along-with, (b) the togetherness of the temporal occasion of festival, and (c) the improvisational meaning-making of togetherness.

a. Improvisation as playing-along-with

Think of the experience of playing fetch with a dog, or watching a child play with a ball, trying to bounce it as many times as possible in a row. In each of these experiences, you become engaged in the activity, playing along with the dog or child. These are examples of play in the sense that Gadamer relates play to art. Play is essentially social, as the 'act of playing requires a "playing along with"'.¹⁹ Play engages others to join with the intentions and rules of play to create a common ground in which human relationships can take place. Improvisation, as performance and festival, also requires a 'playing along with'. Each performer must play along with the other performers as they make music together. In improvisation, everyone involved also adopts a set of 'rules and regulations that only count as such within the closed world of play'.²⁰ Both musicians and listeners 'play along' with the rules of the game of improvised performance. There is an 'as

¹⁷ The terminology of 'performer' refers here to the maker of sounds that are considered the performance. In many important ways, the audience also is a performer.

¹⁸ In the notion of 'work,' Gadamer stays consistent with much of German aesthetics, and unfortunately does not always criticize this notion. Gadamer's focus on literary texts results in the usage of this topic in all the arts.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 124.

if' character to these limits, as performers and listeners act 'as if' these limitations were set in stone, while still realizing that such limitations are constructed in the play world of performance. Both play and festival share the characteristic of uniqueness with improvisation, as play 'is something that has emerged in an unrepeatable way and has manifested itself in a unique fashion'.²¹ The improvised uniqueness of the performative event creates the occasion of festival.

b. The togetherness of the temporal occasion of festival

Play creates the space and time for festival. It creates the boundaries through which people enter into festival with common intention for a specific time. This time is one that is set apart as special, as normal time gives way to the time of the festival, as 'time only becomes festive with the arrival of the festival'.²² Although Gadamer emphasizes that 'the temporal structure of the festival will lead us to the festival character of art and the temporal structure of the work of art', I further argue that the temporal structure of festival leads us also to the temporal character of human relationships and inter-relational ethics as embodied in festival.²³ Gadamer finds that the temporal nature of art – and improvisation fits particularly well – calls on us to respond by dwelling within the temporal nature of the art. This is akin to the tuning in to the flux of the art in Schutz, so Gadamer retains some of the difficulties of Schutz. In Gadamer's focus on the temporal nature of art, he misses the inter-relational nature of art.

Yet emphasis on the temporal can also be used to emphasize the relational. The time of festival, through the pretext of play, brings people together, and this allows for ethical social relations. Gadamer finds that 'festive celebration ... is clearly distinguished by the fact that here we are not primarily separated, but rather are gathered together'.²⁴ He also finds that in festival there is 'no separation between one person and another'.²⁵ But Gadamer goes too far here. There is always distinction between humans, and thus there still is a fundamental separation. Shared intention does create a commonality, leading to a togetherness that is not always present. While musical festival is not unique in this togetherness, concepts of the togetherness of festival can be applied to many other situations where there is a common intention, such as the sharing of a meal. The shared intention of musical improvisation creates relations of togetherness.

c. The improvisational meaning-making of togetherness

Through the negotiation of limits and freedoms undertaken in festival both individually and corporately,

²¹ Ibid., 126.

²² Ibid., 42.

²³ Ibid., 41.

²⁴ Ibid., 40.

²⁵ Ibid., 39.

new meanings are arrived at. Some are agreed upon, while others are individual meanings derived from experience. Improvisation, as festival, is an occasion of meaning-making. There are three types of meaning that can be associated with musical festival: the meaning of the music, the meaning in our historically conditioned response to the musical occasion, and the meaning negotiated at that time with others that takes the previous two meanings into account. Each of these meanings is improvised in the sense that it is based upon contingencies. Gadamer's description of an organ improvisation will launch us into discussion of the first two types of meaning:

The unique improvisation will never be heard again. The organist himself hardly knows afterwards just how he played, and no one transcribed it. Nevertheless, everyone says, "That was a brilliant interpretation or improvisation", or on another occasion, "That was rather dull today." What do we mean when we say such things? Obviously we are referring back to the improvisation ... I identify something as it was or as it is, and this identity alone constitutes the meaning of the work.²⁶

Gadamer refers to the first type of meaning with what he describes as the identity of the work. While the problems with the 'work' concept have been discussed in relation to Schutz, Gadamer seems to rely on the work concept here. While this is a difficulty in Gadamer's conception of music, we cannot sway to the opposite pole and find that there is no meaning in the music itself. Music is not neutral in meaning. Music already comes to us with some meaning: the meaning that is ascribed to it by the general community. This is the culturally derived meaning based upon our past experiences (our historicity).

Second, there is the meaning we create through our interaction with the music. This is informed by our experience at the moment and our historicity. It is this personal meaning by which we begin to make statements about the music and our experience of it. In the above example, the statements made about the improvisation are examples of such meaning that is created. The meaning that we negotiate with experience and historicity is not only a meaning of music, but a meaning of ourselves as well. But this is not a unique quality of music or any other art form. In all interpretation we learn more about ourselves as we are forced to grapple with how to make sense of it given the object of interpretation's cultural meaning and our own historicity. If interpretation, in this sense, is considered the negotiation of past experiences with contingencies of the moment, then interpretation and improvisation have the same structure. By recognizing the similarities of musical improvisation, interpretive understanding, and human relationships, improvisation can be treated as a phenomenon larger than contingencies of sound production.

These two meanings do not go far enough, though. As we have already concluded with Schutz, music has an essentially relational nature to it; to limit the meaning of music to the relationship of music and the person experiencing it is problematic. In fact, this second meaning of the music and listener, though

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

often cited, is only a theoretical position. Music always has more relationships than this. We are never in complete isolation but always in relationship with others, and the concept of festival is one that is utilized here because an individual relationship with the music cannot exist. While each person does create meaning in the experience of music, the experiences of others negotiate this meaning. Individual meanings take cues from others who are also making meaning, and these meanings are negotiated in an improvisational dialogue that is only sometimes verbal. This meaning-negotiation sometimes moves so far beyond music that the music only seems incidental to the whole process, but the music was still the intention by which these relationships were entered into. One of the ethical dimensions of festival then becomes the ability for a multiplicity of voices to be heard, conflicts of meaning to be negotiated (without always needing to settle on just one side), and the needs of others to be met. The relational leads to the ethical through responsibility; through the valuing of others, the limiting of ourselves for the sake of others, and giving, listening, responding to, and respecting others - the improvisation of human relationships. Benson argues that:

the goal of the composer, performer, and listener seeking a genuine dialogue, then, is both to be aware of this danger [of imposing our meaning as the authentic meaning] and to be creative in allowing each party to have a real voice.²⁷

The essentially relational and meaning-making nature of music, characterized by the concepts of festival and improvisation, make it a site of ethical encounter.

Improvisation is too often considered an isolated musical phenomenon limited to pieces that specifically allow the performer freedom to alter pitch or form. Yet the process of improvisation, as the negotiation of contingencies with our own historicity, interaction and responsibility to others, is not just common to all music performance, but is also common to interpretation and to human relationships. The exploration of music as festival can begin to describe the many improvised aspects of musical performance and reception. Festival also reveals the inter-relational elements of improvised performance, since relationships and responsibilities to other people play an important role in making music together. Improvised music does not just provide a model for ethical human relationships, but is created through, interpreted by, and negotiated *in* human relationships. The ethical responsibilities of the human relationships created through improvised performance – which includes all musical performance and reception – need to be as important a discussion point as the sound of the music, as it is through these interactions that musical improvisation creates relationships and does social work. With so many people interacting with and creating music on a daily basis, we cannot ignore the relationships created through music. After all, who is music for?

²⁷ Bruce Ellis Benson, *op. cit.*, 169.

САЖЕТАК

Џеф Р. Ворен

**ИМПРОВИЗОВАЊЕ МУЗИКЕ/ИМПРОВИЗОВАЊЕ ОДНОСА:
МУЗИЧКА ИМПРОВИЗАЦИЈА И ИНТЕРРЕЛАЦИЈСКА ЕТИКА**

Шта импровизација има са етиком, уколико етика потиче из људских односа? Да ли импровизација може да ствара и регулише људске односе? Другим речима, да ли импровизација може да врши друштвени посао и ако може, какве је он врсте? Овај чланак одговара на ова питања. Први одговор је да музика “по себи” има посебне моћи да измени људе, а импровизација је извор те моћи. Док музика има привилеговано место у друштву, овакав поглед на импровизацију исувише се ослања на романтичне концепције моћи музике. Концепција феноменолога Алфреда Шуца (Alfred Schutz) о “заједничком стварању музике” истражује неке веома важне елементе односа у процесу стварања музике, али идеализује друге елементе заједничког стварања музике како би се они могли лакше применити на друге друштвене ситуације. Трећи одговор, и позиција која се заступа у овом раду, јесте да се у процесу и искуству импровизоване музике стварају друштвени односи, да ти односи, будући да су део друштва, заузврат обликују друштво. Одвећ често је импровизација сматрана изолованим музичким феноменом ограниченим на дела која јасно дозвољавају извођачу да измени тонску висину или форму. Ипак, процес импровизације, као уочавање контингенција нашег сопственог историцитета и интеракција и одговорности према другима, није само уобичајена за сва музичка извођења, већ је уобичајена и за интерпретацију и за људске односе. Истраживање музике као фестивала, коришћењем филозофа Ханс-Георга Гадамера (Hans-Georg Gadamer) као референтне тачке, може почети да описује бројне импровизацијске аспекте музичког извођења и рецепције. Фестивал такође открива интеррелацијске елементе импровизацијског извођења, будући да односи са и одговорности према другим људима играју важну улогу у заједничком стварању музике. Импровизована музика не само да остварује модел за етичке људске односе, већ и настаје кроз њих, интерпретирана је њима и њима разматрана. Етичке одговорности људских односа остварених кроз импровизацију треба да буду подједнако важна тема за расправу као и звук музике, будући да захваљујући тим интеракцијама музичка импровизација ствара односе и врши друштвени посао. Са тако много људи који су свакодневно у интеркацији са музиком и у међусобној интеркацији док стварају музику, не можемо игнорисати односе који настају уз помоћ музике. На крају крајева, због кога постоји музика?