

Complexity Through Interaction

**An investigation into the spontaneous development of
collective musical ideas from simple thematic materials**

Nicholas Tasman Haywood

M.Music Performance, The University of Melbourne (Victorian
College of the Arts)

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DECLARATION

This exegesis contains the results of research carried out at the University of Tasmania, Conservatorium of Music between 2010 and 2013. It contains no material that, to my knowledge, has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information that is duly acknowledged in the exegesis. I declare that this exegesis is my own work and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where clear acknowledgement or reference has been made in the text. This exegesis may be made available for loan and limited copying in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

Nicholas Tasman Haywood

Date

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate and describe the optimum conditions under which collaborative improvised musical expression in performance can be established.

This study is an exhaustive examination of selected performances of an ensemble in which I perform. This ensemble was newly formed, specifically for this research study. The research investigates the impact of the ensemble dynamic on the improvisations of each individual within the ensemble and the way in which this affects and informs my own playing.

Performances and recordings by this ensemble are used as the basis of the research presented in the accompanying exegesis. The weighting of this project is 80% folio and 20% exegesis. The recordings have not been analysed in the traditional harmonic, melodic and rhythmic manner as the focus of this study is on the way in which musicians connect at an intuitive level. The manner in which each participant's contributions affect their co-performers has been analysed and discussed. Aural perception and the collective and individual musical history of the participants are seen as significant factors and as such have been investigated through interviews.

It is proposed that a musician's familiarity with repertoire should be such that conscious decision making in performance becomes redundant. In fact, it is felt that the need to deliberately think about both physical and material requirements of music making, when playing, is a hindrance to high quality musical performance, both during improvisation and interpretation of pre-composed materials. To this end, there is a need to separate the manner in which a musician accumulates musical knowledge via practice, from the way they present music, as a performer. The study explores this important relationship in the context of the case study of the project album. These issues have also been examined with a view to offering some insight into the mindset and methods that best support the development of high-level improvisation and interpretive skills.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

The purpose of this research is to investigate and describe the optimum conditions under which collaborative improvised musical expression can be established. This investigation will seek to identify the essential contextual elements that underpin and facilitate successful and effective musical expression through contemporary jazz improvisation.

The initial focus of this study was to investigate the manner in which an ensemble could develop complex musical statements, by utilising simple tunes as a basis for improvisation. It quickly became apparent that the fundamental driving force for this to occur was the ability for members of an ensemble to connect, in a musical sense, at a different level than had previously been considered. This connection was at once both more advanced, as it related to skills and yet fundamental with respect to personal interaction. As such, the focus of the study shifted to an investigation into what it was that enabled highly intuitive musical connection within an improvised music ensemble. It is now believed that if such connection can be achieved, so too can the development of complex musical statements within a group.

There has been extensive writing on many aspects of collaborative improvised music making, from perspectives such as music performance psychology, personal and creative empathy, musical interplay, aural perception and harmonic, rhythmic and melodic development. However, there has been very little in the way of observations of the manner in which these, and other important factors, contribute in combination to enable high-level collaborative improvised music performances to develop. There will be more detailed discussion of these, and other contributing components of improvised music performance in the literature review section of this study.

This study will codify the essential elements contained within the research and demonstrate that these elements are crucial parts of developing successful musical

ideas in an improvised setting and how these elements, in combination, greatly affect the outcomes of such a performance.

By establishing conditions for performance that reflect these requirements in combination, it is proposed that the resultant performances have a greater chance of being artistically satisfying and successful. In most jazz music performances, a theme is played once at the beginning of the work and once at the end. There may be some pre-composed sections within, such as an interlude, but generally speaking, what occurs in between each playing of the theme, is improvised to varying degrees. The improvised section is most often based around the theme. In particular, the harmonic structure of the theme is used as a unifying foundation. Musicians also commonly use additional elements, such as pre-composed, melodic and rhythmic content for this purpose. This study will demonstrate that by utilising composed music that allows the performers to truly connect in a musical sense, high quality collective improvisations will occur.

It is proposed that by removing the need to consciously think about the physical and material requirements of music making during performance, musicians are more able to connect with deeper emotional and communicative aspects of the performance. Simple thematic material used as a basis for improvisation will be used to demonstrate this. It should be noted at this point that written music of a more complex nature **can** be internalised sufficiently such that it too does not require the performer(s) to focus on the materials of the music, however this is beyond the scope of this study and will not be examined in detail.

For the purposes of this study, simple thematic material is that which enables a condition for free flowing group interaction to occur. This could be any music that can be negotiated without conscious reference to the materials and skills of music making, during performance. This definition is deliberately broad, as developmental variances from musician to musician are great, and what may be considered simple thematic material for one person, may also be considered highly complex to the next. One constant is the requirement to remove conscious interference via a need to deliberately devote focus to the written page.

The performances and recording projects to be undertaken in this research will reflect this process. Interviews with participants will provide information with regard to the performer's concept of what simple thematic material is to them, as well as what they consider to be complex music compositional components. The interviews will also attempt to gain an insight into other characteristics of performance, such as conversational aspects of collective improvisation, emotional connection, interplay and sense of connectedness as experienced by the participants.

There has been considerable published analysis of collective improvisation. Elements such as harmony, melody and rhythm are the usual focus of these works. Authors such as Stephen LaJoie (2003) have also explored other less concrete aspects such as levels of intensity. Previous research undertaken in this area tends to focus on the processes of the aforementioned components, rather than the underlying relationships between participants that enable interactive elements to occur. Additionally, there has been work by British guitarist, Derek Bailey, who in his study, *Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music (1980)* examines music improvisation from various cultures and genres. Bailey's work offers brief overviews of improvisation from various musical perspectives, making it worthy of note. It does not, however, deal with the creation of collective improvisation in any real depth. This current study seeks to move beyond a primary investigation of the musical events themselves (the 'what' of the performance) to explore and discuss the causative factors that contribute to interactive creativity, (the 'how', and 'why').

The development of collective improvisation is informed by all of the previously mentioned elements. This research will demonstrate this connection and it is hoped that it will influence the way in which developing musicians approach improvisation, both as individuals and in a group sense.

The quartet, whose performances form the core activities of this study, is a newly formed ensemble, put together to examine the way a group that has never performed together before can create highly developed, complex musical performances, given the right conditions. It is anticipated that the ensemble will perform the same repertoire in very different ways in a series of performances. Recorded performances of the ensemble, done at different times in the development of the quartet, will be

used to demonstrate the manner in which musicians can develop musical dialogue over time. Minimal information will be given to the performers, with regard to how to approach the compositions. It is expected that the ensemble will develop its own unique 'personality'.

The manner in which the ensemble develops musical ideas as a collective will be investigated. This will be explored through interviews with the participants, in conjunction with an examination of recorded performances of the quartet and scrutiny of the relevant literature. The resultant data will be used to demonstrate the ways in which collective development of musical ideas within the ensemble are enhanced. It is hoped that this research will add to the body of work already undertaken in the improvised music field. The need for acute aural awareness, idiomatic understanding, trust between performers and additional requirements for successful development of improvised music will be investigated.

Author's related professional experience

The author positions himself in this dissertation through his performance experience within the wider Australian music scene. He is recognised by his peers and music critics as a major contributor to Australian music. He has performed and recorded with many Australian and international jazz artists, in addition to being a longstanding member of Australian rock acts, The Black Sorrows and Deborah Conway. A representative discography can be found in the author's Curriculum Vitae in Appendix 2.

The author's performance career includes concerts with iconic American jazz musicians Louie Bellson, Joe Williams, Buddy de Franco, Billy Harper, Mark Murphy, Junior Cook and Kenny Kirkland (and many others). He has performed and/or recorded with many significant Australian jazz musicians, including, Professor Tony Gould, John Sangster, Paul Grabowsky, Dr. Tim Stevens, Dr. Robert Burke, Dale Barlow, Don Burrows and Bernie McGann. He has been invited to perform at all major Australian jazz festivals in addition to jazz festival and jazz club appearances in Asia, Europe, USA and the south pacific region. Further information can be found in Appendix 2 of this study.

In 2004 the author undertook private study with American bassist Gary Peacock, who is widely recognised as a significant contributor to the development of American jazz music over the second half of the 20th century, having recorded with the Bill Evans Trio, for example, in the early 1960s, through to the Keith Jarrett Trio, of which he is a founding member.

During the study period mentioned above, the author consolidated his interest in the development of collaborative, group improvisation, which forms the basis of this current work. Collaborative improvisation was evident in his body of work prior to this, particularly through the Browne-Haywood-Stevens trio, which performed and recorded between 1995 and 2000. The trio's CD recording *Sudden in a Shaft of Sunlight* (1998) was shortlisted for an ARIA award in 1998 for Best Australian Jazz Album.

The work of the current Nick Haywood Quartet, with drummer Allan Browne, pianist Colin Hopkins and guitarist Stephen Magnusson informs the research within this study. It was formed with the express purpose of exploring the collaborative aspect of improvised music making. The author had previously performed and recorded with each of the players in the ensemble over an extended period of time, in a variety of musical settings. Browne, Hopkins and Magnusson had not performed with each other in any ensemble prior to this study. Through the author's performance experiences with each of the other musicians, over the past 25 years, it was decided that the current combination of players would quickly develop musical empathy and enable conditions in which satisfying group improvisations could develop.

What is (Jazz) Improvisation?

There have been many attempts to describe what jazz is and it is beyond the scope of this study to defend or critique any of these descriptions. For the purpose of this project I have chosen to use the definition provided by American pianist Bill Evans who described jazz as "a process of making music and in its absolute sense as a certain creative process of spontaneity [rather] than a style [of music]" (Carvell, 1966).

Collective improvisation has been the principal unifying factor in jazz and its related music genres since the early part of the twentieth century. Formal jazz education has existed for much of this time. The first institute to offer the study of jazz was the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1928, with the Schillinger House of Music (later to become the Berklee College of Music) in Boston from 1945. Many other colleges followed from this time.

Traditional methods for learning to improvise have been developed from the perspective of the individual, not the collective. Students of jazz typically learn to improvise, in part, via transcriptions of historically significant musicians. This is in addition to the study of harmony and scales, most commonly chord/scale relationships and particular technical studies required for specific instruments. What is rarely (if ever) examined is the interdependence and spontaneous interactivity of musicians in a group at the creative level.

Scholars have attempted to describe what happens in an ensemble sense during music improvisation. Berliner (1994: 678-688) examines the Miles Davis quintet recording of 'Bye Bye Blackbird'. Berliner accurately describes what each musician plays in relation to his co-performers. He also offers anecdotal examples of perceived levels of success within collective improvisation with quotes from musicians about their experiences (ibid: 387-415). Berliner clearly articulates that development of an improvised music performance is generated as a collective, not purely from an individual perspective. However, the impact of one ensemble member's contributions upon another's output is not discussed. This leaves us with the fundamental underlying question of this study: How can optimum conditions for collaborative improvised musical expression be established? The corollary to this is: What are these conditions?

Common problems with skill acquisition studies

In order to ascertain optimum conditions for improvisation a judgement must be made as to the quality of improvisation. How can improvisations be assessed as successful or otherwise?

If the written/instructional output is taken as indicative of practice, educators have tended to focus on the materials of jazz improvisation and neglected the more

complex interactive ensemble components. While instruction in these areas does take place on a small scale and at a superficial level, observers could be excused for developing a rather imbalanced view of true musical interaction in a jazz performance context.

The reasons for this imbalance in the written canon are likely to be due in part to the difficulty of describing and codifying this interactivity. Further there is often a superficial approach to the possibilities and expectations of this area of performance, with interaction in performance most often described in terms of harmonic or rhythmic context, and not from the perspective of higher-level connections between participants.

Jazz improvisation method books focus on very specific aspects of performance. Authors such as Jamey Aebersold, David Baker, Gerry Coker and Mark Levine examine specifics such as chord/scale relationships, melodic and rhythmic patterns, superimposition of harmonic substitutions and melodic embellishment. Interaction and development of intuitive abilities between players is not often discussed.

American academic Lissa F. May (2003), of Indiana University examined various factors affecting improvisational music performance and whether those factors influence level of achievement in improvisation. May examined technical facility, rhythmic 'feel', melodic and rhythmic development, style, harmony, expression and creativity across 73 "university" level musicians. Two judges assessed each musician on the aforementioned criteria and data was compiled to demonstrate relative successes of the performed improvisations. This was effective on one level, however all improvisations were performed to a backing track (play along record¹) which while providing a base against which the parameters could be assessed, obviously does not allow for interaction between musicians. The elements examined, although important, do not investigate higher-level improvisational requirements associated with personal interaction.

¹ Play along recordings are commonly used jazz education tools, in which standard jazz repertoire and harmonic progressions are recorded, with a rhythm section, usually consisting of piano, bass, drums. The recordings are supplied with a book containing melody and chords (lead sheets) to the recorded pieces and suggested scales for use in improvisation. The student performs with the recording as a way to practice new repertoire and improvisation skills.

By contrast the current study explores fully realised ensemble performances and then through interviews, incorporates insights and reflections from the participants. Their views on what constitutes satisfying and successful collaborative improvisations will be used as a basis for evaluation of improvisational success in the body of this work. In addition, more obvious aspects of musical development during improvisation, such as harmonic, melodic and rhythmic development and manipulation will be discussed.

John Sloboda discusses cognitive psychology as it relates to jazz improvisation. He correctly states that a musician is required to build a “repertoire of patterns and things to do with them that he can call up at will”, and further states “ the performer builds up a repertoire of ‘things that have worked well in the past’.”(1989:149). He also suggests that the improvising musician “is often ‘playing safe’ by using improvisatory devices which have worked well in other circumstances, so as to create the best effects he knows how” (ibid). He suggests that the performance may not, in fact, be improvised, rather it could be a “carefully planned and rehearsed performance”. This study seeks to move beyond Sloboda’s narrow and simplistic approach and demonstrate that performers engaged in high level, collaborative improvised music performances often do not consciously draw on preconceived materials. Rather, the intuitive aspect of performance comes to the fore, removing both the desire and the requirement of deliberately utilising pre-learned matter. The study also seeks to uncover less tangible aspects of musical learning that have an important impact on the final musical result. Intuitive reactions to texture, dynamic, emotional intent and other factors are rarely discussed in the literature. Where they are mentioned it tends to be from an audience point of view. As far as performer to performer is concerned, there is a paucity of written material.

In a 2004 interview that the author conducted with respected American bassist, Gary Peacock (interview with the author, 2004), he stated his imperative of removing all conscious thought when performing improvised music within an ensemble. He suggested that music education and the acquisition of materials of music were, if not treated properly, part of a ‘conditioning machine’, and that improvising musicians, in order to reach their full potential, should ‘de-condition’ themselves, such that they do not need to consciously draw on any aspect of music materials during performance.

This is not to say that he does not value formal music education and the knowledge that it brings, rather he felt it is the performer's responsibility to truly internalise that which he has learned to the point where it no longer serves an intellectual purpose.

Peacock provided a personal example where he was performing with the trio of pianist Bill Evans at the celebrated jazz club, the *Village Vanguard* in 1961. He felt that he was struggling with his playing during the concert and was consciously trying to play better within the trio. In his opinion, the more he tried, the worse he played. Eventually he surrendered his efforts and ceased consciously trying to play better. Instantly his playing, in an ensemble sense, improved. Once he became consciously aware of this phenomenon he began to play poorly again. At this point he again surrendered and his playing once again improved instantly. At this moment Peacock realised the importance of not actively utilising the conscious part of the brain when performing, but rather allowing aural and visual senses to predominate, and to trust that the sum of what he had learned in the past would find its appropriate expression within performance.

The implication of this is that improvising musicians should remove factors that inhibit their ability to focus entirely on the music being created in a given moment. By establishing conditions where deliberate **conscious** thought (during performance) is not required, the players become free to listen, react, respond and create meaningful musical improvisations. Developmental requirements for individual musicians wishing to participate in high-level collaborative improvisations will now be investigated.

Practice-Room – Performance-Stage Dichotomy

Musicians undertake intensive study of many aspects of music in order to become proficient improvisers. Typically jazz method books and educational facilities examine harmony, melodic invention, rhythm, repertoire, significant recorded solos, analysis and historical review. However, these essential aspects of knowledge can also act as inhibiting factors with regards to both collaborative and individual improvisation in music performance if not sufficiently internalised. One of the main foci of this research is to investigate ways in which the performing musician may need to

disassociate himself from his practice-room musician 'self' in order to enable uninhibited musical connection with co-performers. In order to achieve this, the musician should internalise the required musical knowledge so that there is less need to deliberately and consciously draw on musical information during performance, thus enabling the improviser to intuit these elements.

To this end, there is a need to separate the manner in which a musician accumulates musical knowledge via practice, from the way they present music as a performer. Sloboda (1989: 216) refers to the proposal of Fitts, who suggests that skill acquisition can be broken into three phases: the cognitive stage, the associative stage and the autonomous stage (Fitts, 1964 in Sloboda 1989:216). He then cites Anderson,

....the cognitive stage involves an initial encoding of the skill into a form sufficient to permit the learner to generate the desired behaviour to at least some crude approximation. In this stage it is common to observe some verbal mediation in which the learner rehearses information required for the execution of the skill. The ... associative stage involves the smoothing out of the skill performance. Errors in the initial understanding of the skill are gradually detected and eliminated. Concomitantly there is a drop out of verbal mediation. Theautonomous stage is one of the gradual continued improvement of the performance of the skill. The improvements in this stage often continue indefinitely.
(Anderson, 1982 in Sloboda 1989: 216-217)

These stages of development clearly articulate the level of 'knowing' required by improvising musicians to successfully perform high level improvised music. Although the detail of that work has a different focus from that of the current study, it is recognised that by developing musical knowledge in the practice room to the autonomous level, the musician can become freed from deliberate decision making, to then draw on the less tangible aspects of music making, in ensemble performance. This represents, I propose, a level beyond Fitts' "autonomous" which he implies is a skill improvement concept. When even this is transcended, such that the musician is

not primarily aware of musical materials or technical skills but the overall musical performance, it becomes a fully creative dialogue.

Inhibiting Factors

In addition to a high level of instrumental proficiency, it is generally recognised that the improvising musician should also possess highly developed aural, theoretical and compositional skills.

All musicians are expected to thoroughly learn repertoire to be presented, regardless of genre, so that there are no technical issues and the written material can be presented in a musical manner. Additionally, the improviser must be able to create new melodies in real time, most often over a pre-existing harmonic framework. If not sufficiently learned, the essential musical elements required to do this can also inhibit the ability for a musician to interact with his co-performers. The need to consciously process the application of factors such as chord, melody, rhythm and form impacts on the focus that can be applied to aural and visual connection between players in an ensemble, which in turn reduces the ability to connect in a musical sense. By sufficiently internalising these elements, the improviser can be free to respond in a more creative way, without the obstructions caused by the need to consciously deal with the materials of music making. More focus and intent can then be applied to the creation of cohesive musical statements by the ensemble.

To demonstrate this concept I will briefly examine the John Coltrane composition, *Giant Steps*. Paul Berliner (1994:90) suggests that musicians describe this piece as the 'tour de force' because players needed to negotiate the unusual tonal relationships it contained at fast tempos. Typically students who are attempting this work will learn

harmonic patterns that are played through the chord changes. Indeed John Coltrane's solo on the original recording consisted largely of pre-determined patterns as outlined in figure 1. The CD collection of complete Atlantic recordings (Coltrane, 1995) contains several versions of *Giant Steps* from the original recording session in 1958. Coltrane's solos on most versions of the piece are very similar with the same patterns occurring throughout each solo. In contrast, pianist Tommy Flanagan struggles to negotiate his solos and does not sound particularly confident in any version. Mark Levine, in his text *The Jazz Theory book* states,

When "Giant Steps" was released in 1960, nobody but 'Trane could play changes such as these over an entire tune. Pianist Tommy Flanagan struggled through his solo on the original recording, but in fairness to Tommy, nobody else at the time could have done better. (Levine, 1995: 356)

He continues with,

Tommy later recorded a great trio version of "Giant Steps" on his 1982 Enja album of the same name, proving that yes, he could play the changes to "Giant Steps". (ibid)

Tommy Flanagan, at the first recording, was required to deal with complex music materials, having to negotiate an improvisation over the cycle of descending major thirds – a harmonic structure that had, until that time, not been used extensively in jazz music. His solo in the second recording demonstrated that by internalising the material requirements of the piece, cohesive, empathetic improvised music making could take place.

Through considered analysis, *Giant Steps* can be internalised and transformed from being a complex, difficult structure to a simple cell that can be used as a focal point for improvisation.

Figure 1. John Coltrane's solo on *Giant Steps* (first chorus).

Chord tones are written below the staff.

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In figure 2 *Giant Steps* can be seen in lead sheet form. It can be seen that harmonically, the piece consists of a cycle of ascending major thirds over a basic sixteen bar form. The tonal shifts are negotiated in two ways. In the first eight bars Coltrane approaches the major 3rd cycle via dominant to tonic chord movement through different key centres. Interestingly, in this section of the tune he uses the cycle of **descending** major 3rds to realise an **ascending** major 3rd cycle. The movement from B major to G major to Eb major is, of course descending in major 3rds. However if we look at every second bar throughout the composition the movement is ascending in major thirds. The second eight bars of the piece approach the ascending cycle of major 3rds via the more traditional II-V-I movement.

Figure 2. John Coltrane's *Giant Steps* – Lead Sheet

Solfege tones and tonal centres are written below the staff.

The image displays a musical score for John Coltrane's 'Giant Steps' in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into four systems, each with a treble clef staff. Below the staff, solfege tones (So, Mi, Re) and tonal centres (chords) are indicated. The chords are: B Major, G Major, Eb Major, F# Major, Am7, D7, Fm7, and Bb7. The solfege tones are: So, So, Mi, Mi, So, Mi, Re, So, Mi, Re, So, (So), Mi, Re, So, (So), Mi, Re, So, So. The score is marked with measure numbers 1, 5, 9, and 13. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

On the surface this harmonic structure is complex and difficult to improvise over. However if we look more deeply at the composition and allow our ears to hear the composed melody from a tonal perspective we get a very different picture.

If the melody is examined from a harmonic standpoint, in other words the notes of the melody are regarded as tones within a harmonic framework, and not merely as pure pitch, it can be seen that only three tones are present for the entire composition. The 5th, 3rd and 2nd or the solfege names so, mi and re (by utilising a moveable doh). By internalising these tones sufficiently, so that every note from the composition has real harmonic meaning, the harmony can be intuitively realised. This then will allow the improviser to more readily connect with his co-performers, as the requirement of continuously observing the passing harmony is removed.

The same can be said of 'free' jazz music in that all notes played are heard within a context and that context guides the direction of the improvisation being performed. This is to say that at any moment during a performance, the performer hears the note being played at that time in relation to something, which provides a harmonic centre, even if only for that particular note. The perceived harmonic centre may shift with

each subsequent note played. To this end the performer hears notes as tones, in relation to tonal centres and not just as pitch with no relationship to other sounds.

This brings us back to the practice room/concert performance dichotomy, in that hours of practice are required to develop the ears such that we can truly hear, or indeed feel melodies from a harmonic perspective. However, by doing this, the improviser is free to perform without the need to devote conscious thought to the mechanics of the music being played.

A core aspect of this project is the analysis of recorded works by a quartet that the writer performs in. The works will not be analysed from notation based harmonic, melodic and rhythmic interactive perspectives, as the study focuses on ways in which musicians connect on a personal, and in turn, macro-musical way. There will be examination of how participants' contributions affect their co-performers. Aural perception and the collective musical history of the participants are seen as significant factors and as such will be investigated through interviews. The manner in which ensemble members socially connect will also be considered. Due to these considerations, the literature surveyed has a wide scope as it relates to improvised performance generally. More specificity is applied when dealing with matters of interactivity.

Much has been written about the psychology of music performance, aural perception, interplay and social conditions. Thompson (2009), Meyer (1956), Temperley (2007) and Huron (2006) have written extensively on musical perception. Temperley utilises Bayesian probability techniques to analyse music perception through identification of pitch, meter, error identification and other aspects of music perception, while Thompson, Meyer and Huron have written from various psychological perspectives. Monson (1996), Berliner (1994), Hodson (2007), Mazzola & Cherlin (2009) and Ratliff (2008) have written on musical interaction, using different approaches, including interviews with musicians, traditional music analysis and the use of mathematical data to demonstrate various components of musical interaction. There are additionally many publications written on jazz improvisation from a harmonic, melodic and rhythmic standpoint. Much of the literature tends to approach the topic from one of

two perspectives. They adopt essentially either a mechanistic or a psychological approach. These different approaches rarely overlap, and the connection of these elements and the need to develop them simultaneously is rarely (if ever) discussed.

Intuition and Creativity

There has been considerable publication output dealing with the concept of intuition both within the arts in a broad sense, and music specifically. Keith Swanwick, in his text *Musical Knowledge: intuition, analysis and music education* speaks of the connection between sensory experience, intuition and logical thought,

Similarly, intuitive knowledge is not possible without our experience of what Croce calls the basic 'matter' of sensory impressions, the interface between the human organism and the world 'outside'. Sensory experience is not something to be left behind when intuitive knowledge takes charge. Nor does intuitive knowledge serve only as a preparation for logical thought, to be discarded when higher levels are reached. The relationship is not between contrasting functions but between previous and subsequent phases in coming to knowledge, in the same way that breathing starts long before we get round to writing poetry or scientific formulae. We cannot afford to dispense with breathing or eating just because we may want to get on with writing a book or setting up an experiment.

(Swanwick, 1994:29)

This study will utilise aspects of Swanwick's concept and demonstrate that for successful, collaborative improvisation to occur, the materials of music making (via logical thought) should be sufficiently internalised as to allow intuition and sensory experience to come to the fore, such that the connection between players is instant and does not require conscious decision making.

Additionally, Sawyer discusses the differences between creativity as experienced in composition and that which occurs in improvisation, with the major difference being that unlike the compositional process, improvisational creativity occurs in real time, without the opportunity to reflect. The result of this is that the creative process and the resultant product (musical performance), occur simultaneously. He later states that the “real time nature of the interaction within the creative group is a distinguishing feature of improvisational creativity” (1992:256). Sawyer further distinguishes improvisational performance from compositional creativity in that compositional creativity lacks interactional influences commonly found in improvised performance. This study will explore this element further and examine the manner in which the participants interact with one another, from both recorded evidence and interview responses.

The Concept of Jazz Improvisation

Improvisation has been examined at length, within a jazz context, from the perspective of both the individual and to a more limited extent, the ensemble. In particular, Ingrid Monson, in her work *Saying Something: jazz improvisation and interaction* discusses the interdependence of members within an ensemble upon one another,

In an improvisational music, such as jazz, the interaction between group and individual greatly affects the ultimate composition and development of the music. Since the ensemble is divided into soloist and rhythm section, it should be noted that there are two levels on which this individual-versus-group tension operates: the relationship of the soloist (who may be a rhythm section member) to the rhythm section, and the relationship of each individual to the remainder of the rhythm section. (Monson, 1996:66-67)

Monson examines the ways in which ensemble members interact in some detail. However, it appears that she does not consider all participants to be equal, in that she

consciously separates the 'soloist' from the 'rhythm section', thereby creating division of players. This dualistic approach is suitable for comparing roles within a jazz ensemble from a traditional perspective, however in my study I will attempt to demonstrate that the interdependence of participants in an improvised music performance exists at a more complex level than that described by Monson, and that the 'solo' line is only one of many equal parts in one cohesive musical creation from the entire ensemble. The individual contributions within the group are in a constant state of flux, with the direction of each part changing in response to the other members.

Paul Berliner, in his book *Thinking in Jazz*, describes this interdependence of players within an ensemble,

Without warning, however, anyone in the group can suddenly take the music in a different direction that defies expectation, requiring the others to make instant decisions as to the development of their own parts. When pausing to consider an option or take a rest, the musician's impression is of "a great rush of sounds" passing by, and the player must have the presence of mind to track its precise course before adding his or her powers of musical invention to the group's performance. Every maneuver (sic) or response by an improviser leaves its momentary trace in the music. By journey's end, the group has fashioned a composition anew, an original product of their interaction. (Berliner, 1994:349)

Berliner clearly describes the interactive and interdependent nature of creative improvised music making. What he does not describe is the manner in which this interaction occurs, or indeed, methods and techniques a musician may employ to become more highly attuned to perform in such a manner.

Both Berliner and Monson interview well known musicians about the improvisation process, and present a range of examples of interplay in performance, but do not

investigate more complex questions such as how the skills are developed or utilised in performance.

In his doctoral dissertation *Interaction and Improvisation: Group Interplay in Jazz Performance*, Robert Hodson (2000) investigates the interaction of musicians in jazz performance, and the overall effect of such interplay on the creation of improvised music. Hodson clearly describes, with the use of transcribed excerpts from significant jazz recordings, what each performer is doing at a particular moment, in a melodic, harmonic and rhythmic sense. This is presented in the context of the ensemble, but tends to focus on mechanistic and event alignment rather than the more complex interactive and communicative aspects of improvised music performance. Hodson describes defined roles of the players within specific sections of an ensemble, such as rhythm section and horn section and discusses the manner in which the players interact with other ensemble members, with respect to these defined roles. The recognition of and adherence to defined roles within an ensemble are certainly a requirement of many forms of jazz music, such as bebop (as analysed by Hodson). It is also recognised that musicians who perform improvised music should have a deep understanding of these roles and their historical development. My study will build on this research and will demonstrate that development of musical communication beyond that experienced from a traditional standpoint is achievable, and will result in successful collaborative, improvised music.

In his paper 'Improvisational creativity: an analysis of jazz performance' (1992), Sawyer interviews professional jazz musicians with the purpose of gaining insight into creativity within jazz performance. In his study 'Group Creativity: musical performance and collaboration' (2006), Sawyer examines three characteristics of group activity – improvisation, collaboration and what he describes as 'emergence', which refers to the resultant product of collective improvisation,

The key characteristics of group creativity are improvisation, collaboration, and emergence. But we tend to neglect these characteristics. Instead, we often try to attribute the group's creativity to a single person: the group leader, the soloist, the director or conductor. (Sawyer, 2006: 153)

With reference to improvised music performance Sawyer suggests there is *“a constant tension between fully conscious and fully nonconscious (sic) performance, and each musician must continuously resolve this tension to achieve a balance appropriate to the moment.”* (Sawyer, 1992:257)

He further states,

When a performer's nonconscious component is active, the more conscious levels of processing may continue to filter ideas generated at the nonconscious level. The conscious levels, which monitor other musicians or attempt to stay aware of the song form, may likewise contribute ideas to the ongoing nonconscious generation. (ibid.)

This study will endeavour to build on Sawyer's work and others and attempt to uncover specific activities that lead towards successful collaborative music improvisations. It will further attempt to unfold how these activities can best be developed to enhance the condition of group improvisation.

There has been study of group improvisation in fields other than music, interestingly, often with comparisons to jazz performance. Mendonca and Wallace discuss improvisation within the domain of emergency management and refer to similarities between this field and those of medicine, engineering, the arts and business. They suggest that,

recent and expansive literature on management improvisation has helped to describe the antecedents and consequences improvisation. Antecedents include factors that can trigger improvised behavior, such as environmental conditions (e.g., time pressure) and the nature of management knowledge and experience. Consequences include the success of improvisation and the contribution of improvisational behaviour to organizational learning. (Mendonca & Wallace, 2007:547)

They further refer to a cognitive theory of improvisation with three stages,

1) learning processes before, during and after improvisation; 2) integration and validation of the model that is described here within a cognitive architecture; and 3) application of a computational model of improvisation to decision support.
(ibid:557)

These concepts can be applied to the realm of improvised music. This study will uncover what key factors are required, if any, to be in place prior to and during group improvised music performance in order to create more successful improvisations than would otherwise be obtainable. It is further hoped that this will assist to provide a process for the development of musicians' abilities to improvise in a group sense.

Jazz Improvisation – Instructional Texts

It is important to note that much of this literature tends to connote the isolation of different aspects of jazz improvisation in both perception and pedagogy. However, as there are a plethora of instructional publications dealing with jazz improvisation, and the lack of discussion around interactivity in these works is pervasive, only seminal or major works will be discussed. These can be placed in two broad categories: play along texts/recordings and instructional methods. Both of these areas of study have been used extensively, over several decades, in the teaching of improvisational skills, both within formal education and self-directed (private) study.

The Jamey Aebersold series, *A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation* (Aebersold [series], multiple dates), which at the time of writing this study has over one hundred volumes, deals with the development of improvisation skills within a jazz context. Standard repertoire and commonly used harmonic functions form the basis of the texts and recordings in which the student performs with the pre-recorded rhythm section, using suggested scales as a basis for improvisation. This system is excellent in the development of basic jazz language skills, but as in the research of May (2003) it presents some difficulties relating to musical communication, in that it requires the player to perform with a non-responsive medium (play along), in which interaction between performers is not possible.

Similarly, the extensive Hal Leonard *Jazz Play Along* (Leonard [series], multiple dates) series, also an excellent educational tool for the development of jazz language, from an individual perspective, also requires improvisational development in a non-responsive environment. The structure of this series of works is very much as described with respect to the Aebersold series and presents the same problems regarding interaction or lack thereof.

Review of instructional method texts has demonstrated that the majority almost exclusively deal with the development of materials for improvisation from harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and stylistic perspectives. Interaction and higher levels of perception and intuition are rarely discussed. Jerry Coker, in his book *Improvising Jazz*, discusses ear development and the need to develop the ability to listen to co-performers,

When a student of music theory identifies and writes what his instructor plays for him in a dictation exercise, he is using the same process used by the jazz improviser. He is translating abstract sound into tangible symbols and making it understandable. The student is translating sounds coming to him through the auditory senses and placing these sounds (in symbol form) on paper. The improviser is working with imagined sounds which, when translated, are played on his instrument. The mechanical process of translation, however, is the same and can be developed through extensive practice. (Coker, 1987:34)

He goes on to say,

The improviser will often need to use his transcribing ability to translate the sounds around him in an improvising session if he is to fulfil his obligations toward group improvisation, and if he is to learn from listening and understanding the efforts of those around him. (ibid)

Coker states that improvisers need to develop aural skills in order to enable them to listen to and learn from their co-performers, but does not go into details of

achievement of interaction and musical connectedness. This study asserts that these ‘forgotten’ elements are an important part of the artists development and demonstrates the manner in which musicians connect and interact in a musical sense, as well as ways in which improvising musicians can further develop this aspect of performance.

George Bouchard, in his text *Intermediate Jazz improvisation: a study guide for developing soloists* (2001) addresses the concept of combining intuition with conscious decision-making. He suggests that in the moment of performance (improvisation) both elements are utilised simultaneously to produce improvised music, a view shared by many scholars and improvising musicians. He discusses the need to learn the materials of music making, which he lists as scales, chords, patterns, licks, etc., during practice, as intellectual exercises in addition to the need to interact within an ensemble. The exercises in the book deal exclusively with musical materials from the individual perspective and in spite of discussing the concept, offers no suggestion for developing the intuitive, interactive aspect of music making.

Although intuition and interaction are described in many texts, with the importance of their existence acknowledged, there appears to be a gap in the literature dealing with the establishment of conditions required to create successful collaborative, improvised musical statements within an ensemble setting. My project will endeavour to add to the current body of literature by investigating the conditions required to achieve this in the context of the case study of the album “1234” and offer suggestions in which improvising musicians can further develop the intuitive, collaborative aspect of music performance.

Chapter 2

Methodology

The focus of this research is practice led and as such, concert performances and recordings by the quartet are seen as central to the project. Close examination of the musical outcomes of the quartet, via interviews with the participants, self-reflection and examination of the recordings by the writer, and study of relevant literature in the field will be utilised to enable deep investigation into what is actually occurring within the ensemble.

Drummer Allan Browne is recognised by many musicians and critics as being a leading exponent of improvised music within the Australian jazz community. Critic and author John Shand refers to Browne's contribution,

But few if any have brought such complete artistry to multiple idioms as drummer Allan Browne, who understands – and not just intellectually, but in his heart – that the music is all one.
(Shand, 2009:55)

Browne has been the recipient of many prestigious awards including the Don Banks Fellowship in 2000 for his contribution to Australian music. He was also awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2013 for his contribution to jazz.

Pianist Colin Hopkins is a highly respected musician who, like Browne, is recognised by many musicians and critics as a significant Australian improvising musician. He has performed at major festivals throughout Australia and Europe. Hopkins was the recipient of the 2007 Melbourne Jazz Fringe Festival Commission, where he composed a major work for jazz trio and string quartet. He has featured on over twenty CD recordings of Australian improvised music. Critic John Clare spoke of Hopkins'

performance with the Nick Haywood Quartet at the Wangaratta International Jazz Festival 2011,

The clarity, sparkling lyricism and, yes, bracing intellectuality of Colin Hopkins's piano also made it hard for me to tear myself away. (Clare, 2011)

Guitarist Stephen Magnusson has performed with many leading Australian and international artists including Charlie Haden, Arthur Blythe, Ricki Lee Jones, Paul Grabowsky and Mike Nock. He has been the recipient of several prestigious awards including the Swiss Diagonal Arts Grant and Pop Kredit award in 1999 and the Australian Jazz Award in 2000. He has twice been nominated for the Freedman Fellowship. Shand states *“wizardry is the only word for the guitar playing of Stephen Magnusson”*. (Shand, 2009: 145)

The author, Nick Haywood (bass) has been a leading performer within the Australian music scene for many years. He has been invited to perform at every major jazz festival in Australia and at many jazz festivals and jazz clubs throughout Europe, Asia and North America. A detailed biography can be found in Appendix 2. Gettler writes,

Ornette Coleman's Round Trip is magic, ... Haywood's solo here is special. Swinging hard, he creates a sound and rhythm that goes right through the listener. (Gettler, 2011:32)

The structure of the interviews conforms to the work of Sawyer (1992), and differs only in that all participants are members of the same ensemble as the writer. Each participant was presented with the same questions and their answers were recorded and later transcribed. Studies using similar methods include Monson's *Saying Something: jazz improvisation and interaction* (1996), Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz: the infinite art of improvisation* (1994) and Biasutti and Frezza's 'A Research About the Beliefs on Teaching, Learning and Performing Music Improvisation' (2006).

In order to develop a deep understanding of the conditions necessary to create successful collaborative, improvised music within an ensemble, the writer has chosen to propose questions to the participants that are directed towards uncovering these

conditions. It is hoped that the information gathered from the interviews will, in conjunction with detailed observation of the recorded works, provide insight into the mindset of experienced improvising musicians with respect to interaction and collaboration.

With regard to the development of meaningful improvisation it has been observed by the author that some ensembles are more effective than others. This is often independent of the skill levels of individuals within ensembles and has more to do with a deep understanding of other, seemingly indeterminate factors. These observations motivated the desire to investigate what these factors were and how they could be developed in order to achieve better results within group improvisation.

In order to investigate these observed processes and enable informed discussion of the performance outcomes the following approach was taken.

1. Simple tunes were composed and sourced for the project. This was to enable musical connection between players to occur without inhibition associated with negotiating, in the first instance, complex musical structures.
2. The ensemble would record the selected pieces without rehearsal, in one take, without edits.
3. The ensemble would perform concerts over a two-year period to enable musical connection to develop over time.
4. The ensemble would record the same repertoire again, with some additions, in one take, without edits. This will be done in a concert setting.
5. Ensemble members would be interviewed and asked questions pertinent to group improvisation and their individual development as improvising musicians.
6. Data obtained from the aforementioned steps, in conjunction with an examination of available literature, would be utilised to formulate some key principles.

Conditions were established to enable uninhibited musical connection between players, as a means to elucidate what these indeterminate factors were in the first instance, and secondly to attempt to discover a means of bringing these factors to the

fore within musical performance. The pieces to be performed were selected for their simplicity. They contained uncomplicated melodies and relatively simple harmony. This was to enable the players to focus on musical connection within the ensemble, rather than to concentrate on complex themes at the expense of listening to, and responding accordingly, within the quartet. There was a deliberate decision made to never rehearse, in an attempt to remove preconceived ideas from presenting themselves in performance. The same pieces that were used in the initial recording project, to be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, were used for all subsequent performances. There will be an examination of two performances of the same piece in a later chapter, not in an attempt to select which performance was stronger, rather to investigate the different manner in which the ensemble interpreted the same basic information (lead sheet) after several performances.

Detailed examination of recordings and live performances of the ensemble selected for this project will provide insight into the collaborative and interactive aspects of improvised music making. All members of the ensemble are respected improvisers within the Australian improvised music community, and it is felt that both their performances and personal opinions are extremely valuable sources of information for this project.

The CD recordings presented as an accompaniment to this exegesis were recorded almost two years apart and as such demonstrate the manner in which the quartet has developed in terms of empathy and other ensemble specific elements.

The first recording was done at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) studios at Southbank, Melbourne, Australia on November 26, 2010. Conditions for this recording are discussed at length in Chapter 3.

The second recording was a live concert performance from Bennett's Lane Jazz Club in Melbourne, Australia on September 20, 2012. One specific track from this recording will be used to demonstrate key findings from the study. This will be a tune not previously recorded or performed by the quartet. Another will be used to demonstrate the manner in which key elements of collaborative improvisation have been developed by the quartet over a two-year period. This will be a tune that also

appears on the first recording. Detailed examination of this tune will be undertaken in Chapter 4.

In the period between the first and second recording, the quartet performed over thirty concerts, in jazz clubs and major jazz festivals. For most of these performances the same repertoire as recorded on the first session was played, with new pieces added to the repertoire only on the day of the second recording. The purpose of this was to examine the manner in which musical connectivity between players developed as familiarity with framework material likewise developed. New material was added to the second recording to demonstrate how much, if any, musical connection between players had developed over time, irrespective of repertoire. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The writer interviewed participants in the project in order to discover what aspects of collective improvisation were significant to them. There were specific questions that each participant answered, which focused on particular aspects of group improvisation and relationships within the group, in addition to deliberately open-ended questions, which were asked as a means to enable the participants to expand on aspects of improvisation they felt were important to themselves as individuals.

The majority of the interviews in this exegesis were conducted between November 1, 2012 and November 5, 2012. This was approximately two years after the first recording of the quartet, during which time over thirty concert performances had occurred. This enabled the participants to provide information based on the initial recording in addition to their performance experiences in the quartet over the subsequent two years.

The interviews have not been transcribed in full. The method for notation is similar to that used by Hodges (2007:80-81) in that information relevant to this exegesis was transcribed as accurately as possible, with idiosyncrasies and colloquialisms included. As a means to represent the interviews as accurately as possible, non-verbal utterances, pauses and repeated information has been represented by three punctuation points. When information that lacks relevance is presented, and requires omission from the transcription, it is indicated with five punctuation points. All other

punctuation used is standard, and there has been an attempt to represent phrases as spoken by the participants with appropriate pauses and inflections.

Lead sheets within the exegesis are presented as they were provided to the quartet. This work does not contain transcription and analysis of the performances, in a traditional melodic and harmonic sense, as the focus is on the manner in which players connect and not specific harmonic, melodic and rhythmic events. When specific musical events or periods are discussed the accompanying CDs will be referenced and noted with precise time indicators within tracks.

In the interviews particular attention will be paid to concepts that enhance collaboration in a broad sense, much of which is applicable to areas of collaborative practice beyond the scope of improvised music, nonetheless, directly impacting on the manner in which improvised music can be created. It is hoped that this will provide insight into conditions considered desirable to achieve effective collaborative improvised music. The data gathered for this study is qualitative in nature, with the opinions of interviewees, in conjunction with observations from the recordings, by the writer forming much of the evidence used. The writer is familiar with quantitative research undertaken in this area by writers such as Pressing (1987) and May (2003) but the broad style of exploratory investigation used in the current study has little to benefit from contriving to force a more rigid qualitative representation of the data.

Chapter 3

The Recordings

Process

It is important to discuss the process of recording for this project, from the perspectives of the physical environment, the method of recording, the mindsets of the participants and the impact of the composed music used.

Each recording will be discussed separately as the purpose of this study is not to compare one recording with another, in a qualitative manner but rather to examine the ways performers within the ensemble choose to interpret the same basic notated musical information on different occasions. It should be noted that all participants have extensive experience as music recording artists, and as such, it was not felt that different physical environments would impact significantly on the abilities of the ensemble members to perform to their maximum potential. As such, different recording spaces were used for each performance - the first, a professional recording studio and the second, a jazz club. The conditions within each of these will be discussed independently. Variables within the environments, such as the musicians' ability to both hear and see one another will be discussed. Familiarity with the repertoire will be discussed also, as the two selected recordings were done almost two years apart and it is felt that this may have impacted on the mindsets of the performers.

First Recording of the Ensemble

The first recording was undertaken at the ABC studio at Southbank, Melbourne on November 26, 2010 for the ABC Classic FM program *Jazztrack*². The session was both engineered and mastered by *Jazztrack* host Mal Stanley.

² *Jazztrack* is a long running ABC Classic FM radio program which is aired twice-weekly and features both Australian and international Jazz music. It has long been the leading jazz broadcast in Australia.

A decision was made to record no more than two takes³ of any given tune. This was done to keep the recording fresh and minimise the potential for contrived performances. All recording was done in real time, with no overdubs or edits.

The positioning of participants within the recording studio was an important factor, in that good visual contact needed to be maintained to assure maximum connection between players. Visual cues and body language recognition are commonplace in performance of improvised music, and it was important that these factors should be allowed to occur. This was also seen as significant as the performers were provided with minimal information with regard to formal performance instructions, which in turn required aural and visual awareness to be maximised. Participants in this study all utilise visual cues, both deliberate and inadvertent, in addition to aural cues, to better connect with one another in a musical sense. Examples of this can be found on the accompanying DVDs to this work and one such example is discussed on pages 59-60 of this study.

Ensemble members were positioned in a semi-circle, with some separation to enable each instrument to be recorded without spillage of sound into each other's microphones. The drums and bass were positioned in separate booths with floor to ceiling glass walls, which enabled good visual connection between players. The piano was positioned in a large room connected to the booths. This allowed Hopkins to maintain suitable visual contact with other ensemble members. Magnusson was placed in the same room as Hopkins, although his guitar amplifier was placed in a different room to avoid sound spillage. Each member of the ensemble had clear visual connection with their co-performers, and the environment was as close as could be achieved to simulating a typical concert performance setup.

Each performer had a separate fold back control, which enabled them to create the best blend of sounds for themselves, within their own headphone set. This assisted greatly in creating a natural playing environment, which in turn helped remove factors that could potentially interfere with the performance. The effect of the studio environment on the performers was investigated further in interviews with the participants. Each ensemble member spoke of recording sessions in general terms,

³ A take is a recording of an individual performance of a piece of music.

and the need to remove self-consciousness as a means to achieve a feeling of a live performance. They also mentioned the negative impact of not usually having an audience in a recording session, and associated feelings of isolation. Each ensemble member also spoke of how feelings of self-consciousness did not occur in this particular session. Hopkins states,

Mind you I didn't find that in that recording we did...because there's a strong connection between the four of us, there's more of a conversation happening with us anyway, so that the conversation with the audience is not so lacking there, because there is a sort of internal conversation, whereas I've been in recordings where it gets really hard is if you don't have that conversation amongst the band, and in a recording, you are really thrown way too much back onto yourself and that self-consciousness really makes you play in a.....its really stifling and crippling, and you become way too into that sense of judgment about what you play. (Interview with the author, 2012)

When all participants were satisfied with the blend of sounds within their headphone mixes the recording commenced. Arrangements, stylistic feels, tempi, dynamics, introductions and endings were not discussed or annotated. Participants were provided with simple lead sheets of each piece, consisting of melody line and chord symbols with the exception of *4x4*, which did not have chord symbols or melody. There was no other information on the sheets, again except for *4x4*, which had the order for soloists to perform as a way of providing some structure to an otherwise unstructured piece of music. The lead sheets provided in the body of this work are exactly as presented to the ensemble members at the recording session. Charts differ in spacing between systems and some errors, including incorrect spelling of the piece *Tahdon* are present. Below is an overview of the recording of each piece. Further examination of some pieces will follow in Chapters 4 and 5.

It is recommended that the reader listen to the accompanying CD 1 recording (the album *1234*) in conjunction with reading the following descriptions of the performances.

because that tune's got really lovely little fragments of melody, I know we just sort of refer to little fragments of melody all the time, and I find that really exciting that we weren't really locked into a prescriptive set of changes but we were bouncing off the tune in a much freer way, we were referring to the tune just when we felt like it... I suppose we did that all the way through to the end and we just ended it with one of those fragments.

(Interview with the author, 2012)

The recording began with a two bar count-in by the author, as the desired effect was for all players to start at the same time. There was no further discussion with regard to groove⁴, order of solos or the manner in which the tune would end. The result was that the performance was quite elastic in its nature, though interestingly all players automatically adopting a swing feel. In hindsight this most likely occurred because the count-in was preceded by strong finger clicks on beats two and four, sustained over several bars. This type of count-in is commonplace when establishing a swing feel and the ensemble members all appeared to have recognised the count as such. There were two iterations of the theme, which resulted from visual communication between ensemble members during the recording. The impact of visual awareness in music performance will be discussed further in Chapter 4. The final phrase of the theme was used as a motif to begin the solo section, with both the guitar and piano loosely restating it at approximately 50 seconds. This appeared to be in response to approximately four bars of drums playing 'time'. All ensemble members used this final phrase as a catalyst for improvisation, with the piano restating the motif at 1:09. Other fragments of the theme were played throughout the improvised section. Notably the bass played a fragment of the opening phrase of the theme at 1:24, which was extended by both the guitar and the piano, beginning a section of conversational playing, with strong reference to the theme by the bass, piano and guitar. This enabled the players to be free of the constraints of focusing on difficult pre-composed elements of the piece.

⁴ Monson (1996:68) describes groove as 'a rhythmic relation or feeling existing between two or more musical parts and/or individuals'.

A press roll on the snare drum at 1:51 was the catalyst for a shift in direction. At this point the drums and bass began to play swing groove time and walking bass lines, while the guitar and piano continued to play in a conversational manner. Throughout this section, although all ensemble members continued to play, there appeared to be strong use of space, with each ensemble member making statements and then allowing others to respond. The organic nature of this intuitive interaction adds weight to the belief that by removing the need to process excessive and perhaps extraneous data during performance, more cohesive, collaborative group improvisations will occur than would do so otherwise.

There was a group decrescendo from 4:16 until 4:30 at which point a bass solo began. The bass played unaccompanied until the drums entered at 4:52 and the bass solo continued until 5:26 when the theme was reintroduced. The guitar and piano re-entered at the second phrase of the theme and continued to play until the end of the piece, which finished after two iterations of the theme. The ensemble members, using visual cues, all finished the piece with the phrase on bars 9-10 of the theme. The ending of the piece was not discussed. Ensemble members' abilities to musically coordinate, from various aspects, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this study.

Figure 4. The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress

THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS

JIMMY WEBB

The musical score for "The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress" by Jimmy Webb is presented in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score consists of 13 measures. The melody is written in treble clef. Chords are indicated above the staff: G, D/F#, EMIN⁷, D, G, A⁷, D/F#, G, A⁷, BMIN⁷, A, G^{#11}, D/F#, EMIN¹¹, G. The score includes a final phrase in brackets, which is a four-measure melodic line.

The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress (figure 4) was selected for the project because it has a simple elegance built around one motif and does not have a complex harmonic progression. There have been several recordings of this piece, by various artists. The participants were asked in interviews if they had previously heard this piece, and if they felt prior listening impacted on the way they performed the piece for this recording. Hopkins and Browne had not heard the piece previously and Magnusson was familiar with the tune but had never performed it. Magnusson commented,

I think as I'm get older I try not to get too attached to a song. I don't mean that in a negative way, I just don't get attached to any...preconceived notion of what it is, because it can't be anything except for what it is on the day. We don't play in a pop band where we have to play the parts the same all the time. We could do that sometimes but then it's going to be much more formulated than what it was going to be. (Interview with the author, 2012)

Magnusson played an improvised guitar introduction. Various effect pedals were used which impacted on the mood established in this section. The decision to begin this piece with unaccompanied guitar was not discussed, nor was the manner by which the ensemble would enter. The improvised introduction was used as a catalyst for the rest of the performance of this piece.

The theme was strongly referenced at 2:31, which was followed briefly by harmonic development, which indicated that the introduction was drawing to a close. The theme was introduced at 3:00 with the ensemble members entering at this point. It was considered that the natural manner in which this occurred was most probably due to a combination of acute aural awareness of ensemble members and a visual indication from Magnusson. The theme was performed twice, with subtle dynamic variation throughout. This occurred naturally, without discussion or notated indication, seemingly as a result of heightened awareness, due to the environment and the use of simple thematic material.

The open sounding mood established in the unaccompanied guitar introduction continued into the solo section. Understated, empathetic playing from all ensemble members was a major characteristic of this performance. One notable example is at 6:32, where the author continued the final statement of Hopkins' solo into the opening statement of the bass solo. At the conclusion of the bass solo the theme was restated once, without a coda, which complemented the simple approach to the performance of this piece.

Figure 5. Tahdon

TAH DOH (I DO)

JUKKA PERKO

A  **A** 

B 

D.C. 

LAST X ONLY 



Tahdon(figure 5) – This piece by Finnish saxophonist Jukka Perko was written for his wife for their wedding day and translates as ‘I will’ or ‘I do’. Both the chords and melody of this piece are joyous in nature and to some extent direct the emotive character of performance.

The only predetermined aspect of this performance was that all players would begin together. The author counted in the piece, with a strong crotchet click before the count. Standard jazz-based performance practice generally implies that the feel of a piece (with such a count-in) is to be even eighth notes in nature, which is what occurred in this instance. Even though the count in doesn't appear on the final mix, it is interesting to consider the count in as part of the performance. In other words, the author begins the performance with a count in that is contributive to the instant decisions about the style and focus of the performance.

The melody was played without introduction (as was desired from the count-in). Dynamic variation occurred naturally throughout this section, in alignment with cadential points within the composition. The notated music consisted of melody, chords and bass line, all of which were played during the presentation of the theme. As with the other pieces, dynamic markings were not indicated on the chart.

Solos from the guitar, piano and bass were all relatively short and melodic in nature, in congruence with the composed theme. The performance did not deviate greatly in feel or dynamics from the playing of the theme, which provided coherence to the overall aesthetic of the piece.

Figure 6. Round Trip



Round Trip (figure 6) is an Ornette Coleman composition, which is essentially a blues form. Throughout this performance the quartet adhered to the sensibility of the blues but did not strictly apply the harmonic progression generally associated with a twelve bar blues.

As with some previously discussed pieces, *Round Trip* was counted in by the author, with a strong click on beats two and four, implying a swing feel. All participants elected to play the melody in unison, which provided a sense of stability and solidity to the theme. The bass played a dominant pedal (the piece is in the key of Eb major, and the bass played a Bb at this point) from bar nine until the end of the form, which provided tension through the cadential section of the form. The theme was played twice at the beginning, with the bass playing the pedal in the same place both times.

At the beginning of the improvised section all players elected to play 'broken time', whereby the pulse of the music was not overtly stated but the music was still in time. The first solo was from Hopkins and there was considerable interaction with the author and Browne. Magnusson did not play in this section. There was a gradual build toward a regular swing feel (with the bass playing four crotchets to the bar and a complementary swing pattern on the ride cymbal from the drums) from approximately 1:57 until 2:13, at which point the swing feel was fully established. The dynamic of the trio then played a decrescendo from 2:45 until 3:02, when the piano solo ended.

The guitar solo began at 3:02 and the ensemble once again played broken time, rebuilding the intensity and dynamics from this point. At 3:50 the piano re-entered and it was at this point that all ensemble members began again to play swing time, albeit with a momentary shift back to broken time at 3:55. There was considerable interaction, particularly between the guitar and piano from this point until the end of the guitar solo. Conditions required to enable this aspect of music performance to occur will be discussed in Chapter 4.

At the conclusion of the guitar solo, the guitar, piano and drums stopped playing to allow space for the bass solo to begin. Browne spoke of the importance of aural awareness in music performance,

Listening is as important as playing, to me, and knowing when to play and when not to play, and when to leave someone.

(Interview with the author, 2012)

The drums re-entered shortly after this, at the same time as the bass moved from playing crotchet-based lines to more melodic, rhythmically varied lines. This occurred 8 bars after the commencement of the bass solo, with the following phrase, over 4 bars, outlining the complete 12 bar form of the blues. The harmonic structure of the blues was also hinted at during this section, although, as previously stated, was not strictly adhered to. Interaction between the bass and drums was evident throughout this solo. The pianist punctuated the end of the bass solo by stating the initial phrase of the written melody. This may have been as he felt the ensemble was going to return to play the melody, but quickly realised that a drum feature was to begin, and the phrase was incorporated into the (improvised) arrangement of the performance.

The drum feature, which followed at 6:57, was 12 bars long and ended with a clear set up for the ensemble to re-enter with the theme. The melody was played twice, as is standard jazz practice for a blues, in a very similar manner to that which was played at the beginning of the recording. During the second iteration of the theme, at 7:38, the pianist played a phrase that led away from the anticipated conclusion. Other ensemble members completed the iteration of the theme before allowing the pianist to establish an extended coda. Each ensemble member re-entered when they

deemed it musically appropriate, until the piece came to a conclusion approximately 90 seconds later. The ensemble members utilised elements of the pre-composed melody throughout this section, which provided a link to the rest of the performance. There was a strong feeling of trust exhibited between the ensemble members in this instance, with each player exhibiting confidence that the musical decisions made by their colleagues were valid choices. They also trusted that their co-performers would validate their own musical choices. Browne describes the existence of trust within the ensemble,

When I think of your quartet I think of everyone there being interested in the ensemble rather than themselves so much, and that's reflected in the music. (Interview with the author, 2012)

Figure 7. Detention River

DETENTION RIVER

NICK HAYWOOD

The musical score for 'Detention River' is presented in five staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and repeat signs. Above the staves, there are chord symbols: *Esus*, *Fsus*, *Bmin*, and *Gmaj/B*. The score also features a first/second ending bracket and a final double bar line.

Detention River (figure 7) – An original composition with an AABC structure, consisting of two motifs and a simple harmonic progression. This piece was originally conceived as a country blues tune and was inspired by the Detention River in North-West Tasmania. The feel that was originally intended was not discussed with the ensemble

members, and while some elements of country blues music are evident (mainly through the melodic content of the piece), the interpretation by the quartet is unique and unpremeditated.

Immediately prior to recording this track, it was decided that Allan Browne would play a drum introduction using mallets. Tempo or specific stylistic consideration was not discussed, which provided Browne with the freedom to establish a rhythmic bed upon which the other participants would play.

After a 4 bar drum introduction, the piano, bass and guitar (playing the melody) entered via a visual cue from the author. Magnusson played the melody at this point. The decision for the guitar to play the melody was not discussed, however as all performers have strong jazz performance backgrounds, it is the author's opinion that the performers opted for the guitar to assume the role of lead instrument, which is commonplace with this instrumentation within the jazz tradition. It is of interest to note that when the guitar, piano and bass entered, they immediately assumed roles that can be considered as much more traditional in nature than the earlier pieces, with all players opting to 'lock in' with the groove provided by the drums, rather than opt for a more rhythmically free approach as demonstrated in the earlier pieces.

During the 'B' section of the composed section of the piece, the piano opted to double the melody in the second half of each phrase, which provided the music with an antecedent/consequent effect throughout this section. Hopkins extended the phrase at the end of this section to provide continuity to the 'C' section of the piece, which is a variation of the 'A' section. The improvisation section of this recording provided for individual solos rather than beginning with collective improvisation, as occurred in previous pieces.

The first solo was by Stephen Magnusson and the decision for this was via eye contact between performers during the recording. There is a requirement for significant levels of trust to exist between players for this to occur successfully, both from the perspective of the individual taking the solo, and from that of the other ensemble members in electing to provide accompaniment for a particular solo. The concept of trust within music performance will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this study.

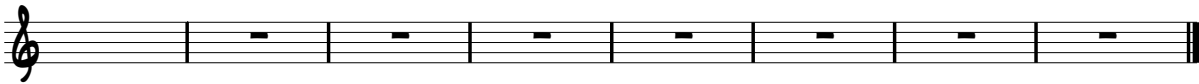
The movement from the guitar solo to the piano solo occurred at the end of the form (3:40) and the confidence with which this was undertaken further demonstrates the aforementioned concept of trust. The bass and drum groove continued at this point, which assisted in maintaining the mood of the performance and provided a solid base from which the piano solo would develop. Hopkins signalled the end of his solo by repeated references to the melody through the final four bars of his solo. The result was that the ensemble played a dynamic shift from forte to piano at 5:21, which was the end of the form and allowed the guitar to re-enter with the restatement of the theme. Piano and guitar unison lines were prominent throughout the 'A' sections, with the guitar playing the melody alone in the 'B' section. This provided a contrast to the first iteration of the theme, in which this was the reverse. The piece concluded with a vamp⁵ over the tonic chord with a gradual fade conducted over approximately forty seconds. During this vamp each player gradually decreased the density of their contribution until a natural conclusion was reached. The manner in which the performance concluded, as with all other performance criteria, was not discussed. The performers' understanding of commonly used idiomatic devices contributed to this outcome.

⁵ A vamp is a term widely used in contemporary music. In the context of this study it refers to a repeated phrase in which the harmony is static.

Figure 8. 4 x 4

4 x 4

NICK HAYWOOD 2010



PIANO SOLO

CUE TO DRUM SOLO

CUE TO GUITAR SOLO

CUE TO BASS SOLO

WHEN READY ENSEMBLE IMPROVISATION

PIANO DROPS OUT

DRUMS DROPS OUT

GUITAR DROPS OUT

BASS FINISHES

4 x 4 (figure 8) – This piece is essentially a free improvisation. The score to this piece contains instructions designed to provide a determined structure as outlined in figure 8. The guidelines indicate an unaccompanied solo from each ensemble member, which then leads into a collective improvisation, followed by a gradual dropout until only the bass remains to conclude the piece.

All players were free to play whatever they wished within the guidelines, and it was hoped that each person's solo improvisation would inspire/inform the next, until the quartet would eventually improvise collectively. There was no prior discussion regarding any aspect of the performance.

The piece began with a piano solo in which several unconventional techniques were used. These included playing inside the piano, muting strings and using found objects to strike the strings. The textural mood established here was continued into the drum solo, which began at 1:34. The opening statement of Browne's solo appeared to be a

continuation of the final phrases played by Hopkins, with the use of similar rhythmic devices and timbral colours, which enabled logical musical development through this transition point. The use of non-traditional piano techniques also contributed to this transition. The drum solo built in intensity, through the use of increased note density and dynamics from here, continuing to explore textural variation throughout. At the commencement of the guitar solo (2:42) the drums continue for approximately twenty seconds, allowing the guitar to establish a different mood. Various effect pedals and alternate picking techniques were employed in this section, with the result being a calm, open sounding solo which texturally contrasted with the previous one. The guitar solo concluded at 4:14 at which point the bass solo commenced with a sense of urgency. This feeling built over a thirty second period, until the guitar, drums and piano re-entered for the group improvisation section. By now the author had established a medium tempo 4/4 feel, around which the other ensemble members played syncopated notes that quickly transitioned into free rhythmic and melodic statements, around defined rhythm from the bass. The tempo and intensity of the bass line changed throughout but the overall character of the line remained constant. The high level of intensity continued until 6:30, by which time all instruments except the bass had stopped playing.

Figure 9. Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain

BLUE EYES CRYING IN THE RAIN

FRED ROSE

1 F

5 C

9 F

13 C

17 \flat

21 F

25 F

29 C

Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain (figure 9) – This piece by Fred Rose, written in 1945, has been primarily associated with Country and Western music. It was selected for this project as it has a strong melody and simple harmonic foundation. To the author's knowledge, this piece has not previously been performed or recorded by an ensemble that has its foundation in the jazz tradition.

The recording of this piece commenced with an unaccompanied piano introduction. Hopkins elected to establish a slow gospel feel, which provided a platform for the remainder of the performance. At 0:37 a vamp was played to introduce the playing of the theme.

The guitar, bass and drums entered together after a four bar piano vamp to play the theme (albeit with a two beat drum pick-up into the melody section). At this point it is noticeable that all players connected in a musical way such that the sense of space within phrases carried as much significance as the notes being played. This was achieved by attention to note length, dynamics and awareness from each player of the overall impact. As with the other pieces on the recording, this last element is crucial to the presentation of a performance in which the individuals are fully engaged with the collective impact and effect of the performance, as they are simultaneously in the process of making their own contribution.

The sense of space discussed above continued into the improvised section. A specific example occurred in the piano solo, which immediately followed the theme. Interaction developed between the piano and the bass, in particular, throughout this solo, in which improvised musical phrases flowed between the two instruments over a sustained period of time. Examples of this occurred between 3:02-3:54 and again through the following B section (3:54 – 4:25). The solo concluded with a diminuendo over the final four bars of the form, which established a starting point for the guitar solo that followed.

Magnusson continued the earlier established mood through the guitar solo in which he played with what could be described as a country music sensibility. The musical connection between the players was maintained during this solo. The concept of trust between players is seen as significant in this regard, in that each player was required

to trust that musical choices within the ensemble were completely valid at any given time. It is felt that this aspect is perhaps one of the most important elements of these performances. Bassist Ron Carter, in an interview about his duet recordings with guitarist Jim Hall described trust in the following manner,

It's the kind of situation that in order for it to succeed each guy has to trust the other guy's sense of it all. If I play a note, Jim has to know that I mean that note to be there. If he plays a chord, I know he expects me to find a note to enhance that chord because I know he means that chord to be there. And without this level of trustworthiness, in spite of talent, it's not going to be successful musically. (Milkowski 1988, cited in Monson 1996:175)

Although all ensemble members of the quartet are most familiar with jazz and jazz related grooves, there was no hesitation or reduction in musical connection evident from the ensemble, when the guitar solo commenced in another style. Moreover the level of trust within the quartet was such that the solo developed (in an ensemble sense) in intensity throughout, until the diminuendo over the last twelve bars of the form, which established a starting point for the bass solo that followed. The dynamic variation within the guitar solo was not discussed however the dynamic shifts were consistent and instant from all players.

The bass solo commenced at 7:04 with an embellishment of the opening phrase of the written melody. This served as a link from the guitar solo to an extended improvisation from the bass. The accompaniment at this point was from the piano and drums, with the guitar electing to not play. This afforded the bass solo more room for dynamic variation and melodic choices. The piano contributed simple rhythmic support, which also provided the listener with a reference point for the pulse of the music.

The steady support from the piano and drums continued throughout this solo, which enabled the author to develop the solo rhythmically, melodically and dynamically due to the sense of strong support from the other players. Once again this reinforced the key concept of trust between players as a means to create successful group

improvisation. The solo concluded with the final phrase of the composed melody, over the last four bars of the solo, which served as a cue to return to the final iteration of the melody.

The ensemble returned to the melody at this point with Magnusson playing the theme on the guitar, as was the case in the initial iteration. Rather than play the entire piece again, only the final eight bars were played, which was followed by a vamp over the tonic chord. The vamp was sustained for a period of approximately two minutes. During this time there was considerable variation in intensity and dynamics, as can be heard on the accompanying CD recording 1. As mentioned previously, aspects such as this that relate to arrangement were not discussed prior to the performance. Highly attuned active listening was evident here, in that collective, instinctive variation in dynamics and intensity, along with intuitive departures from traditional roles were clearly demonstrated throughout.

Figure 10. Slow tune

SLOW TUNE (INTERVALLIC STUDY 1)

NICK HAYWOOD 2010

1ST X PIANO
2ND X ADD GUITAR
3RD X ADD BASS/DRUMS

FREELY IMPROVISE (WITH TIME) ON THEME, BASIC THOUGHT (POSSIBLY) LARGE - SMALL INTERVALS (JUST A THOUGHT - NOT COMPULSORY)

Slow tune (figure 10) – this piece was composed as an intervallic study, with participants free to play or rest, as they felt appropriate. Two pre-determined factors were provided to the ensemble members; firstly that the piano would begin alone and secondly that the written melody would be used as a basis for improvisation.

Structurally the piece consists of a six bar melody which is then transposed up a minor sixth and repeated. There are intentionally no chord symbols provided, as it was hoped that the performers would intuit the harmony based on the playing of the melody. The bass part is essentially an elongation of the melody, with some rhythmic variation and note omissions.

The recording commenced with piano alone, playing the melody very slowly, and the guitar joining at bar 3. At this point the mood and tempo were both established, which provided a basis for co-performers to enter in an effective manner within the parameters established by Hopkins. The entry of the guitar was complimentary to the mood established by the piano, and the use of an effect pedal to create sustained notes provided a sound reminiscent of a violin.

The bass entered at bar 7, the beginning of the transposed section of the melody. This entrance assisted in both layering the instrumentation of the performance in an orchestration sense, in addition to building the dynamics and tension throughout the second half of the playing of the theme. Browne entered by playing cymbals, in the final bar of the theme, which assisted in clearly outlining the form, and as such, the point at which extended improvisation would begin.

All quartet members began to improvise at this time, with no clear delineation of roles within the quartet. In a sense all ensemble members were soloing simultaneously, using thematic material as a basis for improvising. The effect of this was that a strong tie to pre-composed elements was maintained, along with a feeling of adherence to structure, although in reality, the structure was not rigidly adhered to and the performers were free to develop the piece at will. There was a constantly rising dynamic and increasing levels of interplay throughout the performance.

At 3:50, when the levels of interaction and intensity were at their highest, Hopkins played a phrase with strong allusions to the melody from bar 6 of the theme. At this

point there is a transition to the modulated melody (bars 7-12). The playing of this phrase served as an indicator to return to the theme. The ensemble played a loosely interpreted iteration of the second half of the theme from 4:02 until the end of the performance. Again, this was not discussed prior to the recording but does indicate an innate sense of compositional intent across the ensemble.

Four key concepts were identified from the initial investigation of the recordings that relate to the development of meaningful collaborative improvisations. These concepts are supported by the feedback from interviews with the ensemble members. This input will be discussed and elaborated upon in Chapter 4. It should be noted that these concepts in isolation do not constitute an ability to create meaningful improvisations. The historically accepted materials of improvised music making are not only a precursor to but also a foundation of, this type of musical performance. It is hoped however that the postulation and investigation of these concepts will provide a means to frame the discussion of ensemble based improvised music. The impact of this in later research may extend to investigations into the curriculum and pedagogy of improvised music. Each of these concepts will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Second Recording of the Ensemble

The second recording of the ensemble was a live concert recording from Bennett's Lane Jazz Club in Melbourne, Australia from September 20, 2012. As mentioned previously, this recording was not analysed in totality. It was considered that the in depth discussion of the main recording for this study in its entirety was sufficient to discern and contextualise the main concepts. There was a decision made to record some of the same pieces from the first recording in addition to three new works. Detailed examination of the performance of two pieces from this session does occur later in this study, to provide a context for the way the ensemble played, two years after the initial recording.

The stage layout of the ensemble was typical for a jazz quartet of this instrumentation as can be seen on the accompanying DVDs. Piano was to the left of stage, with bass,

drums and guitar sequentially across from that point. Players positioned themselves so that they could maintain good visual contact with each other. The ensemble members had performed at this venue many times and indeed the quartet itself had performed at the venue approximately twenty times over the previous two years and as such all players were familiar with the acoustic properties of the room.

The first, on pages 73-80 of this study is the standard tune '*When I Grow Too Old to Dream*', by Sigmund Romberg and Oscar Hammerstein. This piece was not previously recorded by the quartet and was presented to the performers three weeks prior to the recorded concert. There was again no rehearsal or discussion of performance requirements.

The second piece from this performance to be examined was the author's composition '*4 x 4*'. The first recording of the quartet also contains this piece. This piece was selected, as it is essentially a free improvisation with certain guidelines, as described earlier in this chapter. Players were not restricted by a predetermined harmonic framework or rhythmic structure. It was hoped that this would enable free-flowing collaborative improvisation to occur, and the concepts that were identified from the first recording could be further examined. A detailed examination of the second recording of this piece can be found in Chapter 5 of this study. This, importantly, includes a comparison with the first recording as a means to identify the different ways in which the earlier identified concepts can present themselves, in performances by the same ensemble, over a period of two or more years. It should be mentioned that in the approximately two-year period between the recordings, the quartet had performed *4 x 4* over fifteen times.

In addition to the pieces mentioned, the second recording contains the previously recorded '*The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*', '*Round Trip*', '*Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain*' and '*Tahdon*'. There will not be detailed examination of these pieces, as the previously mentioned analysis of two pieces from this recording was considered sufficient to identify and compare any examples of the key concepts discovered in this study. The reader is encouraged to listen to these pieces from both recordings, particularly from the perspective of collaboration and development of the identified concepts over the two-year period between recording sessions.

Chapter 4

Identifying the Key Concepts

Four key concepts were identified from analysis of the first recording, all seen as critical in the development of successful collaborative improvisations. These were substantiated by the subsequent interviews with the participants⁶. It is proposed that by identifying and evaluating these concepts, higher levels of engagement with co-performers can be achieved and as such, musical connection within performance will be at optimum level. The identified concepts will be discussed in their broader contexts, as well as the manner in which they can be applied within musical performance.

Materials

Fundamental to creating improvised, or indeed any music, is a sound understanding of the 'materials' of music making. For the improvising musician these include good instrumental technique; understanding of music theory, including harmonic, rhythmic and aural language; techniques for improvisation; compositional sensibility and a sound understanding of music history and idiomatic considerations. Coker refers to these elements as the '*improvisor's basic tools*' (1987:3-11), and suggests that the absorption and utilisation of theory and technique are crucial to the development of the improvising musician. He does mention intuition and other less tangible aspects of performance at this point, but this at a cursory level only. Hodson (2000) expands on these principles in his detailed analysis of key recorded jazz performances, in various contexts.

The acquisition of jazz music performance requirements largely occurred via an aural tradition in its early stages. Much of the material elements mentioned were passed

⁶ It is worth noting that the interviewees were not "led" in their responses and their statements with respect to the idea of the key concepts. Their feedback that impacted on these topic areas occurred organically and as a product of a broader discussion around the recording of the album.

on in an informal manner. However, today they are often learned in a formal educational setting and the manner in which this occurs is seen as somewhat standardised across educational institutions. The intricacies of formal jazz music education could be discussed at length, but it is beyond the scope of this study to explore this area.

As discussed earlier, the materials of music should be learned such that they become subconscious in nature. This enables other higher-level concepts to come to the fore, in that the need to consciously draw on music materials during performance is eliminated. This is particularly so for two of the other key concepts, Aural Awareness and Trust, which will be discussed at length in this chapter.

The selection of simple thematic material for this study was not intended to convey the idea that complex music should not be used as a basis for improvised performance. Rather, the more transparent vehicle was considered to be a better platform for both the exploration and demonstration of the concepts. The idea of removal of conscious thought processes during performance is recognised by many improvising musicians, especially with regard to the use of fake books.⁷ The use of such books is often seen as a hindrance to improvised music making, and there is common belief that the chords and melody of repertoire to be performed should be memorised to aid the process described above. Coker suggests that prior to performing, participants should memorise the pieces to be performed. He further states that arpeggio and scale patterns across the harmonic framework of pieces to be performed should be developed to enable the player to focus on other elements of performance. The elements he mentions are *'establishing melodic form; developing the meter sense, mood, and swing; finding useful notes and phrases; and planning and controlling the intensity of a solo in chosen or inspired moments'* (1987:26). Coker is supported by Levine, who states that *"experienced musicians have internalised this information to the point that they no longer have to think about it very much, if at all"* (1995:vii), and Galper who writes *"Practicing is external behaviour that affects internal processes that in turn affects external behaviour"* (2005:169). This study builds on

⁷ A fake book is a collection of tunes commonly used in music performances, usually presented as lead sheets.

these principles by investigating higher-level aspects of improvised music performance than have previously been examined.

Traditional approaches for developing ensemble skills, whether acquired in formal education, or informally through rehearsal and performance with colleagues, primarily focus on the role of the individual within an ensemble, and not on the collaborative aspects of music making outlined in this study. Of prime concern in this situation is the manner in which each ensemble member fulfils the expected role of his chosen instrument, in an ensemble sense, and not the communicative qualities of music performance that are seen as crucial in the context of this study. Texts such as *Intermediate Jazz Improvisation: a study guide for developing soloists* (Bouchard, 2001) and *Improvising Jazz* (Coker, 1987) do mention the need for developing listening skills and the need to be intuitive with regard to ensemble performance, but do not offer suggestions as to how this aspect of music performance can be developed.

In the current project, music materials were discussed in interviews with the ensemble members associated with the project, and there was consensus that these need to be developed to an advanced level to best facilitate musical ideas during an improvised music performance. However, while the general belief was that of a necessity to be able to freely express musical ideas without conscious reference to this acquired body of information, each member regarded different elements of music materials as important for their own development. Each player discussed this with the assumption that the fundamentals of music making, such as knowledge of scales, chords, rhythm and style had already been established. Hopkins stated,

...if I practice anything, its about the idea of gestures, you know, like I'm just going to sweep up the keyboard or I'm going to sweep down the keyboard, its that simple but there's a billion different ways to do that...also...the only thing you want to practice is making music...the only reason you want to play the instrument is to make music, to sit there and practice scales all day...that's not making music...if you want to practice scales find a piece of music that has scalar runs in it, you are still practicing the craft of making music...what you want to do when you get up

on stage is you want to make complete pieces of music so the only thing you should be practicing is making music. (Interview with the author, 2012)

Hopkins indicates that internalising music materials such that musical choices in real time can be reduced to gestural movement, rather than detailed components such as specific pitch, rhythm, dynamics and other material elements, trusting that the specifics mentioned are sufficiently internalised that they will emerge subconsciously. This is to say that in earlier stages of musical development, the specifics of music materials are deliberately and consciously practiced until they become a part of the internalised body of information, or the musical vocabulary, of the improviser. It is recognised that these elements need to be periodically revisited to remain fresh throughout the performing life of a musician. In addition, it is believed that new knowledge needs to be accumulated throughout a player's life to ensure growth as an improviser. This is discussed earlier in this study in the section 'Practice Room – Performance Stage Dichotomy'.

Magnusson similarly articulates the need to develop advanced aural, harmonic and physical (technique) skills,

Developing your aural, mechanical and cognitive skills within structures, whether it's playing through changes or not...

He goes on to say,

I don't care what anyone says, even the great improvising free players, like Derek Bailey for guitarists, or Evan Parker, they all can play the shit out of their instruments...You've got to learn your craft... (Interview with the author, 2012)

Magnusson's comments describe the imperative of developing sound material skills and the freedom to have musical choices as an improviser. The acquisition of skills, both physical and intellectual, enable the improviser to have a broader range of musical choices than would otherwise be available. Similarly, Browne speaks of developing technique as a means to better articulate musical ideas,

...as far I'm concerned, the practice routine I have is just to help me play my ideas...(interview with the author, 2012)

These skills should be practiced such that choices become automatic and the resultant musical statements intuitive in nature. The earlier mentioned statements of Coker and Galper further support this. By internalising the materials of music, an environment is created whereby a developed sense of aural awareness can emerge around the real time application of the musical language.

Aural and Visual Awareness

Aural and visual awareness is a phrase that I have selected for this study to represent an awareness of both the sound and physical scapes in which improvising musicians perform. The term includes visual awareness with regards to body language and physical cues from co-performers, as well as a developed understanding of the intent of musical statements through heightened listening abilities.

The ability to interact in performance with regard to visual stimulus is something that is developed over time. There are visual cues that have become standardised in jazz performance, such as physical gestures to signal the end of a performance or the act of tapping one's head with a hand to indicate a return to the theme or 'head'⁸ of a tune. Other subtle, but important visual cues that exist between performers require more time to develop. Ken Robinson, in his text *'The Element'* examines cultural differences between western and East Asian societies. He states that *'the cultures we grow up in affect the basic processes by which we see the world around us'* (2009:150). This premise can also be considered in the development of the culture of an ensemble. Over time, subtle physical nuances that players exhibit can provide musical cues to their co-performers.

⁸ The head is a term commonly used by jazz performers and refers to a composed theme, most often consisting of melody and chords on which improvisations are based.

Within the context of the studied performances, there are many subtle movements from Browne, Hopkins, Magnusson and the author that are utilised as musical signals, from which they can use intuitively to inform and communicate musical choices which form part of an overriding musical statement. One such example occurs on the accompanying DVD recording of the quartet from October 12, 2011, during the piano solo on the first piece in the concert; Ornette Coleman's *Round Trip*. Toward the end of the climax of the solo, at 4:15, Hopkins played a repeated short phrase, accompanied by a downward gesture from his right shoulder. Over the following eighteen seconds until 4:33 there is a decrescendo from the ensemble, with Hopkins body movement guiding the decrease in dynamic. This aspect of performance direction was not discussed and it was a combination of the body gestures from Hopkins and the visual and aural perception of Browne and Haywood that enabled this to occur. Many other examples are evident throughout the two DVD accompaniments to this study.

Hopkins, when asked about visual connection, in the context of the first recording session of the quartet said,

... oddly enough, on that day it didn't seem to worry me too much [re physical separation], in the past it has because there's something about that being in the same space...especially being able to read somebody's body language...on a gig, that's what makes the gigs work, its almost you can second guess what someone's going to do because they've started to do it with their bodies, or even use eye contact, or there's so many subtle things that happen and if they're cut off in the studio, you can hear it in the music, there's a lack of connection in the music. I don't know, I suppose the way we were set up that day we must have been able to see each other enough to pick up on all of that stuff. (Interview with the Author, 2012)

Hopkins' reference to the ensemble members being able to "pick up on all that stuff" is seen as significant. Subtleties in body movement and physical connection between players, via eye contact, can inform collaborators of each other's musical intent, much

in the same way as a conductor guides an orchestra in performance. These movements are often subtle and can be a combination of empathy with physical gestures that occur with co-performers generally, and deeper examples that result from long-term musical relationships, specifically. These skills are often developed innately, however it is felt that deliberate practice of this aspect of music making can help to achieve better results. The ability for a musician to interact with his co-performers, in a physical sense, should eventually be undertaken at a sub-conscious level, much in the same manner as other aspects of music making. The intricacies of practice required are beyond the scope of this project but could form the basis of a later study.

The term Aural Awareness as used in this study, encompasses everything to do with the auditory processes of the musician. This includes aural skills as they commonly pertain to the study and performance of music, such as developed abilities to differentiate pitch, chords, rhythm and tonal centres. However of equal importance is the musician's ability to actively listen at a deeper level. This is particularly important with regard to the player being able to truly hear his own and his co-performers' places in the music. The term 'place in the music' is used to define where each participant aurally sits within the overall sound of the music. This is not just the position in the form, although this should also be considered a part of the overriding definition. By developing listening skills such that sub-conscious connection with one's co-performers can occur, highly developed interactive, collaborative improvisations can begin to be created. If material aspects of music making are internalised such that they do not require conscious effort to access, the musician is then free to draw on the higher-level concept of Aural and Visual Awareness. It is equally important that this concept, similarly, is internalised to enable other concepts, to be discussed later, to come to the fore.

Monson (1996) speaks at length about the roles of each instrument within a standard jazz ensemble, from the perspectives of soloist and accompanist. She speaks of interaction and group dynamics, and offers explanations about the way in which musicians interact in real time. Within Monson's discussion this is limited to that of

expected roles such as ‘rhythm section player’ or ‘soloist’ and not from a perspective of complete awareness of the musical environment.

Magnusson speaks of aural awareness from the perspective of highly developed listening skills,

I’ve met a lot of people in the last 30 years of playing music that have perfect pitch, the ability to tell you what’s going on, in terms of labelling it, but it doesn’t mean you’re a good listener. The difference between having great skills as a pitch dude or a rhythmic dude, and someone plays some sort of rhythmic thing and you know what it is and you can throw it back at them, as opposed to someone who can really listen hard. So I think that that’s, aurally for me...has got to do with how well you can listen, not how well you can decode a piece of information, that’s not listening. That’s like having a conversation, and I can say something and you can speak it back to me in five languages but it doesn’t mean we are having an conversation, it just means we are decoding the information and then throwing it back out there. I think music can sometimes get like that, where people have this incredible skill...I’m not putting down people that have incredible skills...some people who have incredible skills can transcend the skills and they’re the total masters...its not about just knowing what notes they are...Herbie Hancock is an incredible listening musician, Charlie Haden is an incredible listening musician...they listen deeper.
(Interview with the author, 2012)

Magnusson’s description articulates the interactive imperative of aural awareness for an improviser, or indeed any performing musician. It is important to note Magnusson’s use of the word ‘conversation’ when describing an improvised music performance. This descriptor is used by many improvising musicians to describe musical dialogue between players and is often used by scholars and musicians alike to describe a style of jazz music, particularly that played in the tradition of pianist Bill

Evans' trios⁹, which feature high levels of interplay between trio members. Conversational jazz improvisation is not just limited to the particular style of Evans. Throughout the history of jazz music, conversational improvised music making has been evident, from the early recordings of New Orleans musicians through to music being created in the twenty-first century.

There are also many performers today, and historically, who do not display the skills required to "listen hard" as Magnusson describes it, which can often result in performances that lack musical connection as described above. As Magnusson suggests, there is a danger for a performer to rely solely on their aural skills to identify pitch, rhythm and harmonic movement, all of which are considered important parts of music materials, as described earlier in this chapter, but not to listen hard in an ensemble context. This can result in situations where co-performers mimic other's melodic and rhythmic choices (as described by Magnusson) rather than contribute to musical dialogue, or performances where musicians disengage from their co-performers by being entirely focused on their own musical output, and not that of the ensemble. This is problematic in two ways. Firstly, the resultant performances can lack musical connection, which can prevent the development of collaborative ensemble improvisations, thereby providing a less than desirable musical outcome. Secondly, a lack of musical trust can occur, as performers often become annoyed or nervous if they are not able to engage in musical conversation, which can in turn detract from the artistic output of the individual, and as such, the ensemble.

Trust and Respect

Trust and respect are seen as two closely related phenomena and as such should be examined as a single unified concept. Both components will be discussed separately by way of identification, and then as a whole.

⁹ Evans trios, especially that from 1959-1961 with Scott La Faro and Paul Motian were considered landmark in this style. The term conversational is commonly used to describe the manner in which the trio played. Berliner, when speaking of this trio, refers to the bassline "*as a counterpoint to the original melody*" (1994:86)

In its broader sense trust has been described as “confidence in or reliance on some quality of attribute of a person or thing, or the truth of a statement” (Onions, 1964). Monson also describes trust in which musicians “want to be able to rely on another musician’s marking of the time cycle, for example, should they momentarily lose it themselves”(1996:174). She further states, “That musicians rely on one another to orient and reorient themselves – especially when playing against the time – is apparent...” (Ibid.)

While Monson’s statements are correct, my research demonstrates that the level of trust between musicians performing at the highest level has the potential to be understood at a much deeper level. For this to be realised, each player should trust the intent of their co-performers completely, such that all players in an ensemble can freely make musical statements with the understanding that they will be supported, or encouraged, by their co-performers at all times. This is not to say that errors do not occur in performance under these circumstances. What is meant is that if the level of trust is high then players do not need to be pre-occupied with potential musical mistakes. The connection between players becomes elevated, enabling each player to respond to their co-performers at all times. This includes moments when musical ‘mistakes’ occur. If trust is paramount, the ‘mistake’ will be treated as a musical choice, rather than an error, which can then be incorporated into an overriding musical statement.

An example of this occurs on the accompanying CD 1 within the Ornette Coleman composition *Round Trip* (track 4). Towards the end of the performance, at 7:38, during the final iteration of the theme, Hopkins begins to move away from the composed melody, which was being played by the quartet. The ensemble continues to play through this element, until the theme is realised (7:45). At this point the guitar, bass and drums stop playing, which enables Hopkins to perform a cadenza that evolves from the potential error. At 7:49 the bass re-enters, followed shortly after by the drums, then guitar. From here there is considerable interaction between all players, with a groove quickly established, which then becomes a coda for the performance. The ensemble fades from approximately 8:45 until the end, at 9:14.

Trust between performers is seen as a significant factor in the realisation of successful collaborative improvisations. This element is clearly demonstrated in this particular performance. A common occurrence in many recording sessions happens when performers will cease playing if a take does not occur as anticipated. However in this recording the players opted not to stop, rather the intuitive choice was made to continue playing, trusting that the commitment to the performance by all players was such that musical connection would be maintained. There was no sense of hesitation within the quartet and the resultant recording was considered successful.

When asked about the importance of trust within an ensemble, particularly in relation to improvisation, all ensemble members regarded it as crucial to successful improvised music making. Hopkins spoke of trust and its relationship to enabling the performer to maximise their creative abilities,

Yes, it is crucially important.... because by contrast if you are in a situation where trust isn't there, to me that's completely stifling... because the opposite of trust, which implies acceptance, is judgment and I think as a musician as soon as you feel you are being judged, particularly by other musicians that you are playing with...it just completely blocks the creative process... particularly the music we make, which actually involves being quite vulnerable.... the same as being in a relationship, you are not going to allow yourself that vulnerability if you don't trust the other person's going to be accepting of you and not going to be judgementalor think any less of you because you are vulnerable. (interview with the author, 2012)

Hopkins' contextualisation of trust, in an improvised music setting clearly demonstrates the need to feel that it is permissible to be explorative, in a musical sense, without having to consciously assess one's own creative output in real time. This in turn enables the performer to remove the need for conscious decision making during performance, which as described earlier, can be an inhibiting factor to musical creativity.

Hopkins' use of the word 'judgement' is also seen as significant, in that as in other aspects of life, when an individual feels that they are being judged by others, they become self conscious, often questioning their own actions and decisions. This by its nature is stifling in a musical sense as it interferes with the performer's ability to freely interact and make bold musical statements. Hence an environment that contains a genuine feeling of trust, and is absent of judgement, is essential to successful outcomes.

Browne, like Hopkins, speaks of trust and its relationship with judgement,

I think it's crucial. There's nothing worse than being in an ensemble where you're meant to be improvising but you have someone with a very strong ego, who's likely to dump you for various reasons. I find that very difficult. (Interview with the author, 2012)

Browne speaks of the impact of lack of trust within an ensemble, and how it can cause players to feel stifled in their ability to freely create collaborative improvised music. This demonstrates both sides of trust, or lack thereof, in a musical sense. The person who does not exhibit trust in his co-performers is required to constantly re-evaluate his own playing, due to a combination of questioning other ensemble members' musical decisions, and not being able to completely focus on his own musical choices as a result. The person who feels they are being judged, likewise has difficulty improvising, due to the creatively stifling effect of being evaluated and not trusted by his co-performers.

Magnusson also speaks of trust as an integral part of previously mentioned components of collaborative improvised music,

Probably one of the most important things about playing music is listening and interaction and communication, so trust is pretty much entwined with all of that, you can't have it without trust...as soon as the music starts everyone's responsible for everything. (interview with the author, 2012)

Magnusson's description of the place trust holds within improvised music demonstrates that it is a fundamental requirement of ensemble performance. By saying that 'everyone's responsible for everything' he acknowledges that there is a need to trust that all ensemble members will make deliberate, confident musical statements that contribute to the overriding musical output of the ensemble.

Although the concept of trust is recognised as an important factor with regard to collaborative improvisation, it is not necessarily an easy thing to develop. There may be instances where musicians are required to perform with players that they do not know particularly well, or indeed do know, but do not have a relationship in which trust is evident. Conscious effort, on the part of all participants, may be required to develop a culture in which trust is present in order for high quality improvised music to be created. This may involve participants, as part of their broader development as musicians, developing methods to encourage and communicate trust within performance. This includes development of the ability to validate or accept contributions of co-performers, even if these contributions are not necessarily as anticipated.

It is recognised that there are fundamental differences between spoken language and music. There are, however, useful similarities that can be used in some contexts. Victor Zuckerkandl, in his text *Sound and Symbol: music and the external world* (1956:67) states "Music and language, then, have one thing in common – that tones, like words, have meaning and that the 'being in' of the meaning of the word, like that of the musical significance in the tone, is of a nonmaterial nature". The analogy of music as language, in a broad sense, then is useful in this instance. A successful conversation requires the exchange of ideas from participants. These ideas may introduce dialogue that moves into areas that were not necessarily intended at the outset. However, the willingness to allow each participant to express their ideas, trusting that the other participants of the conversation will respect their opinion and that they are able to speak freely without fear of judgement, will enable free flowing dialogue to occur. This is the same with improvised music performance as supported by the input from Hopkins, Magnusson and Browne.

Of course there are many occasions in which musicians do perform without a developed sense of trust within an ensemble, but it has been my experience as a professional musician with over thirty years experience, that these are most often lacking in musical connection.

The ability to enable trust to exist, when performing improvised music, is something that can be developed over time. To this end the performer is required to remove doubt and judgement when performing. This mind set can be acquired from a combination of believing that one's own musical decisions are valid, and that one's co-performers musical decisions are equally valid. Appropriate contribution and responses to sounds can then occur without the fear of value judgement being placed upon the participants. Hopkins states,

Rather than trusting yourself, it's trusting the process...when I was talking about judgment, a lot of that can be in your own head, judging yourself...you have to trust that that process is going to unfold and its going to be ok, and you've got to get rid of those voices in your head that say that this going to be a disaster. So a lot of your job is actually keeping that at bay and trusting that it is going to be alright. (Interview with the author, 2012)

Trust, whether it is with regard to one's co-performers, one's self or the musical process, exists alongside respect. These two elements are closely connected, and in the context of this study will be considered as one concept. However, there is an important difference that can be considered when observing the two sub elements. As discussed and demonstrated above, to trust somebody is to believe them, or in a musical sense, to believe that their musical choices are valid and should be accepted. This also conveys the idea of allowing oneself to be vulnerable. By contrast and in general terms, respect is described by the Oxford dictionary as "*deferential regard or esteem felt or shown towards a person or thing*" (Onions, 1964). This definition is relevant in the performance of improvised music, and indeed that of any music performed in an ensemble setting. To have respect in a performance setting is to hold a person in high esteem, such that their musical choices will be embraced, and their

ability to participate in musical dialogue will not be hindered in any way. Respect can be seen as a more altruistic concept in this regard, in that its focus is very much external to the person exhibiting it.

It is possible to trust co-performers, in a musical sense, without the presence of respect, but it is highly unlikely that respect can exist with an absence of trust, in that trust is seen as a required component of respect. Musical situations where trust is present, but respect is not, most often contain musical dialogue between players, but without the presence of musical respect, the performance does not often develop beyond that of the idiomatic norm.

Respect for one's musical co-performers is seen as significant, both from the perspective of respecting musical decisions made during an improvised music performance, and as a general sense of respect for the artistic integrity of each performer. Informed musical choices need to be made constantly when playing improvised music, from the perspectives of soloist, accompanist and ensemble member (during collective improvisation), which ultimately shape the outcome of each performance. This encompasses all previously discussed elements. Internalisation of the Materials of music making, as discussed earlier, along with the concept of Visual and Aural Awareness, when in combination, enable the concept of Trust and Respect to be realised. These concepts should be seen as complimentary in that by demonstrating a sound understanding of music materials, a significant level of aural awareness can develop. Confidence with aural surroundings in performance can lead to the development of a sense of Trust and Respect.

When asked about the significance of respect when performing improvised music within an ensemble, Hopkins said,

...We're all people that are willing to.... there is a genuine interest in what the other person's got to say, which I think translates into the music as well, its like... that a bit of respect about well we'll really listening, well what's this guy trying to do? I know if you or Steve are soloing it's really that...trying to understand what you're trying to say and really supporting that or maybe

not playing at all... I mean in this band I do a lot of [that], and I really enjoy that...sometimes the best thing to play is nothing.

(Interview with the author, 2012)

Hopkins speaks of supporting his co-performers and being truly engaged with what they are trying to create in a musical sense. Unexpected harmony, rhythm, melody, form and other material aspects of music are not seen as problematic. There is *trust* that each player will make musical choices with integrity and that those choices should be trusted and their implementation respected.

Magnusson speaks of respect for co-performers as an integral part of creating music. He suggests that nothing can exist, in a musical sense, without respect. Furthermore he states that if respect is not present, both from the perspective of having respect for another person's musical choices, or that of another person respecting his choices, then the ensemble likewise should not exist,

As soon as you start disrespecting someone's musical choice, you should never play with them...it's a bit like... as soon as you have to tell somebody what to do, you shouldn't be there... You will give guidance sometimes, it might be in the shape of a chart, a piece of music that might have some sort of part, which will give an indication of the general framework that you want, but that's not telling someone what to do its just kind of going...this is the thing and some music is more specific than others. But I've got to a point in my musical life where I can't do that anymore. I almost don't want to play someone else's thing unless I can be me all the time.(Interview with the author, 2012)

Respect for co-performers is evident throughout the accompanying CD recording. Each piece began organically, with no indication of groove in any recorded take, and a marking of tempo in only four of the eight pieces (G.P., Tahdon, Round Trip and Slow Tune). Despite the lack of obvious direction as to how the pieces were to be

performed, reviews¹⁰ suggest the recording was cohesive and each piece was successful in isolation, with the album sounding complete as an overall work. This cohesiveness is well described in a review of the CD '1234' in the Melbourne Age newspaper,

Many tunes here, including originals, are actually quite simple but what this band does is layer them with complexity. Their gift is that rare ability. It's the capacity to draw listeners in and take them on a journey. (Gettler, 2011)

The success of the recording process has also been substantiated by music industry peers, in that the CD recording, '1234', was awarded both the Australian Jazz Bell Award for Best Australian Contemporary Jazz Album in 2012, and also the Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) Art Music Award for Excellence in Jazz, also in 2012. These awards were both judged by panels of industry experts, with the Australian Jazz Bell Award assessed by an international panel.

Each player respected and trusted his colleagues within the quartet and musical choices were embraced. This is largely attributed to the participants having developed the materials of music making over an extended period of time, which enabled them to maximise their familiarity with their aural and visual surroundings. This in turn created an environment whereby respect and trust could flourish, which established an environment for intuitive aspects of improvised music performance to predominate.

¹⁰ Reviews include The Age, Melbourne December 16, 2011, The Australian December 17, 2011, ABC Limelight Magazine, February, 2012 and Rhythms, March 2012

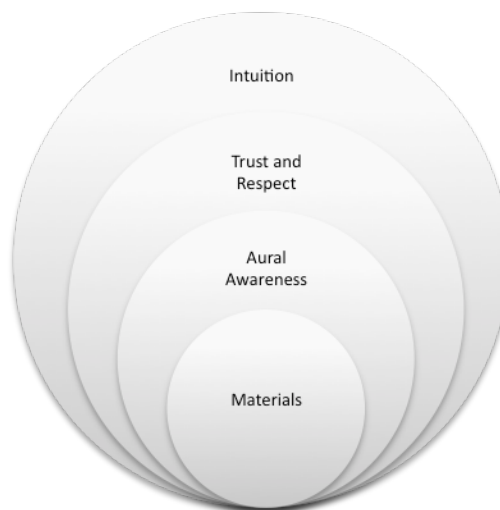


Figure 11

Intuition

One of the other main ideas that surfaced during the analysis and interview process was the impact of Intuition during music performance. In order for an individual to effectively play in an intuitive way the other recognised key concepts need to be developed. This is demonstrated by figure 11, which shows the interdependent nature of the identified elements. At this point it is appropriate to provide a definition of the term intuition in the context of the analysis, the perceptions of the players and observation from critics. The Oxford dictionary describes intuition as *“the immediate apprehension of an object by the mind without the intervention of any reasoning process”* (Onions, 1964).

In a musical sense intuition is an attribute that is developed over time and is aided by learning and internalising the materials and idiomatic considerations of musical language and expression. These materials and other considerations are identified and described by the four key elements outlined in this chapter. Within the parameters of this study, intuition is developed with the accumulation of knowledge, the application of which becomes subconscious, and is not merely an innate reaction.

Ladd discusses the subconscious nature of intuition and its application within his field, that of agricultural economics, in which he describes intuition as *“immediate knowledge attained without conscious deliberation or reasoning”* (1979:3). This description is applicable to music performance in that by internalizing the materials of

music making, as earlier discussed, musical knowledge can be expressed from a sub-conscious level, enabling performers to interact in a manner not unlike that which occurs in verbal conversation. The barrier of conscious thought can be removed, which will assist immediate creative, interactive music making to occur. Sawyer describes some of the elements of this process stating,

These conventions include a wide range of unwritten expectations: (1) musicians are expected to know a large repertoire of “jazz standards” and be able to play them without rehearsal; (2) musicians are expected to know standard chord substitutions, to be able to hear a soloist use one, and to be able to follow along immediately; (3) musicians are expected to be able to hear when a soloist is nearing the completion of a solo so that they can support the climax, and also so that the next soloist can begin without delay (Sawyer, 2008:54)

Musicians within an ensemble should develop a deep understanding of their co-performers’ musical idiosyncrasies in order to create an environment that enables the exercise of intuition. This most often occurs over extended periods of time, and generally speaking, the longer musicians have been playing together, the more likely it will be that intuitive music making will occur. It is felt that this process can be hastened if the participants have developed the key concepts to a high level. This is evident in the first recording of the quartet. At the time of recording, the ensemble had only played together once before. Each of the ensemble members had played with the author previously, but the remaining three ensemble members had not played with any of the others in any context before. There had not been an environment in which intuitive music making could develop over time, however each of the key concepts were evident, in that each player had developed their own understanding of both Music Materials and Aural and Visual Awareness. Further, there was a high level of trust and respect between the performers. This was due in part to each player knowing the others, both personally and with regard to their musical reputations. These factors, in combination, enabled the players to freely

perform without distraction, which provided an environment for the intuitive aspect of improvised music performance to come to the fore.

Swanwick (1994:26-30) discusses intuition and its connection to logical knowledge as a continuum, with each informing the other in a continuous state of flux. This study builds on that of Swanwick's by including the key concepts of Aural Awareness and Respect and Trust, as integral factors in the realisation of the integrated elements of logical knowledge and intuition, or music materials and intuition. In an ensemble sense, the connection between solid knowledge of music materials (logical knowledge) and intuition cannot occur without the existence of the other key concepts.

By developing understanding of these elements to an advanced level, an individual, apart from being able to negotiate more complex improvisations, is presented with more choices, musically speaking. In this study these concepts will be taken from the realm of philosophical and theoretical discussion to the applied sphere of music performance. It is through the practical music making of the ensemble that these concepts will be demonstrated and elucidated.

It is important to mention that acquisition of the key elements is not seen as linear. Although hierarchically lower elements need to be in place, to realise the higher-level elements, the process is continuous and should be considered circular rather than linear. The hierarchically lower concept of Materials, in particular, is one that develops throughout the life of the musician. Even when all elements are in place and successful collaborative improvisations are being realised, the improvising musician should continue to develop their understanding of the materials of music. This broadening of the artist's vocabulary and expressive palette will enhance their Visual and Aural Awareness and in turn encourage higher levels of Trust and Respect, leading to more Intuitive collaborative playing.

The accompanying recordings provide demonstrations of intuitive playing (and by implication, other key elements) during music performance. For the purpose of discussion I have selected one piece to use as an example. Track 2 on CD 3, the standard tune *'When I Grow Too Old to Dream'* (Romberg & Hammerstein, 1934), was

presented to the ensemble for a performance three weeks prior to the CD concert recording. The ensemble members were given a copy of the chart below (figure 12) and no discussion, with regard to performance direction occurred, either at the first performance or the subsequent concert recording.

Immediately prior to playing the piece Magnusson indicated that he would like to play the theme. The author counted in the tune at a slow tempo and the ensemble began to play.

Figure 12. When I Grow Too Old to Dream

WHEN I GROW TOO OLD TO DREAM

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of 16 measures, grouped into four lines of four measures each. Chords are indicated above the staff at the beginning of measures 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 15. Measure numbers 5, 9, and 13 are placed at the start of their respective lines.

Chord progression (measures 1-16):

- Measure 1: F
- Measure 2: C(SUS4)
- Measure 3: F/A
- Measure 4: Dm
- Measure 5: Gm7
- Measure 6: C7
- Measure 7: F
- Measure 8: F7
- Measure 9: Bb
- Measure 10: Bb/A
- Measure 11: Gm
- Measure 12: E/G#
- Measure 13: F/A
- Measure 14: Dm
- Measure 15: G7
- Measure 16: C7

All ensemble members started together, playing in an understated manner, allowing the resonance of the instruments to predominate. Playing in this manner is commonplace with this ensemble, and the connection of intuition with other elements is well described by Hopkins,

I think the best thing about this group is...everybody's willingness

to actually almost listen a bit more than they play, which sort of sounds simple but there's not many people that do it I don't reckon. (Interview with the Author, 2012)

This approach continued for the first sixteen bars, and considerable interaction occurred between players at a low overall dynamic level. There was some intuitive, collective dynamic variation during this period, within the parameters of previously stated dynamic range. At the conclusion of the first form there was a noticeable shift in intensity, dynamics, interaction and density of play from the individuals. This appears to have been in response to a two bar drum figure from 1:04 until 1:13, which occurred over the last two bars of the form¹¹. The intuitive aspect of performance was demonstrated here, in that all players increased these elements, at the same time, in a cohesive and musically satisfying manner. In addition, the presence of subtle variations in the above factors is noticeable from the beginning of the performance until this point. This is also the beginning of the second iteration of the theme, which is noticeably different to the first playing. The interaction between Magnusson, playing the theme, and the other members of the quartet is constantly in flux, with each player contributing equally to the dynamic variation and intensity of the performance. Similarly, there is another obvious lift from all players, in response to a drum figure at 1:44, into the midway point of the form at 1:48. The conversational manner in which the ensemble interacted continued throughout this form.

Magnusson moved away from the notated melody and began to create entirely improvised lines at the start of the third cycle of the form, which commenced at 2:22. The mood of the previous form was continued here and there is strong evidence of trust between performers throughout. This is exemplified as Magnusson's lines began to become more angular and rhythmically complex than previously exhibited, but there was no sensed hesitation from either Magnusson or the other members of the quartet. This described trust enabled all players to feel free to explore challenging musical ideas, without concern for making mistakes or becoming lost, either within the song's structure or in a rhythmic sense, which is further evidenced in the following

¹¹ In this context the word 'form' refers to the length of the theme of a piece of music, in this instance sixteen bars.

iterations of the form. Magnusson described the existence of the key concept of Trust and Respect, and its connection to creating improvised music as,

Probably one of the most important things about playing music is listening and interaction and communication, so trust is pretty much entwined with all of that, you can't have it without trust...as soon as the music starts everyone's responsible for everything. (Interview with the Author, 2012)

Another significant shift occurred at 3:29, which was the beginning of the fourth iteration of the form. At this point, the bass and drums began to play with a 'double time feel'¹², introduced by Browne with two bars of ride cymbal played with quaver beats over the final bars of the form. The manner in which the ensemble plays here does not sound rushed, with the resultant groove sounding more like a swinging 'four feel'¹³ than that usually associated with a double time groove. The piano accompaniment from Hopkins at this point became busier than previously demonstrated, with rhythmically anticipated chords, which complimented the feel played by the bass and drums. At this moment Magnusson's lines developed higher intensity than in prior choruses¹⁴, with greater note density and intervallically tense note choices. There was a noticeable increase in the overall dynamic level of the ensemble at this point.

Clear evidence of the application of all key concepts is present from here until the end of the guitar solo, with harmonically adventurous melodic lines from Magnusson, in conjunction with rhythmically secure playing from all ensemble members and Hopkins' piano accompaniment becoming more open in a harmonic sense. There was a strong sense of coherence within the collective improvisation of the group here, which demonstrated an acute awareness of the aural space of the performance from each of

¹² Double time feel refers to the bass playing eight quaver beats to the bar and the other ensemble members playing in a manner complimentary to this. The eight quaver beats may be overtly or implicitly played.

¹³ Four feel refers to the bass playing four crotchet beats to the bar and the other ensemble members playing in a manner complimentary to this. The four crotchet beats may be overtly or implicitly played.

¹⁴ The term chorus is commonly used in jazz music to describe an iteration of the form of a piece of music, in this instance sixteen bars in length.

the players. The key concept of Trust and Respect is likewise evident here, in that each player's respect for his colleagues enabled them to have the freedom to play in an unrestrained manner, trusting that their musical choices would be validated. The combination of these elements provided an environment that allowed the performance to be both cohesive and spontaneous.

The guitar solo concluded one bar into the next form, with the start of the next chorus being at 4:35 and the end of the solo at 4:37. The overall ensemble dynamic level at this point was still at a high level, which continued for exactly one more bar, until 4:39. At this point both the drums and bass made an immediate drop in dynamics and returned to a 'two feel'¹⁵, which provided a space for the piano solo to commence. A further example of intuition with the ensemble occurred here in that Hopkins, Browne and the author simultaneously shifted the manner in which they interacted, to provide a more conversational type of improvisation. This enabled a gradual drop in dynamics throughout the remainder of the first half of the form. At 5:03, the author played a C pedal note, from beat three of the seventh bar of the form, being the root note of the C7 chord, moving to the fifth of the F Major chord in bar eight, which established the mood for the second half of the form, at 5:09. The pedal note continued into the next section of the form, over the C7(sus4) and C7 chords in bar 9. At this point Hopkins began to play lines in which melodic invention, for the first time, was the primary focus in his solo. The bass and drums continued playing in an open manner, leaving space for the soloist to develop musical ideas throughout the remainder of the form. At 5:38 Hopkins played a phrase, between beats two and four of the final bar of the form. This phrase was played in a way that appeared to inspire the bass and drums to make a shift in rhythmic drive. In the following bar, at the start of the next chorus (5:41), the author began to play in a more forceful 'four feel' in response to Hopkins' phrase, and Browne moved to a drum groove that was propelled by a skipping feeling. Similarly Hopkins began to employ more heavily swinging melodic lines from this point. Both Hopkins and Browne began to play in a rhythmically more complex way from 6:05, leading into the second half of the form, from bar 7 of figure 12. By way of contrast the author continued to play crotchet beats through bars 7 and 8 of the form,

¹⁵ Two feel refers to the bass playing two crotchet beats to the bar and the other ensemble members playing in a manner complimentary to this. The two crotchet beats may be overtly or implicitly played.

which provided an anchor to the rhythms played by the pianist and drummer. At 6:12, which was the midway point of the form, the author began to play anticipated crotchet beats, which further served as an anchor, while Hopkins and Browne continued to play in a rhythmically adventurous manner. This continued until 6:27, at which point all three ensemble members instantly moved to a settled 'four feel', with little rhythmic, melodic or harmonic tension. Hopkins and the author continued to play in this manner while Browne played a roll on the snare drum between 6:30 and 6:43, which was the end of the form. This inspired a rhythmic shift in which the ensemble returned to a 'double time' feel, at the start of the next chorus (6:43), which had not been heard since the final form of Magnusson's guitar solo. Both the author and Browne continued to play a double time groove throughout the next form, providing Hopkins with freedom to create increasingly more complex lines, both rhythmically and melodically, while offering some rhythmic drive to the ensemble. This continued for 22 bars, until 8:05, when Hopkins reduced the intensity of his solo. This was complemented by Browne and the author, who returned to a 'four feel' two beats later, at 8:09. At this point, two bars prior to the midway point of the form, the ensemble intuitively established a calm, settled feeling, with dynamics, intensity, rhythmic variation, harmonic choice and melodic invention all headed towards a point of resolution. This continued for another eight bars, where the piano solo concluded at the end of the form, at 8:50.

Here, at the start of the next cycle of the form, Browne stopped playing to provide the author room to begin the bass solo from a low dynamic. Likewise Magnusson was not playing at this point. Hopkins played minimally and this enabled the bass solo to be performed with a rubato feeling. Browne spoke of this aspect of group performance and its connection with the key concepts,

Respect is to allow someone space and know what the balance of that space is, and that's instinctual, isn't it. If you're playing a free solo and I'm sitting there next to you thinking, I don't have to think, with you, I just know that soon I will hear something from you and I'll know that's when I start playing. You want me then, but last thing I should do is as soon as you start playing is

start playing some thing that is a bit like you, and send you off in the wrong direction. (Interview with the author, 2012)

During bars 6 and 7 of the bass solo, between 9:15 and 9:23, a figure was played that implied stricter tempo than previously played as a lead into the second half of the form. From here Browne recommenced playing, and there was a lift in dynamics within the ensemble. The author played the first two bars of the composed theme at the start of the second form of his solo, from 9:55, at a relatively high dynamic, within the context of this solo. Magnusson re-entered at this point, playing single line rhythmic figures. This dynamic level was maintained until the end of the form, which transitioned into a drum solo.

The drum solo, which was over one chorus, between 10:57 and 11:58, was accompanied by piano throughout. This unusual approach created an environment in which Browne's normally melodic playing could be presented in a different context. The solo was melodic in nature, with each half of the form clearly outlined by Browne. The improvised manner in which the drum solo was placed within the performance was very effective, as it separated the relatively low dynamic level of the bass solo from the equally low dynamic level of the beginning of the final iteration of the melody.

At 11:58, the final iteration of the composed melody began, with Magnusson once again playing the melody, with some variation on the notated theme. The ensemble returned to the low dynamic level that was prominent in the first iteration. The mood remained constant until the end of the form, at 13:02, at which point an improvised coda was performed. There was no discussion between ensemble members prior to the performance about overall structure and the inclusion of a coda was entirely organic in nature. The coda continued until 16:15, and all ensemble members interacted in a rhythmic and dynamic sense over a C pedal note played by the bass. The coda concluded with a fade. The coda, like other key aspects of the performance was entirely improvised, which enabled the intuitive approach of ensemble performance to come to the fore.

The ability to create musical complexity within the ensemble, with respect to group improvisation, was evident throughout this performance. Intuitive playing, informed by long term individual development of all key concepts enabled high-level collaborative improvisation to occur. Trust and Respect within the ensemble allowed members to boldly explore musical ideas without fear of being judged. The ability to listen acutely to each quartet member, both in isolation, and as a collective, enabled cohesive, improvised, ensemble playing to occur. These factors in conjunction with each member's collective understanding of the materials of music making enabled the exercise of intuitive interaction between the performers.

Chapter 5

There is evidence that the key concepts revealed in this study are demonstrated in the performances on the first recording of the quartet. These can be heard through detailed listening to the recorded works and from examination of the interviews with the participants. It should be remembered that the quartet was newly formed prior to the initial recording session, and as such the quartet did not, at this time, have an established history of performing together. The members of the ensemble all had extensive experience of playing improvised music prior to the session and all had performed over an extended period of time with the writer. Each quartet member had prior knowledge of the musical output of the others. Over the ensuing two year period, and in over thirty concert performances, the members of the quartet developed their understanding of the subtleties and idiosyncrasies of their co-performers. The resultant musical output in the second recording was therefore quite different to that displayed in the first recording session. Hence while the key concepts are evident in both recordings, the depth and scope of their expression changes over time. This is seen by comparing the concert recording from 2012, on CDs 2 and 3 with the album *1234*.

As a means of demonstrating this, a detailed examination of two recordings of the same piece, recorded two years apart, will be presented. The purpose of this is not to compare one against the other to assess which is more successful; rather it is to elucidate the different manners in which key elements can present themselves within the same ensemble, over an extended period of time.

An application of the key concepts

A central focus of the performance component of this project was to play the same basic repertoire at each concert, in order to observe any changes in the manner in which the ensemble members would interact with the same material. A limited

number of new pieces were added to the repertoire one week prior to the second recording. This was done to examine how the quartet would utilise unfamiliar repertoire, after developing musical understanding as an ensemble over the previous two years¹⁶. The following is an examination of two versions of the same piece. For the purpose of this discussion I have selected the piece *4 x 4* as it is, as previously described, a free improvisation with compositional guidelines to provide a loose structure. As such it is not restricted by predetermined harmony, melody or form.

The first recording of this piece has been briefly described in Chapter 3. The same description will be used in this section, with some additions to provide more detail. There will then be an examination of the second recording of the piece. It is recommended that the reader listen to both versions of this piece prior to reading the accompanying narrative, in order to provide an aural perspective to the two musical events.

The first recorded version of *4 x 4* is track 6 from the 2010 CD recording. The score to this piece consists of written instructions as outlined in figure 8, on page 45 of this study. The performance guidelines list the order of the unaccompanied solos from each ensemble member, which then lead into a collective improvisation, followed by a gradual dropout until only the bass remains to conclude the piece. Aspects of the guidelines for this piece have evolved over the course of the study. Two of these changes are that the order of the unaccompanied solos became less important and the manner in which the piece concluded was no longer predetermined. Development of the higher-level key concepts is seen as a prime contributing factor to this.

Both performances utilised the same basic guidelines in that all players were free to play whatever they wished within the parameters of the chart, and it was hoped that each person's solo improvisation would inspire/inform the next, until the quartet would eventually improvise collectively. The ensemble had performed this piece many times between the two recorded versions presented here, and as such it could be considered that certain playing conventions had developed over time. It is the writer's opinion that rather than specific musical events developing across multiple

¹⁶ Refer to Chapter 4 for a detailed examination of a new piece: *When I Grow Too Old to Dream*

performances of the piece, levels of trust and respect, in conjunction with the presence of the other key concepts, enabled intuitive music making to occur. This empowered the quartet members to take more musical risks with knowledge that their co-performers would respect all musical decisions made. This enhanced the ensemble's ability to explore the intuitive aspect of performance.

The first recording of the piece began with a piano solo in which several unconventional techniques, such as playing inside the piano, muting strings and using found objects to strike the strings were used. Hopkins combined these techniques with the use of musical space in conjunction with no specific tempo or time signature. The textural mood established here was continued into the drum solo, which began at 1:34. The opening statement of Browne's solo appeared to be a continuation of the final phrases played by Hopkins, with the use of similar rhythmic devices and timbral colours. Although not identical, there is logical musical development through this transition point. The drum solo built in intensity, with the gradual introduction of cymbals and variation across the drum kit. Through the use of increased note density and dynamics from here, he continued to explore textural variation throughout.

The guitar commenced playing at 2:42, with the initial effect of provision of additional colour to the drum solo. This quickly transformed to Magnusson taking the lead role, with Browne fading after approximately twenty seconds. This enabled Magnusson to establish a different mood to that experienced previously. Various effect pedals and alternate picking techniques were employed in this section, with the result being a calm, open soundscape which texturally contrasted with the previous solo. There was a feeling of a slow underlying pulse throughout this solo, which had a continuity of mood. The guitar solo concluded at 4:14 at which point the bass solo commenced with a sense of urgency. This feeling built over a thirty second period, until the guitar, drums and piano re-entered for the group improvisation section. By this point the author had established a medium tempo 4/4 feel, around which the other ensemble members played syncopated notes that quickly transitioned into free rhythmic and melodic statements, around defined rhythm from the bass. The tempo and intensity of the bass line changed throughout but the overall character of the line remained

constant. The high level of intensity continued until 6:30, by which time all instruments except the bass had stopped playing. The piece concluded shortly after.

The second version of 4x4 is from the recording of September 20, 2012 and the same basic information was presented to the quartet, as demonstrated in figure 8, on page 45 of this study. The piece can be found at track 2 of Set 1 of that particular recording (CD 2). This version, like the first, commenced with Hopkins performing a piano solo. This solo contrasted with that in the first recording from the outset. Hopkins' opening passage was in tempo, with no use of extended techniques such as those demonstrated in the first recording. There was an edgy quality about this performance, with swinging lines and a sense of form, albeit abstract in nature. From 0:34 until the end of the solo, Browne can be heard to play bass drum notes as accompaniment to the piano. There was spontaneous interaction between the two players from this point, with a transition in which Browne's bass drum became more prominent, from 1:26 until 1:43. From here the piano phrasing became much more sparse, until the drums were left alone at approximately 1:56. The transition from the piano solo to the drum solo contrasts with that of the first recording. In the first recording Hopkins' solo was completely unaccompanied, with a gap in time prior to the commencement of the drum solo. As such there was no interplay between the two musicians. Although lack of interplay in the first recording does not suggest that the players at that time lacked any aspect of the previously identified key concepts, it does indicate that by the second recording the players had become more likely to take musical risks in a group sense. There was no suggestion from either player that the other's, or indeed their own musical contribution was not valid and respected. Both felt free to make bold musical statements and the interplay and ensuing transition into the drum solo were both successful. This suggests that trust and respect has developed over the two years as the quartet members have become more familiar with each other's musical contributions.

The mood established in the piano solo continued through to the drum feature, with forceful rhythmic play and a strong sense of forward motion from the outset. At 2:45 Browne established an ostinato pattern that continued until the end of his solo. There was a diminuendo from the drums throughout the repetitive pattern, which implied

that the solo was reaching a natural conclusion. As with the first recording, Magnusson entered towards the end of the drum solo, at 2:56 by texturally adding to the drum pattern. Browne continuing to play for a further 11 seconds, by which point the guitar feature was firmly established.

This guitar solo contrasted with the soundscape presented in the first recording in that its focus was melodic invention, which transformed to movement within a harmonic framework around the tonality of F Major. Magnusson's solo ended on the tonic chord of this key at 4:37. A bass solo immediately commenced with the author utilising the low F note of the double bass as a pivot point for the beginning of his solo.

The bass improvisation moved away from the initial pivot note, at 5:06, to an open string E note, which is the lowest note on the double bass. This helped to facilitate melodic invention across the range of the instrument and maintain the pedal note at the same time. The author momentarily moved away from the pivot note as a means to develop other melodic content, but soon re-established a new tonal centre of D Major at 5:53. A D pedal note was quickly put in place and played with an obvious rhythmic drive. This served as an aural cue for other ensemble members to re-enter and commence the group improvisation section of the piece. Browne entered soon after, at 6:19, with subtle brush playing that provided support for the bass groove. Magnusson then entered at 6:21 and the aural connection between the players was immediate, further suggesting that the higher-level key concepts had developed noticeably over the previous two years. Hopkins then entered by striking the strings of the piano at 6:29, with this entry both adding to the mood that had earlier been established by the author, and providing additional drive to the collective improvisation. The development of the ensemble improvisation was significantly longer than that in the first recording and contained two distinct sections.

The first, between 6:29 (at which time all participants were playing) and 8:05 was based around a repetitive even eighth note pattern, which was developed by the bassist. Each player contributed with complementary phrases and use of space. At no point in this section was any individual ensemble member featuring as a soloist, but clearly structured collective improvisation was evident throughout.

The second section, from 8:05 until the end of the piece, contrasted with the first. All players started to play in a loose, conversational manner. There was not a feeling of sustained groove from the ensemble, with each member contributing when they felt it appropriate to do so. The playing here was intuitive in nature and typified the group's development of the key concepts, both as individuals and as a collective, over the past two years. Trust and Respect were evident in that each musician felt free to play bold statements in the knowledge they would be supported and encouraged to continue. There was also evidence of the presence of Aural and Visual Awareness, in that the music at all times sounded cohesive. Advanced technical skills in addition to highly developed melodic, rhythmic and harmonic invention from all players demonstrated the presence of the key concept of Materials. The combination of all of these factors assisted in providing an environment where intuitive music making could occur.

The piece ended in an organised manner, with the drums, bass and guitar finishing together five seconds prior to the end of the piece, which allowed Hopkins to play an unaccompanied final phrase to bring the piece to a conclusion.

The quartet members were interviewed approximately four months after the second recording and each reflected on the higher-level concepts and their application to the creative process within this ensemble.

Browne reflected on the manner in which the quartet develops collective, collaborative improvisation through a shared respect of each other's co-performers,

When I think of your quartet I think of everyone there being interested in the ensemble rather than themselves so much, and that's reflected in the music. (Interview with the author, 2012)

Magnusson spoke of the development of connection within the quartet over a two-year period. The development is seen as being a result of development of the key elements,

we were gonna (sic) talk about this packet of chocolate [picks up chocolate] but in the mean time we got distracted and we

ended up talking about this plectrum [picks up plectrum], and it doesn't matter...conversations can go off in different linear kind of dimensions, you know, music can do the same. That's what this is, and that's what I reckon we've found the last season that we've done more so than we've had previous....we all went 'oh my God', this is somewhere new, as players, it could go anywhere and every week was different... (Interview with the author, 2012)

Hopkins discussed trust as a process that should be allowed to unfold. This is seen as significant to the improvising musician's development towards utilising the higher-level key concepts,

Rather than trusting yourself, its trusting the process...when I was talking about judgment, a lot of that can be in your own head, judging yourself...you have to trust that that process is going to unfold and its going to be ok, and you've got to get rid of those voices in your head that say that this going to be a disaster. So a lot of your job is actually keeping that at bay and trusting that it is going to be alright. (Interview with the author, 2012)

Through examination of the recorded works, in conjunction with the expert opinion of the participants and available relevant literature, it can be seen that attainment of the higher-level concepts does facilitate an environment in which optimum levels of creative, collaborative improvisations can occur. It has further been demonstrated that musical connection through the key concepts, has developed over time within the ensemble. It is apparent from the first recording of the quartet that each player had already developed their ability to bring the higher-level key concepts to the fore. The second recording provides examples of further development of the key concepts, such that the players felt comfortable to take more musical risks than they had done so previously. Responses to interview questions from the participants support this theory.

Findings from this study can be developed to inform how musicians approach the manner in which they perform in a group sense. It is the writer's opinion that initial awareness of the key concepts followed by a deliberate, conscious approach to fostering and developing these, as part of the student musician's growth, will enable such connection to become more commonplace.

Conclusion

The initial focus of this study was to investigate the manner in which an ensemble could develop complex musical statements by utilising simple tunes as a basis for improvisation. It became apparent during the recordings and confirmed by analysis and the participant interviews that there were fundamental factors that were precursors for this process. These factors enabled members of an ensemble to connect, in a musical sense, at a different level than had previously been considered. The causative factors for achieving musical connection became the central focus of the study. Identification of these factors along with an investigation into conditions required to establish and develop them form much of the investigation in this work.

Consequently, this study seeks to demonstrate that the musical development of the performing musician needs to extend beyond the expected norm of simply learning foundational elements. The acquisition of the key concept of Music Materials is essential for developing the other higher-level key concepts. Aural and Visual Awareness and the more transcendental concepts of Trust and Respect, and Intuition are imperative components of creatively mature music making.

Improvised music can be, and indeed is, often performed in ensembles where the higher-level concepts have not been developed by their participants. Teaching and learning methods that do not adequately address the key concepts discussed in this study also exacerbate the problems that are created by this. The resultant musical output is often lacking in artistic depth.

There is a dearth of literature that deals with these higher-level concepts as they apply to collective improvised music performance, or indeed, any music performance. Similarly, these important aspects of ensemble performance are rarely, if ever, considered beyond a superficial level with regard to formal music education. Generally the student musician learns the mechanics of instrumental technique, along with improvisation skills such as chord/scale relationships, for example, in isolation. Pre-recorded accompaniment, or play-along recordings are often used to practice

these aspects of performance. The isolated atmosphere created with this type of practice often leads to performances in which participants sound detached from one another, particularly if the player(s) do not have an awareness and developed sense of the higher-level concepts. As such development of the higher-level concepts as outlined in this study is seen as crucial in the musical development of the improvising musician.

The hierarchical system of development of the key concepts has been found to be of significance, because higher-level concepts cannot be fully realised without prior development of the lower-level concepts. Some development, or at least understanding of the higher-level concepts can commence early in a musician's playing life, through nurturing an environment in which trust and respect for co-performers, within the sense outlined in this study, for example, can exist. This can be achieved as part of a musician's formal training, by including methods for achieving higher levels of aural awareness, trust and respect and intuitive abilities into the wider body of learning.

It has also been proposed that the acquisition of the key concepts is not entirely linear. Lifelong development of the lower level concept of Materials is a requirement of the improvising musician. Development of this concept, on a continuing basis, informs the higher level concepts such that they too continue to develop. In essence, the acquisition of all concepts is linear in the first instance but reverts to cyclical once intuitive, collaborative improvised music is achievable. It is also important to recognise that all members of an ensemble are required to develop each of these concepts, in order for the group to be able to perform at maximum potential, and that in ensembles where this is not the case, maximum potential is rarely, if ever, achieved.

I have attempted to demonstrate that in order to achieve musical connection between players, every aspect of improvised music creation should be internalized, such that it is indeed sub-conscious. This eliminates potential conflict of focus for the performer. The requirement of factors such as conscious monitoring of other musicians or being aware of the song form, for example, while commonly utilized by many musicians, does not enable the improvising musician to perform with the maximum creative focus possible. If the musician is able to internalize these (and

other) components, the resultant musical output should also be more cohesive.

This study has also suggested that the manner in which the modern improvising musician often learns their craft is in contrast to the manner in which they most often perform. That is to say that musicians frequently practice in isolation, acquiring knowledge and necessary skills to better their abilities to perform improvised music, yet the music making almost always occurs as a collective. There can be some benefits gained from formal and informal ensemble study, but insight into the key concepts, particularly those hierarchically higher than the concept of Materials are rarely incorporated in curricula beyond a superficial level. Much of the pedagogy tends also to focus on the lower level key concept. It is hoped that this research will assist in bringing attention to the key concepts with regard to the development and education of the professional musician.

The impetus for this research has been improvised music performance, and as such the central focus has been the development of the quartet, and the manner in which musical connection is found. Previously mentioned CD reviews and major peer assessed awards, such as the 2012 Australian Jazz Bell Award and APRA Art Music Award, have supported the observed musical connection within the quartet and the presence of the operation of the key concepts.

The higher level key concepts of Intuition, Trust and Respect and Aural and Visual Awareness are demonstrated in both recorded performances. Ensemble members' understanding of the Materials of Music making is evident through listening to the recorded works. It has become apparent that the higher-end concepts, particularly that of Intuition, have developed significantly within the group. Although the concept of Trust and Respect was present from the initial recording, the further development of familiarity with co-performers physical and aural idiosyncrasies (elements of the concept of Aural and Visual Awareness), through concert performances, has enabled more intuitive performances to occur. The key concepts are in a state of constant flux, supporting each other in the development of the improvising musician's abilities to perform collaborative improvised music. A significant consequence of the continued development of the concept of Trust and Respect, is that the quartet members were all prepared to take risks in performance, without fear of judgement. All players felt

assured that they were able to make bold musical statements with the complete support of their colleagues.

The interviews with the ensemble members have demonstrated that significant development of the key concepts has occurred over the two-year period between the recordings. It should also be noted that there have been many concert performances within this period, in which higher-level connection between players has developed. This is confirmed in the interviews conducted for this study.

The manner in which the ensemble develops musical ideas as a collective is seen as significant. It is believed that if the hierarchically lower key concepts of Materials and Aural and Visual Awareness have not been realised, the higher-level concept of Trust and Respect likewise, cannot be easily attained. Development of all key concepts enables the performer to remove the need to consciously think about any aspect of music making during performance. Intuition is able then to be utilised, through the combination of all other key concepts. Through the examination of fully realised ensemble performances and subsequent interviews with the participants, it can be seen that successful, satisfying improvisations occur when the key concepts have been developed by the individuals within an ensemble. Although the higher level key concepts have been unconsciously attained within this particular ensemble, it is proposed that all key concepts, through individual effort, could be developed consciously, as part of a long term, focused practice regime. These attributes, like the lower level key concept of Materials, should be internalised so that they eventually become subconscious.

The quartet will continue to perform and record. This will enable the writer to further explore the concepts raised in this study through further research. Of interest will be development of the higher-level key concepts over an extended period of time, and their impact on the perceived success of the group's improvisations. It is hoped that the outcomes of this research could be made available to educators and students of music as a means to promote and encourage different approaches to ensemble learning. It is hoped that this will further develop ensemble performance outcomes and in turn, more satisfying improvisations from both ensembles and individuals.

Appendix 1

List of Recordings

CD 1: Nick Haywood Quartet 1234

Recording Date: November 26, 2010

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. G.P. [Nick Haywood] | 6:10 |
| 2. The Moon's a Harsh Mistress [Jimmy Webb] | 9:30 |
| 3. Tahdon [Jukka Perko] | 6:36 |
| 4. Round Trip [Ornette Coleman] | 9:17 |
| 5. Detention River [Nick Haywood] | 7:50 |
| 6. 4 x 4 [Haywood, Magnusson, Hopkins, Browne] | 6:43 |
| 7. Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain [Fred Rose] | 11:41 |
| 8. Slow Tune [Nick Haywood] | 5:24 |

CD 2: Live at Bennett's Lane Jazz Club, Melbourne, Australia. Set 1

Recording Date: September 20, 2012

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Golden Earrings [Young & Evans] | 10:09 |
| 2. 4 x 4 [Haywood, Magnusson, Hopkins, Browne] | 10:43 |
| 3. The Moon's a Harsh Mistress [Jimmy Webb] | 12:37 |
| 4. Round Trip [Ornette Coleman] | 10:34 |

CD 3: Live at Bennett's Lane Jazz Club, Melbourne, Australia. Set 2

Recording Date: September 20, 2012

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain [Fred Rose] | 10:27 |
| 2. When I Grow Too Old to Dream [Romberg & Hammerstein] | 16:21 |
| 3. Mad Arse Blues [Nick Haywood] | 13:27 |
| 4. Tahdon [Jukka Perko] | 8:31 |

DVD 1

Recital performance at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.
Recorded on October 12, 2011.

DVD 2

Recital performance at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.
Recorded on September 1, 2012.

Appendix 2

CURRICULUM VITAE – Nick Haywood

Over the past thirty years Nick Haywood has become one of the most in demand bassists and educators on the Australian music scene. He has impressive performance and recording credits with both Australian and international artists.

Selected Australian Performance Credits

Tony Gould	John Sangster	Ted Vining
Allan Browne	Paul Grabowsky	Bob Sedergrreen
Don Burrows	Mark Isaacs	Jump Monk
James Morrison	Tiddas	Brazzjazz
Joe Camilleri	Vince Jones	Bobby Gebert
The Black Sorrows	Shelley Scown	Bennett's Lane Big Band
Deborah Conway	Wilbur Wilde	
Tim Stevens	Bernie McGann	Dale Barlow
		Mistaken Identity

Selected International Performance Credits

Mark Murphy	Gerry Bergonzi	Salvatore Bonafede
Billy Harper	Junior Cook	Jack Parnell
Malcolm Pinsen	Andrew Stermann	Mickey Tucker
Nat Adderley	Buddy Greco	Olavi Olouhvira
Louie Bellson	Claire Martin	Kelavi Olouhvira
Joe Williams	Bobby Shew	Mirko Guerrini
Buddy de Franco	Pete Christlieb	
George Chisholm	Valeri Ponamarev	
Kenny Kirkland	Bob Gullotti	

Haywood has been a featured artist on approximately 100 CD's.

Selected Discography

Nick Haywood Quartet	1,2,3,4 (Jazzhead 2011)
Mistaken Identity	Live (Newmarket, 2010)
Browne Haywood Stevens	King, Dude, Dunce (Newmarket, 1996)
Browne Haywood Stevens	Sudden in a Shaft of Sunlight (Newmarket, 1998)
The Black Sorrows	New Craze (Mushroom Records, 1997)
The Black Sorrows	Beat Club (Mushroom Records, 1998)
Peter Petrucci Trio	Message from the Past (Move, 1998)
Peter Petrucci Quartet	Nowhere to be Found (Jazzplay, 2007)
Tiddas	Tiddas (Mushroom Records, 1997)
Chris Young Project	Brood Groove (Move Records, 2011)
Lewis and Young Quartet	Desert Storm (Mushroom Records, 1992)
Hayden Jones	Whisper Not (Newmarket, 1997)
The York Quintet	A Prayer for the Workin' Cats (Out to Lunch, 1993)
Jane Clifton	Incommunicado (Mushroom Records, 1995)
Martin Breeze	Strangers (Newmarket, 1999)
Dodge	Offline (Jazzhead, 2000)
Blow	Live at Bennett's Lane (Newmarket, 2002)
Robert Burke Quartet	Live at Bennett's Lane (Jazzhead 2011)
Robert Burke Quartet	Wide Eyed (Jazzhead, 2003)
Robert Burke Quartet	The Edge of Today (Jazzhead, 2005)
Allan Browne	Collected Works (Newmarket, 2002)

Allan Browne Quintet	Cyclosporin (Jazzhead, 2004)
Allan Browne Quintet	The Drunken Boat (Jazzhead, 2007)
Allan Browne Quintet	A season in Hell (Jazzhead 2010)
Allan Browne Sextet	The Conjurer (Jazzhead, 2012)
Mark Lockett	About Time (Move, 2004)
Gemma Turvey Trio	Into the Life of Things (2008)
Jennifer Levy	Polygot Riddum (2009)

Career Highlights

In 2012 Nick Haywood was the recipient of the Australian Jazz “Bell” Award for Best Australian Contemporary Jazz Album. He was also the recipient of the APRA Art Music State Award, which was awarded for excellence in Jazz.

He was nominated for two ARIA awards at the 1999 ARIAs, these being Browne-Haywood-Stevens “Sudden in a Shaft of Sunlight” (Best Jazz Recording) and The Black Sorrows “Beat Club” (Best Adult Contemporary).

Haywood has performed at every major festival in Australia including Montsalvat Jazz Festival, Wangaratta Festival of Jazz and Blues, East Coast Blues & Roots Festival (Byron Bay), York Jazz Festival (W.A.), Pinnacles Festival of Improvised Music (QLD), Manly Jazz Festival, Melbourne International Festival.

Nick Haywood has performed at festivals in China, Switzerland, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Hong Kong. He has also performed to enthusiastic audiences at several New York, Paris, Hong Kong and Beijing jazz clubs.

He has countless television, film score and advertising credits.

In May 2002 Haywood recorded Don Banks’ “Nexus” and “Equations” for Jazz Quintet and symphony orchestra at ABC Southbank.

In September/October of 2002 Haywood successfully toured Europe with the contemporary jazz ensemble Blow, receiving excellent responses and favourable reviews for all performances.

In 2003 Nick Haywood was invited to participate in an anniversary concert of John Sangster's "Lord of the Rings" at the Malvern Town Hall, featuring many of the artists from the original recording.

In 2004 Haywood was the recipient of the Alan C. Rose Memorial Project Grant, which enabled him to study in New York City with world-renowned bassists Gary Peacock and Rufus Reid.

He completed a Master of Music Performance degree in 2004 at the Victorian College of the Arts.

In October 2005, Haywood performed a concert to rave reviews with Andrew Sterman of the Philip Glass Ensemble.

He continues to perform at major festivals throughout Australia and internationally on a regular basis.

Educational Experience

Nick Haywood is currently Senior Lecturer in Contemporary Music and Co-ordinator of Contemporary Music at the University of Tasmania, Conservatorium of Music.

Nick Haywood was Foundation Head of Music Higher Education and Senior Lecturer for the Bachelor of Australian Popular Music degree at Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE from 1996 -2011. He also teaches privately, and conducts master classes at various festivals and institutions both around Australia and internationally.

In 2005 Haywood established and delivered a ten-week music program at the Beijing MIDI School of Music, in conjunction with NMIT. Several modules of NMIT's Advanced Diploma in Music Performance were adapted and delivered at the MIDI School.

During his time in Beijing Nick Haywood had several performances at jazz clubs in

Beijing as well as headlining the inaugural Beijing MIDI Jazz Festival.

He has worked as a guest lecturer and post-graduate supervisor at the Victorian College of the Arts and Monash University.

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