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Chapter 1.What is improvisation?

The most general explanation of the term improvisation says that it is an activity of making or creating without preparation, at the moment of performance. Here, I shall bring several definitions of this term - or rather phenomena and practices – written by specialists from various fields and styles of music.

Let's see, in a little more detail, what the term "improvisation" includes.

According to Derek Bailey[1], improvisation has the rare property of being, on the one hand, the most widespread form of musical activity, which, on the other hand, is the least appreciated, recognized and understood. Improvisation plays a very important role in all areas of music, but there is (with rare exceptions) almost no information material about it. The reason for this is probably in its nature; it is in constant development, it is unstable, elusive and in fact "unwritten." In every period, including our own, attitudes towards improvisation ranged from enthusiasm to opinions that consider this activity to be something significantly less valuable than a written composition, almost a cheap (circus or magician) trick bordering on vulgarity.

Cesar Bresgen, in his book *Die Improvisation in der Musik*[2] talking about improvisation in music in general says that the term improvisation is often described in historical treatises. As early as the 13th century we find "*proferre discantum ex improvise*" (in free translation "to create the upper voices without preparation"), as opposed to "*component*" (composing, writing), also (around 1470) *super librum canere* or *cantare sul libro* "singing over a book, i.e. singing over a written voice"; *Contrapunto alla mente* (1614), i.e. a (contrapuntal) melody that is added from memory (better: from 'spirit') to an already existing melody. It is a common use and today it is said: "Something will come to my mind" (Italian, "*passare per la mente*" = to think).

> Improvisation in the true sense means simultaneously inventing and performing music without obvious immediate preparation ... It will therefore contribute to the affirmation of creative imagination, through understanding certain phenomena and musical styles, which has become one of the trends of the 20th century. It can be described as a comprehensive medium of musical activity, music education as the real *movens* - the mover - of music.[3]

Bresgen (just like some Renaissance theorists), however, points to the dangers that “lurk” on improvisers; solo improvisation without a basic concept, some frameworks and meaning always remains unsatisfactory - group improvisation, if left to chance, or to the will of the individual, could result in complete chaos.

Where are the boundaries between composing and improvising? Given that their origins are common, in many cases it is very difficult to draw a clear line between composition (artwork) and improvisation (spontaneous form). Bresgen quotes the German contemporary composer Karl Stockhausen, who believed that in an improvised work should be realized "statistical in dynamic, aimless in targeted", a requirement that is contrary to the concept of creation (composition) of classical epochs. Another German composer of the 20th century, Paul Hindemith, makes a clear distinction between a master (composer) who tirelessly processes material to its highest possible density, to its most convincing form, and ultimately shapes it into a work of art and improvising layman or (professional) musician trying, motivated by a special mental stimulus or inspired by favourable circumstances - instrumental or vocal - to find the best possible spontaneous expression.

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[1] British guitarist, one of most important representative of the so called “free improvisation” and author of the book *Improvisation, Its Nature and Practice In Music*, Da Capo, 1980

[2] Published by Heinrichshofen Verlag, Wilhelmshaven, 1983, in the series Musikpädagogische Bibliothek, vol. 27.

[3] Bresgen, ibid.

Let's see, just briefly and very generally (we will deal with improvisation in jazz later, ...) what German jazz-player and pedagogue Sigi Busch says about improvisation.[4]

In the introduction to his book, he cites various definitions of improvisation in music according to which it is: making music without preparation, ornamenting a melody[5], ad hoc inventing the voice "against", creating a cadence, ex tempore composing, simultaneously creating a musical idea, practical realization and immediate reception by the audience, simultaneous design and performance of music, without preparation and usually without written processing (composition). Improvisation is the basic and most important element in jazz.

According to Sigi Busch, to improvise means:

> ... to express oneself spontaneously on an instrument free from the requirements of a notated musical text, pouring music "out of the sleeve", the degree that precedes composing, the realization of new musical thoughts, free musical fantasizing; from this developed the musical form of *fantasia*, the realization of one's own tonal and melodic idea, *ad hoc* composing, reciting, singing without prior practice or preparation, the art of performing music without the music being memorized or read from score, free choice of tones within mandatory or self-imposed rules, a dynamic principle for spontaneous and imaginative performance of music.

In describing various forms of improvisation, Bailey uses the terms “idiomatic” and “non-idiomatic”; for him, idiomatic improvisation is that in jazz, flamenco, baroque and the like (earlier music naturally includes that), and non-idiomatic (which we are not really interested in ...), for example, completely "free improvisation."

1.1 D. Bailey: Improvisation in the Music of Eastern Cultures - India[6]

In his series of broadcasts on the BBC, Bailey gave the opportunity to the Indian musician Viram Jasani (*sitar* and *tabla*) to present Indian music - the following are the most important excerpts from that interview:

> When we begin the performance of a *Raga*, we proceed very leisurely at first. We play what is called the *Alapa*. The purpose of the *Alapa* is to explore the melodic possibilities of this *Raga*, which has nothing to do with rhythm or style yet. First, we establish the tonic note... This can be done either by a drone or by playing a phrase from below towards the tonic note... Then the improvisation moves to the lower register... And here, indeed, we apply a simple mathematical procedure. But not all possible combinations are allowed. One has to decide which ones are permissible, which ones to play, and how to play them. Now, we pick out a note... concentrate on this one note... And in this way, we work our way up the scale. The whole thing is repeated against the background of a regular pulse, which here, on the *sitar*, is plucked on the drone strings... Focusing on this note... I build my phrases around this note, centering them on this note... And thus, one highlights each note of the scale by improvising around each individual note as we ascend the scale. That's why it takes so much time to produce a - possibly - good performance. So far, everything has happened without any

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[4] Busch, Sigi: *Improvisation im Jazz*, Ein dynamisches System, Advance Music, 1996.

[5] Let us recall here the role of diminution in Renaissance and Baroque music.

[6] The reason why I devoted so much space to Indian music is at least the theoretical possibility that, as typical or average Western musicians wishing to reconstruct or revive something from our own musical heritage, we can find some ideas and inspiration in it (Indian music) on how to apply it conceptually (but of course not literally) in another, our own, idiom. At the time I started working on Croatian version of this study, I did not yet knew that in early 2021, I would decide to fulfill one of my long-standing dreams - to acquire and learn to play the Indian bowed instrument *sarangi* in just three months....

> rhythm. Then when the percussion come in - and this is the point where the improvisation may slow down a bit, where you come to a definitive composition -, you can either invent your own piece, or you play a traditional melody from your stylistic range, perhaps one that your teacher (*guru*) is famous for. This melody has a specific duration and a focal point that corresponds to the focal point of the rhythmic cycle. And we both meet at this point... And while I repeat my melody over and over again, I maintain the rhythmic cycle, thus giving the *tabla* player the opportunity to freely improvise without abandoning the rhythmic cycle. For example, right now he is improvising, and when he comes back and finishes his improvisation on the same focal point... he maintains the rhythmic cycle, and I can freely improvise. And so we take turns. Here, one tends to play ever faster turns, while the overall atmosphere becomes ever calmer, which may seem contradictory. But Indian music is like that: full of contradictions - I can't change it."

Alain Daniélou (French Indologist, musicologist and author) writes about the traditional method of teaching in Southeast Asia and says:

> With this form of personal teaching, artistic training precedes technical training. The student is in constant contact with a fully open work of art and always has a goal that he should finally achieve; the content and form of music are never separated from each other.

According to Bailey, improvisation is learned by chance or through a chain of controlled coincidences, by a method of trial and error ... Improvisation is a very practical thing - there is no purely theoretical side to improvisation. During the learning process, people who try to "learn" to improvise best gain insight and gain experience of how improvisation works through a series of mistakes and some success along the way. In Indian music, there is a long and complex teacher-student relationship; it is the only methodology that justifies this characteristic of improvisation.

(DB) I asked Viram Jasani to describe his teacher's method in more detail and asked him if he could remember his first attempts at improvisation.

> It is difficult to specify an exact moment when one begins to improvise. It happens in such a way that your teacher, when he wants to teach you a specific *Raga*, doesn't tell you: 'The tonal structure of this *Raga* is constructed in the following way, and these are the tones used in it,' but he plays for you and lets you listen, and perhaps he asks you to imitate certain phrases. And gradually, after listening to him several times, you develop a sense for this *Raga*. You don't even need to know its name, but over time, you develop a sense for it and can immediately recognize it when it's played by another musician or by your teacher again. So, you start playing such phrases, and eventually, you reach the stage where you're not just repeating the phrases your teacher taught you, but you begin to introduce your own phrases into this *Raga*. And you involuntarily notice when you're playing something that doesn't belong in the context and is out of place. In other words, when learning a *Raga*, you're learning something extremely complex; you don't learn a *Raga* based on its set of tones.
>
> Since, if you will, we are learning a musical language[7], it is only natural that at some point we invent our own phrases and develop our own conception of performing a *Raga*.
>
> Our music is an extremely intuitive music, one learns intuitively, the sense for a *Raga* is acquired intuitively.

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[7] It is interesting to compare this with what Rob C. Wegman says about similarities between learning how to improvise and learning a new language, **Ch.4, pp.25-29 (now…).**

According to Bailey, a common feature of most music with an improvisational tradition is the absence of an accurate notation system. He quotes Curt Sachs (from *The Wellsprings of Music*):

> Music without notation is not limited to societies that did not have an alphabet. Lot of ancient music was designed by priests only for priests and cantors, and some were even kept secret. While notation had its place in sacred music to prevent contemporaries and future generations to violate sacred traditions, secular music was based on free invention and memory, in both Western and Eastern cultures. Only under the pressure of developed polyphony does musical notation become necessary.

The only "notation" in Indian music is to be found in books on music theory (which is perceived as something completely independent of music practice; one rarely touches the other). The lessons are therefore based solely on hearing, impressions and personal mediation.

> Improvisers of all genres and styles often talk about "their" music. This does not mean seeking copyright, but is an expression of complete identification with the music they play. Musicians embody music themselves. In India, where, as Yehudi Menuhin says, "music gradually progressed over thirty or more centuries, with the steady pulse of one river and the steady growth of one redwood," the continuity and development of music were excellently preserved in the hands of improvising artists.[8]

1.2.Improvisation in the traditional folklore of Croatia, especially in its coastal part of Istria and Dalmatia[9]:

Here I wanted briefly to mention the transcriptions of several Croatian ethnomusicologists who, starting in the late fifties and sixties, for many years have been doing extremely important and valuable research and field-recordings. Due to their work a huge amount of sound and other material has been saved which in most cases is extremely important and the only valuable document of their time. Not only that old narrators, singers and instrumentalist (who even today are almost always - as in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance - makers of their own instruments) died but also the taste and thus the style of performance of dances and their accompaniment sometimes change and - unfortunately but inevitably - "modernizes."

That's why everything I am talking about here applies to the performances and the role improvisation had there, from that time, i.e. half century ago.

In every traditional (real peasant, folk, and even the so-called "urban") music, the musicians almost as a rule do not know the notes of music[10] and because of that, in every performance without problems and a lot of thinking, could spontaneously play at least a little bit differently.

This is true, for example, of the dances of Istria and Kvarner, or the entire Croatian coast - both along the coast and on the islands.

Naturally, in the case of dances the basic rhythmic formulas, their duration and the order of their repetition must remain the same because otherwise they would inevitably confuse and throw the

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[8] In today's classical music of India, it is not uncommon for musicians to represent the tenth or more generation of musicians of their family. In the 90s I had the honor of performing and recording with outstanding musicians, the Maharaj brothers from Benares (*sarod* and *tabla*), who represented the 15th generation of musicians of their family! In the meantime, the 15th and 16th generations of that family are performing very successfully together - see on YouTube under "Maharaj Trio".
[9] See Musical Examples A I-1 to I-3.
[10] Unlike those who play in city wind bands.

dancers out of rhythm. But around these "solid" motifs, modules, musicians (soloists, in the case of bagpipes, *mišnjice* or *mih*, or two or more musicians, in the case of winds, *roženice* or *sopile*[11] or bowed strings *gunci*) add new, different, ornaments every time and through that their performances are always freshly new. There are also cases (just like in flamenco or in Indian music) that a musician or musicians perform alone, without dancers. In that case, their performances become even freer and the role of improvisation is much bigger.

I came into the contact with this part of our rich musical heritage only in 1969 in the small Istrian town of Grožnjan[12]. That first contact (and those that will follow and my own, initially very naive and uncertain, practical "steps") impressed me so much that I already then tried to imagine some kind of "Croatian" improvisation, based on our ancient traditional folklore.

What we consider today as autochthonous Istrian traditional music belongs to the former peasant tradition (it is interesting that the music of the Italian minority in Istria sounds quite "similar" - at least to my ethno-musicologicaly untrained ear ...) but today, partly because of tourism, partly because migrations of former peasants to cities, it can be heard in the city too. It is difficult to say what the traditional music in the Istrian cities used to be like, because wars, longer or shorter occupations and the huge exodus of Italians after the Second World War completely changed or erased this former tradition. However, Istrian traditional music and its original instruments, due to its special scale, could be "applied" to medieval music in only very "limited" quantities. For example, as independent interludes and introductions,[13] but not as an accompaniment to singing.

The only alternative would be what my late colleague Theo Tabaka[14] once tried to do in Istria, unfortunately without success. He tried to persuade one of the Istrian musicians - makers of *roženice/ sopile* to do what we could call "well-tempered" (for our "western" ear adjusted...) instrument. The maker's reaction was a complete rejection because the man could not (in fact; not wanted to) understand the reason for this action.

The situation is better with Dalmatian traditional (primarily "urban") music, because it was for many centuries (1415-1799) under the direct political, economic and cultural influence of the *Serenissima* i.e. the Republic of Venice and the Italy or Mediterranean culture in general.

Although ornamentation (especially in highest parts) has been always used in mandolin ensembles, for us is the most interesting dance- (and sometimes solo) music played on Dalmatian *lirica, lijerica* or *ljerica*. In this music meet and "intertwine" like a Croatian "*pleter*" or interlace, music of the Mediterranean[15] and some other elements that are undoubtedly of Croatian, Slavic, or even Illyrian origin.[16]

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[11] A shawm, still played in Istria and the island of Krk.

[12] In spite of the fact that at that time I was nearing the end of my studies at the Academy of Music in Zagreb, I didn't have any idea about it. But thanks to my teachers from "Studio der frühen Musik" of Munich and their leader Tom Binkley, I began to realize the richness of our musical heritage....

[13] Our Zagreb EM ensemble, Universitas Studiorum Zagrabiensis, used the combination of two sopile and mih from Istria in concerts and recordings for many years. This combination brought great success both at home and during our foreign tours in Belgium, France, Italy, Great Britain, and the former Soviet Union.

[14] The Austrian flutist, who became a naturalized citizen of Zagreb, was a pioneer of early music in Croatia and the former Yugoslavia. He was a longtime soloist of the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra and a professor at the Music Academy in Zagreb. Additionally, he was the founder and leader of Zagreb's chamber early music ensembles "Musica Antiqua" and "Collegium Musicum."

[15] Instruments of almost identical shape, sound, playing technique, and to some extent the style of performance still exist today in the Italian province of Calabria and in various places in Greece. It is also played in Bulgaria under the name Gadulka, with the addition of so-called "sympathetic" strings. It seems that all those instruments have developed from the Byzantine bowed *lyra*.

[16] I added some of my experiments with more elaborated lijerica dances in Appendix/ More Music.

In the Dalmatian hinterland, Dalmatinska Zagora, is still practised playing of *diple/ mišnjice* (a kind of simple bagpipes with mostly double chanter but no drones, existing in similar form along the coast and on the islands), a special way of singing known as *ojkanje* or singing *iz knjige/ libra,* from the book or hat, as well as the ancient tradition of singing heroic, epic songs to the accompaniment of bowed instrument *gusle*. Like the traditional music of Istria and Kvarner, playing on *lijerica, diple, ojkanje*, and *guslar's* tradition has managed to retain much of its originality. In the last case the themes of course changes, but the way of creating, singing and accompaniment remains almost the same, because *guslars* are reluctant to accept or introduce any "modernism."

About this practice and similarities it has with the so called formulaic memorising, see in the **Chapter 7 (pp.67).** It is interesting to note great similarities this "technique" has in common with the *arte della memoria* (based on learning the rhetoric of Antiquity) which continued to be practised during Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[17]

1.3.Improvisation in the rock music:

Let's go back to Derek Bailey, this time concerning the improvisation in rock music.
As he was originally an established jazz guitarist, we should not be surprised by his relatively low opinion of the (average) rock musicians ... According to him, the will to improvise is foreign to most rock musicians - their attitude and practice are closer to what we could compare with the practice of diminishing, ornamenting in Renaissance and early Baroque music.

> (DB) Their material, even if it changes very little, must be, if nothing else, flexible and open to current adjustment procedures. Because performance is never determined to the last detail, but is always subordinated to circumstances. There is no abstract ideal, nor is the standard fixed by the notation that stands above the performance and by which it is measured. If something is noted, it only serves as a starting point and guide. "It doesn't matter who wrote what, as long as it's played by the right person.[18]"

Improvisation in rock occurs relatively late, in the late sixties. In this case, Bailey decided to interview Steve Howe, guitarist of the British band "Yes", (from whom comes the above quote), about:

> > The music expanded enormously back then. There were country influences again, jazz came in - for me one of the most important aspects -, and then there was the Indian music thing. It all became a much livelier affair, where people could improvise much more freely.

> Improvisation in rock music comes almost without exception from the blues. The main role model of a musician is usually one of the African American blues players. A small part of improvisation, which does not belong to this sphere of influence, is usually of an experimental nature and comes mainly from electronic music.

> > People had understood the guitar from the blues for years, and Hendrix actually brought blues and modern rock together, but apart from this track and the experimental stuff, there's a third role, which was my primary concern. I always wanted to be a pure rock guitarist, who could do fundamental rock stuff as well as develop a few modern clichés. But I don't think everyone fits into these categories. As soon as you delve deeper, with every music, there are missing links between labeling and reality. Top-class improvisation really advances someone who sets

[17] See more about that in Chapter 6. and 7.
[18] As in the case of blues and traditional folklore, many excellent rock musicians do not master the musical notation and that does not prevent them to be extremely inspired authors - performers.

certain requirements and has a style. And I think that's what people are looking for in their improvisation.

What makes one improvisation better than another?

“In essence, a certain sense of clarity in the conception of what I'm doing. Very often, I can practically accept every improvisation I make. I've done stuff at home, just improvised, and said, 'That's excellent.' At times, I'm inspired, and I aim for something that is completely free of clichés in phrasing. Not necessarily in terms of the notes, more in terms of phrasing, - I usually use the words 'right' and 'precise' - the clarity of phrasing... - Maybe I can put it this way: The notes are right - each note has its own weight. I think that's something most people struggle for. A certain incontrovertibility. I can play endlessly, and when I record it, I believe I understand what I'm after. I'm after getting a grip on something.

There's a little bit more than I think I'm capable of, you know, and when I get a grip on that, then I'm happy. I'm trying to set a standard. I think the same applies to groups; there's a standard in improvisation, until you reach that, you just can't play well, not really together. Once you've really played well together in an improvised section, it raises the standard for the entire tour.

You mentioned earlier that you improvise on tape, listen to the tape later, and that this is an essential part of your composition method.

That's exactly how I proceed. What I usually try to do is, if you will, to blend the idea of composing and improvising together. So when I'm working on a piece, I play it and gradually drift into whatever comes to mind. And if I actually like something, I usually try to use it, ...

As soon as you start playing spontaneously, you have to come clean. I think that's the reason for the reluctance to talk about it. Someone once said, if you stare too sharply at inspiration, it disappears. And that's how it is. Intangible.

1.4. Audience or attitude towards the audience

In this regard, it will again be best to leave Bailey alone to say what he thinks about it:

The relationship between improvised music and its audience is special. The sensitivity of improvisation to the environment in which it takes place, exposes the performance completely unprotected to the influence of the audience. Escape into a routine - the ability to provide at least one standard performance regardless of the circumstances - usually has a detrimental effect on improvisation, limiting itself to the most predictable aspects of idioms or vocabulary. Applause or an expression of dissatisfaction by the audience has an immediate effect, and since it affects the artist at a crucial moment of the musical - creative process, affects not only the performance, but also the design and selection of materials used. From the exaggeration in 19th century improvised cadences to the bizarre performances of Norman Granz’s “Jazz in the Philharmonic” of the 1950s, has repeatedly shown all the dangers for the improvising musician “lurking” from the audience’s “critical” angle.

Alain Daniélou reports on the difficulties of Asian musicians working in the Western entertainment sector, and in this way describes in detail the problem that Western music such as flamenco, jazz, and now more and more so-called "free" music also must experience: "As soon as musicians notice a positive reaction from the audience, they are tempted to repeat the process [formula] that caused this reaction, which explains how the level of that music could suddenly deteriorate. The musician gradually becomes a comedian who repeats his tricks when he notices

that they are having success by the audience, and his concerts become diverse *varieté* numbers from which inspiration disappears as it turns into a desire for commercial success.[19]

However, improvising without the reaction of the environment is a contradiction. So, improvisation in front of an audience is faced with a lot of questions, but getting answers is not easy. At least one thing is certain: an audience of improvised music, be it good or bad, active or passive, benevolent or hostile, has power like no other audience and can directly influence the creative act of what they are just experiencing. And perhaps because of this possibility, the audience of improvised music has a significantly higher level of musical intimacy than any other musical situation.

> (Steve Howe:) "I think the audience has a huge contribution, but I don't know how to explain it because it's hard for me to do. I once saw myself improvising on film and was surprised by what I was doing: walking up and down, making grimaces - things I wasn't really aware of until now. And I discovered a connection between ... - As soon as you take the lead in the play, you move towards the audience. You introduce yourself to the audience, so to speak. It's like you're invited to the ramp."

Surely the improvisations you do at home look different from the ones in front of the audience?

> "That's what worries me the most ... I think what I play at home is completely incomparable to what I do on stage. Once there is an audience, there is a need to be good, and when you're at home alone, you're so relaxed that some of the best things [ideas, inspirations, inventions] come to your mind ... as soon as there's no compulsion to have to succeed."

Here Bailey moves into the field of jazz, which he himself, as an active performer, knew well and asks for the opinion Ronnie Scott, a famous (late) British saxophonist:

> "When you play that kind of music, you can't get away from the fact that there's an audience; you cannot play in a vacuum. It has to be something that is meant for someone, otherwise it doesn't have much value. You can sit in your living room and be sure you're playing fantastically, but if there's no audience, it doesn't mean anything.[20]"

Still, can you be sure you're playing fantastically?

> "Well, you might think, 'My God, my technique is good today, and I wasn't able to play it last night - something like that. But then going out in front of an audience and playing - it's a completely other thing."

I would like to return to a certain point. So you don't think it's possible to achieve top performance without an audience?

> "Someone has to be present; because I can't imagine it's worth playing in front of anyone. Even if there are just other musicians from the band you're playing for."

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[19] Any similarity with a lot of the so called "pop" music is accidental…

[20] My own experience in this regard is quite different because 17 years ago, for several reasons, I decided to cease "normal" (let's call it "direct") public activity and to start the "indirect" or virtual one. This means that when I am within my own "four walls," in my home studio, I record myself. The audience is not present, but I play for myself, keeping in mind that the best (recorded, of course) performances will be listened to by mostly unknown audiences on my YouTube channels, on SoundCloud, or on my own website. Just like in my former public appearances, improvisation (or if nothing else, ornamentation) still plays a significant role. An even more concrete step towards a "real" public appearance would be the so-called "streaming," which can be played "live" and/or broadcast later.

So it has nothing to do with the size of the audience?

"Not at all. No, it's a communicative moment that belongs to music ..."

Unlike Ronnie Scott and Steve Howe, the views of Viram Jasani are quite different:

(Viram Jasani:) "Personally, I believe that many Indian musicians show the best creative powers when they practice, [without an audience, alone] because then they are really free - they should not be afraid of the audience sitting in front of them, and in this situation they really go out and "open" themselves. … Sure, the musician will try to work hard in front of the audience, but he feels cramped. He is very careful."

1.5.Jazz music:

Of particular interest, for the reasons already mentioned above, is what Bailey says about improvisation in jazz:

Undoubtedly, the decisive impetus for reviving improvisation in 20th century Western music came from jazz. As a unique music - at a young age - of boundless vitality, jazz is today widely recognizable in both musical and sociological significance. But it did its greatest service to the Western musician by reminding him of something practically extinct in Western music: it showed him that performing music and inventing music need not be two separate activities and that instrumental improvisation can develop to the highest areas of musical expression.

The difference between conventional jazz and its variants can be most easily determined by the fact that improvisation in conventional jazz is based on melodic-harmonic themes (melodies) and their bar structure. Basically this very simple technique consists of the following; one sequence of harmonies is played according to a certain beat pattern [number of beats] in melodic lines, scales and arpeggios. This harmonic skeleton is always based on one of the popular forms of song or blues (in the strict form of twelve bars). Of course, what constitutes the essence of improvisation has very little to do with formal technique, so the description of this aspect does not give an idea of how infinitely differentiated this method can be.

... The repertoire of jazz musicians like Dexter Gordon or Lee Konitz probably includes quite a few different "songs"; but they offer enough working material for perhaps the entire life of an artist. Within the demarcated terrain, a renewal process is constantly underway in which the old material is reshaped, rearranged and occasionally withdrawn while introducing new material.[21]

"When I have an extremely good day, an hour-long show consists of only fifteen minutes of pure improvisation. That's maybe four or five minutes on average; but the very fact that something is being improvised gives the impression of free form."

This quote does not come from a musician, but from comedian Lenny Bruce, who often compared his way of working to that of a jazz musician, emphasizing the importance of introducing new material: it not only provides new material for processing, but fills everything with a breath of freedom. This procedure eliminates what is no longer useful and revives the remaining material.[22] Although the main concern is almost always the preservation of the

[21] Completely by accident this technique remembers the so-called *rifacimento* used by florentine *canterini* and some humanist *cantori ad lyram* of the Renaissance...

[22] See the previous footnote.

identity and quality of the idiom, the introduction of new material, even minimal, keeps the whole thing alive and ensures its continued existence. ...

[Ronnie Scott:]

> “When I started playing, I didn’t really know there was anything like improvisation at all. I just wanted to play the saxophone in a dance group. My sense of improvisation developed with better mastery of the instrument; I also listened to jazz soloist records and joined other musicians of my age trying to improvise. That's how it started, and I believe that development will never be completed - at least I do hope so.
>
> I believe that the possibility of improvisation in my particular case was a combination of experience - in time you realize what you can and cannot play - and intuitive listening, since I am not particularly versed in the science of harmony. But I am convinced that there are many aspects and views on improvisation, and that there are as many ways of improvisation and ways to get there as there are people. Oscar Peterson, for example, is an extremely brilliant, technically flawless musician who - I hope I won't 'stand on his feet' when I say so - puts all the fantastic things he has perfected on the table and that's really a top performance. With Sonny Rollins on the contrary - it can happen that one evening he disappoints, and the next takes your breath away because of his ingenuity, etc. With Rollins, every night is different.«

We came to the question of qualitative assessment of improvisation.

> “So there’s one difficulty for me here: you can practice for hours - I’ve never really done that, but let’s say I trained a lot for two to three weeks, went on stage - and my technique is worse than ever before; while, conversely, it can happen that you haven't touched the instrument for weeks, you go out and play [improvise] completely freely and relaxed ... - As for the initial question, how do I judge whether what I played ... - was successful, the answer is very difficult for me, because if you succeed, then the performance has practically become something unconscious, you understand what I mean; it's as if something else has the threads in its hands and you are just a mediator between that other and the instrument, and everything you receive succeeds, and even if something doesn't work properly, it doesn't seem to play a big role ... It's a certain kind of feeling that you work on - or work on unconsciously - and then when inspiration, *duende*[23] - or whatever you want to call it - a happy connection between external circumstances and your internal structure is there - then it just works. It is then a feeling; 'as it is, it must be.'
>
> I think everyone is influenced by her or his instrument as well as by other players, past or present. There is a certain attitude that you develop when you find yourself under the influence of important musicians. Then there is a danger that you will feel your performance worthless if it doesn't sound like that of your ‘great ’idol. As I got older, I gradually got rid of it, and I think it’s a good thing. It gives a lot more pleasure when you sound like yourself than like one of the great acclaimed tenor saxophonists. But there were times when I wasn’t happy if I didn’t sound like the one who set the ‘tone ’[was *in*] at the time."

[23] In Castile, *duende* or *tener duende* (to have d.) means a sublime state of emotion, expressiveness and authenticity - often in connection with flamenco. IP: my own experience coincide completely with what Scott said.

1.5.1.S. Busch, Improvisation in Jazz[24]

Jazz musicians often associate improvisation with their music to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to understand that it occurs in other types of music - even in other arts. For example, think of improvisation in dance and movement, or a combination of "step dance" - and improvisation on drums, maybe even improvisation in music therapy and music education.

As is well known, improvisation is present in both dramatic arts and dramatic education.[25] Improvisation also has a strong place in the historical development of theatre education. It also exists in poetry, for example within lyric (also in connection with jazz), in the art of storytelling, "fable-making", "ad hoc" storytelling. By film and video artists, improvisation is occasionally used as a production rule. The concept of *ex tempore* creation is known in the fine arts all the way to architecture.

Painter and musician Günter Philipp, in his interesting article "Improvisation in Music and Painting", commented on the relationship between the two arts.[26]

It seems extraordinary to me that in almost all types of art, improvisation is practiced in groups. In jazz there is an equivalent to collective improvisation, as played in older styles or in free jazz. But even with soloist improvisation, when played solo, with careful listening and watching, it is noticed that in most cases it is a special form of collective improvisation, because not only the soloist improvises, but his companions too.

Dialogue in improvisation towards outside with other arts, dialogue "inside" with the musicians involved, with the group, with the audience, it is a living and fruitful community: those are the necessary conditions for future development. The idea of dialogue must be present in learning and teaching improvisation. In this way jazz improvisation as a music system, remains exciting and sustainable.

Jazz improvisation:

-consists of several components that are interconnected and interact (structure of effects).

-has a certain order and structure.

-as a system it forms a whole that is more than the sum of its individual parts. Improvised music, in turn, is a part of a further, larger, system.[27]

1.6.Free Improvisation (*avant-garde*, contemporary music?)

As before, in cases where the original text is very clear (and my own knowledge of the subject, insufficient...) I reach for a more extensive quote, and so in the case of the so-called. "free" improvisations. I emphasize that Bailey's writing in this regard is very subjective and in some of cases I do not share his opinion completely.

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[24] Busch, Sigi: *Improvisation im Jazz*, Ein dynamisches System, Advance Music, 1996.
[25] See for instance in Chapter 3., by Domenico Pietropaolo, p.48
[26] Günter Philipp, Das Improvisatorische in Musik und Malerei, in: *Musizieren und Üben*, 4/1995, p. 14.
IP: see also in Chapter 3, pp.58-64 under L. Korrick.
[27] See Musical Examples A I-4 to I-7 Busch Fig.1 – 4.

Free improvisation, sometimes called "total" or "open improvisation" or, perhaps most often, "free music" suffers from a vague identity whence its multiple naming comes. Two common mistakes that make it difficult to recognize are the connection to experimental or *avant-garde* music. Indeed, very often they are placed in the same drawer under the motto; "it's a kind of *avant-garde*, experimental, improvised music" - which is probably in the interest of the organizers, who must learn that the only thing they have in common is the inability to attract a larger audience. But even if they share the same corner of the market, these styles are very different from each other. A free improviser can occasionally perform experiments, but the real purpose of any experiment, to test and prove a theory, is completely foreign to improvisation. Similarly, the attitude and rules of *avant-garde* or contemporary music have little in common with those that apply to improvisers. Although there was a period of contacts between avant-garde composition and some aspects of improvisation in the 1960s, the general tendency of recent [around 1980] *avant-garde* activities of all kinds towards larger and more detailed documentation led to a gap, that always seemed insurmountable to improvisers, deepen even more.

As expected, there has been innovation through improvisation, but striving to always be "at the forefront" is not common among improvisers. And as for the method, the improviser uses the oldest of all musical procedures.

The lack of precision in their determination becomes even greater when it comes to the music itself. It has no stylistic or idiomatic definition. There is no prescribed idiomatic sound. The characteristics of free improvisation derive exclusively from the sonic musical identity of those who perform it.

Looking historically, it is the oldest music - man's first musical activity could be nothing but free improvisation - and I think it is reasonable to assume that since then there has almost always been a form of music making for which the most appropriate term was: free improvisation. Indeed, its accessibility is a stumbling block for both its proponents and opponents. Free improvisation cannot be just a musical art that requires exceptional skills, but it can be practiced by almost everyone: beginners, children, non-musicians. In terms of dexterity and mental strength, it requires what is available. It can be a huge complexity and sophistication or the simplest and most direct action: the meaning of life as well as occasional amateur activity. It can please everyone and serve the musical needs of all kinds of people, and those who feel rejected by the thought that "anyone can do it" can be reassured by the fact that "no more and no less" one Albert Einstein felt improvisation as a certain emotional and intellectual necessity and need.[28]

The emergence of free improvisation as a coherent movement of the early 1960s and its continued practice could, I believe, create an abundance of sociological, philosophical, religious and political explanations, but I must leave that to those authors who have the desire and ability to do so. Perhaps I can limit myself to the assumption that the shift towards free improvisation is largely due to the breakdown of musical language. Or rather, the collapse of the "rules" that determined musical language. This was shown primarily in jazz, music in which improvisation was most practiced just at the time when free improvisation was created. And second, in the aftermath of a much earlier breakdown of musical language in European music, whose

[28] Alexander Moszkowsky reports that Einstein told him in 1919 that improvisation was one of the needs of his life. Every journey that separated him from the instrument for a while made him nostalgic for the piano, and when he returned, he stroked the keys for a long time, to get rid of the burden of sound ideas that had accumulated in him, to give them expression in improvisations. (Conversations with Einstein)

conventions had hitherto exerted an extraordinarily strong influence on all kinds of music, including most forms of improvisation, which could [yet] be found in the West.

Views on free music are numerous and of course quite different. They range from the view that such a performance is the easiest thing in the world and that it needs no explanation, to the point that it is without a doubt the most complex thing that exists. There are those who think that free improvisation is an activity that does not require any instrumental or musical skills, musical knowledge and experience, and others who believe that it can only be performed with an extremely refined, personal technique of virtuoso proportions. Some feel the appeal of its possibilities of musical community, others the possibilities of individual expression. As far as I know, there is no generally accepted view.[29]

1.7.Improvisation on the organ, organists:

As I have already mentioned (and it is certainly known to many) in the world of so-called "serious" (or very often mistakenly called, "classical"[30] music today), the only ones allowed to improvise, even more so it is expected of them, are players of church or concert organs. Given the specificity and importance of this, I give again the word to Derek Bailey, who in his book on improvisation dealt with it in detail:

According to Ferand, the ways in which the improvisation of early organists and harpsichordists manifested itself can be divided into three groups:

1.To embelish (colour, diminish, ornament) the vocal or instrumental melody of someone else's or one's own composition (numerous treatises and textbooks dealing with this art were created and printed during the 16th century)[31];

2.Polyphonic shaping of the liturgical or secular *cantus firmus* by adding counterpoint voices, as well as the continuation of given or self-invented motifs in the imitation style;

3. Free improvisation that exploits the possibilities of playing chords and passages that were the result [of the development] of instrumental technique, which led to the first autonomous forms of instrumental music (preambles, preludes, *toccatas* and *fantasie*.)[32]

Improvisation played such a central role in the development of organ music in the 17th and 18th centuries that a detailed historical treatise of this period alone would require several books (and authors). Even in the second half of the nineteenth century, in an age that otherwise neglected improvisation, there were numerous organists who were known as virtuoso improvisers.

In the 20th century, first of all concert improvisation gained new momentum and became - especially in France - a highly developed and especially esteemed discipline. ...

The main reason that improvisation survived on the organ and continued to develop further, and was completely neglected or suppressed in the rest of European art music, is certainly the special work situation of most organists, where a high degree of flexibility, practical ingenuity and musical "own production" are very important. Although there is a huge [composed] repertoire for all forms of liturgy, it is common organ practice to “do” part of their task with their own [mostly

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[29] See in the Appendix Music Examples A.I-4 to I-7.
[30] Classic, just like baroque, romantic, etc., was just one of the periods or styles of music.
[31] See later in Chapter 3.
[32] Cesar Bresgen: Frescobaldi's *Toccate per l´elevazione,* from his *Fiori musicali*, are an excellent example of a piece which, although composed and written, cannot "hide" its improvisational character.

improvised] music. Preludes, interludes and - although this is sometimes looked at critically - postludes are often improvised. Even the performance of that (huge) usual repertoire is not characterized by slavish adherence to the musical text, (as in the case of soloists on other instruments, orchestral and chamber musicians) and performers are left with a significant degree of freedom. But also the instrument itself, an organ with different constructional features and dispositions, could be a factor that favours improvisation. Even today, and in the past the situation was far more extreme, there is no one strictly defined standard type of organ. Regardless of the reasons, improvisation is today an integral and widely accepted part of the organ musician craft and has become a regular academic subject. It's hard to say what impact this has had on improvisational practice, but it can explain why organ improvisation is the only area where musicians talk - and even write - about their improvisation in a subjective way.

Organ improvisation is divided into two clearly limited areas: bound improvisation within fixed-form schemes (= compositional forms) and free improvisation, which is easy to define by the fact that it does not use solid-form models. Bound improvisation is primarily concert improvisation, while free improvisation is mostly used in the daily liturgical practice of a church musician. The latter is a formal presentation of the art of improvisation, it is its practical application in worship. At universities, the main focus is on bound improvisation, to which the vast majority of the extremely extensive literature on organ improvisation is devoted.

The essence of improvisation becomes clearer precisely in the "free" improvisation. It is usually dealt with in the context of general advices and "practical information", to which a special section is devoted in many organ schools. There is even a special branch of organ literature that deals exclusively with such practical advices and hints. These books and pamphlets appear to have been written in large number between 1910 and 1940; as a rule, they were written by experienced church musicians with "full working hours" as a handbook for their students or colleagues, and in their concentration on practical issues and problems encountered by the organist in his daily work, contain the fruits of immense improvisational experience and numerous tips, useful for any improvising musician. There are also books that focus entirely on this side of the subject, such as H. Schouten, *Improvisation on the Organ*[33] where about counterpoint (which usually stands in the focus of improvisation) is said:

> "However, this is not the last word on improvisation, because every organist is faced with improvisational tasks from Sunday to Sunday. The average organist does not need to improvise *passacaglie*, *rondos* and *scherzi*. ... However, each organist must be able to independently perform one musical phrase from the liturgy in a simple, coherent and responsible way."

Schouten's book is extremely thorough and deals with harmonic improvisation, polyphonic improvisation and improvisation of polyphonic choral prelude. The author modestly points out that his book should be viewed only as an introduction to the art of improvisation - a remark that would be good and in line with any book on the subject.

T. Carl Whitmer's manual, *The Art of Improvisation*[34], does not fall into exactly the same category of these textbooks. His approach is broader and contains a fairly detailed theoretical part. But the most important thing about this book is that it deals with improvisation without any defensive attitude. Contrary to what is common in the sector, Whitmer does not consider it necessary to defend improvisation; he sees in it not only the irreplaceable help "in distress", but considers it a musical activity of the highest category. The term "instant composition" is not

[33] H. Schouten, *Improvisation on the Organ*, London, 1955.
[34] T. C. Whitmer, *The Art of Improvisation*, New York 1934.

mentioned anywhere. Whitmer guides the student through all the usual procedures, but his method is extremely concise, and throughout the book he uses the same two-bar phrase. This practice - practicing improvisation in a limited number of tonal motifs - often proves to be extremely effective.

Whitmer writes:

> There are basically two ways of improvising. One relies on the so-called "spinning" (spinning almost always maintains the same rhythm, the same note values and the same tempo, but the motif is set at a different note pitch, similar to the sequence, and with each step it moves further and further away from [original] sound material, (which can still be easily recognized) expanding the basic idea. The second way relies on the use of a solid formal scheme."
>
> "To improvise on the basis of a formal model, it is not necessary to memorize every detail, but you must always keep in mind the plan and general character. If in doubt, use a fixed form, but experiment with free spinning until you understand: it creates a form that creates itself."

The following are some tips from Whitmer's "General Basic Principles", characterized by their determination:

> “Don’t expect a closed and completed structure. Thought must be kept up to date."
>
> "One mistake can later turn out to be unintentionally correct."
>
> "Don't worry too much about certain parts of the whole. Keep going. At first, each procedure looks awkward, difficult and "strange". This is not the last perfection; rather strive for strong driving energy "
>
> "Don't be afraid to make mistakes; beware of making your performance boring."[35]

The author also commented on the usefulness of imitating and relying on a role model - as well as the dangers involved:

> "When a student imitates his teacher, an adult is in greater danger than a child. Children are rebellious by nature and once they have a degree of self-confidence they defend their own ideas, which is rarely the case with adults."

Whitmer’s enthusiasm for uniqueness and the special musical character of improvisation is, of course, rather atypical. It is a common case that improvisation is suggested to organists only as a useful addition to their work. And as for its musical value, the prevailing opinion is that the best improvisations are those that can be compared to composing[36].

The list of famous improvisers in the music usually reads: "Bach, Beethoven, Vogler, Mozart, Paganini, Chopin, Liszt, Widor, Franck, etc." - all of them have been the well-known composers. Slightly more in line with Whitmer's view is that of John C. Petris, who wrote in 1782 that free

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[35] We can find (see the Chapter 3) many similar advices in 16th century treatises on ornamentation.

[36]Bailey, footnote: The attitude that the ultimate goal of improvisation is when it is considered a [written] composition, is characteristic of the attitude of classical European music towards improvisation. For example, Weber, after hearing Hummel improvise, said, "A man of written notes could not reproduce more accurately and more clearly than Mr. Hummel did here in a way of 'fantasizing' [a term at that time often used for improvisation]."

fantasy is the highest degree of composition ... where meditation and performance are directly related to each other.
Concert improvisation is a special topic for organists. Here they show their ability in front of an audience in all basic musical forms and structures. He takes a theme - sometimes set by the audience - and then presents it in various musical forms: as minuet, scherzo, march, waltz, rondo, sonata movement, canon, fugue, basso continuo, passacaglia. It seems common to prepare for a concert to some degree - which is true for all forms of improvisation. Whitmer's advice for concert improvisation is: "After all the preparations, continue without hesitation, aware that there is at most one person in the audience who could do it a little better than you."

Bailey went to Paris and interviewed the great blind French organist Jean Langlais (1907-1991):

Did such an extended improvisation, of twenty-five minutes, consist of a series of fixed forms, or was it free improvisation?

"I don't think there is such a thing as free improvisation, because in order to improvise, you have to master harmony, counterpoint and improvisation. But Tournemire improvised everything: form and music, and that's extremely difficult. Dupré, for example, has improvised countless symphonies around the world. I also held 274 concerts in the United States and played many symphonies, five-movement sonatas. But this is almost a *retreat* [spiritual exercise] that has been practiced for years. It is improvisation, but it relies on things that have been performed in practice for many years. The most important thing for an improviser is the ability to think at lightning speed."

Improvisation is often described as a kind of "instant" composition. But aren't these completely different forms of activity, which give completely different results?

"Surely. An example of this is the difference between Tournemire's improvisations and his compositions. It was the same with Dupré. When Dupré composed, he would write music that I would call modern. When he improvised, he wasn't that modern. Then everything was more classic. The two were completely different. And look, the greatest organ musician in my eyes today [in 1980] is Olivier Messiaen. We have been friends for many years. We were together in the class of Marcel Dupré, and he did a lot for me when I studied instrumentation with Paul Dukas. As I did not have scores in Braille notation, he read them to me for years. If you are familiar with Messiaen's work and then go to *Trinité*[37] and listen to his improvisations, you will not recognize him as the same musician. Completely different. And sometimes - but not Messiaen - sometimes an improviser is more interesting than a composer."

Why has improvisation survived in organ playing and more or less disappeared from other areas of European art music?

"Because in the church we are constantly forced to improvise. When the priest is particularly slow, we are forced to adapt. If the priest is fast, we also have to adapt. For example, we cannot play Bach's preludes. So we have to improvise. I don't think it's possible to be an organist if you're not an improviser. But people are also very interested in concert improvisation. Especially people who set themes. I think composers are especially interested in setting a theme to see what's going to happen with it."

Since Langlais is blind, I wanted to know how he actually gets the theme from the audience.

[37] The church *de la Sainte*-Trinité in Paris.

"I have two options. Either the person setting the theme plays it for me or someone dictates it to me, and I write it in Braille. Sometimes my son is present and plays the theme for me before I start to improvise. For example, I played several times at the Royal Festival Hall in London and on one occasion Benjamin Britten set me a theme. He gave the envelope containing the theme to my son, who opened it, played the theme to me, and then I started. It's real improvisation. The theme was great. I remember it was in C minor."

Do you think there are different approaches to improvisation?

"Of course. But I repeat: the most important thing in improvisation is the ability to think at lightning speed. And theoretically, a good improviser must be able to improvise everything.

1.8 "Bridge" towards early music I, baroque music:

Speaking about baroque music, i.e. the attempt to revive the performing practice of that music in the 20th century, Bailey already in the introduction sharply "attacks" the European art music, which according to him has "petrifying" effect on everything it comes in contact with:

"... jazz, numerous traditional music cultures and all popular music have suffered serious damage in this contact - the possibility of encountering improvisation here seems rather small. Formalistic and precise, deeply preoccupied with oneself, subject to strict conventions and carefully guarded hierarchies, which dominate great geniuses and their immortal masterpieces, avoiding everything accidental and unpredictable: the way it presents itself today makes the world of art music a completely unsuitable field for improvisation, and yet improvisation played a very important role in the earlier history of Western music.

Here I quote Bailey's next footnote in its entirety, because it best depicts the significance of Ferand's work and his two books, one of which have already been mentioned and which I will return to every now and then.

The most impressive historical account of improvisation that I have found in my, I admit, unsystematic research for this book, are two volumes by Ernest T. Ferand. *Improvisation in examples from the nine centuries of Western music*"(*Die Improvisation in Beispielen aus neun Jahrhunderten abendländischer Musik*), a rich anthology of improvised, mostly vocal practices of diminution and ornamentation[38], and the book *Improvisation in der Musik*. Ferand also deals with the practice of improvisation in early European music in his essay The 'Howling in Seconds' of the Lombards (published in *Musical Quarterly* No. 25, 1939), a contribution to the discussion of the "wrong" counterpoint in the Ambrosian ritual from 15th century. So he writes:

“Instead of the consonants of fourth and fifth, the main role is played by the sharpest dissonances: small and large seconds, none and seventh. Unlike the usual arrangement in *discantus*, the main melody (tenor) is in the upper voice, and the accompanying melody (here called *succentus*) is in the lower voice. According to Gafori[39], this remarkable relic of primitive polyphony in the Ambrosian liturgy was used in solemn vigils in honour of the martyrs, in mourning [lamentations] and funeral masses. Given this particular way of using it, it can be assumed that the mentioned dissonances were used intentionally and in fact improvisationaly as an expressive means to achieve dramatic effects."

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[38] See in the Appendix/ More Music.

[39] This Italian music theorist (1451 - 1522) appears under several names; Franchinus Gaffurius (lat.) or Franchino Gaffurio, Gaffori or Gafori (Italian).

In the same essay, there is a description of the development from polyphony to chord comprehension and how the improvised "singing above the book"[40] comes about.
In addition to the informative content of this essay, it was really refreshing to meet a scientist whose approach to improvisation was based on recognizing and respecting its power and abilities.[41]

Long after the Baroque period, Paganini could write: "It is my duty to hold a concert twice a week, and I always improvise with piano accompaniment. I write the accompaniment beforehand and during the improvisation I work out my theme. "...

One of the areas of Western music, where improvisation has not survived, but at least experienced some kind of resurrection, is the revival of baroque music. Lionel Salter[42], a famous British harpsichordist and leader of the Baroque ensemble, explained to me the importance of improvisation in the Baroque originally had:

> (LS :) "You have to assume that the notes, as written, were just a reminder[43]. They only gave the skeleton of what was being played, so for example, it was quite clear to the violinist that he had to ornament his part. From this point of view improvisation played a very important role.
>
> Especially in slow movements you will find that the written notes indicate only bare outlines and if someone stuck to that and, say, played Handel's sonata exactly according to the text - it would turn out something that Handel would probably burst out laughing, because he would not even dream that someone could play it so boring. At that time, composers were mostly performers of their own works, and due to time savings, they did not define everything on paper. If they wrote a piece completely [exactly the way it should be played], then the reason was primarily to remind themselves that they wanted to do something very special here."

How did you understand your improvisation? Did you see it as improvisation or more as a means to an end? Was it part of a learned routine? Do you see this as a special component of your musical craft?

> I don't think it was something special in itself. It was just part of the performance. Take one *basso continuo* instrument like a harpsichord: its function doesn't stop at realizing chords and keeping the whole thing together - but much more than that. The *basso continuo* player often performed the function of conductor at the same time. He had to give others a rhythmic impulse. It was a process of combining an ensemble, an orchestra, into a homogeneous whole. Composer wrote the numbers (abbreviated notation), and the harpsichord or organ player would use those [numbers] to create a part, which had a clear musical meaning. And this is, I believe, the point at which many have a completely wrong idea of playing continuo. Its aim was not for the harpsichordist to profile himself, to stand out as a virtuoso, nor was it simply a series of dry chords, but for the continuo player to be an integral part of the ensemble, to match the style and texture acts and had a stimulating effect on others in the group. The whole thing was a process of two-way communication. The violinists and other bowed strings in the ensemble inspired the harpsichord player to come up with new ideas, and the harpsichordist was able to develop ideas that others then took up."

[40] About the so-called *cantare sul libro* or French, *chanter sur livre* see Chapter 4.
[41] Ferand was also musician, improviser, performing this kind of music in concerts.
[42] Lionel Salter, 1914-2000.
[43] See Chapter 2, Binkley, p.10.

Although, as a musician who for over half a century has been primarily (though not exclusively) performing EM, studying and re-creating various aspects of performing practice, I do not fully share Derek Bailey's position in what follows, but I felt that in one study on improvisation should be given enough space also to different, even diametrically opposed opinions. Anyway, I leave it to the reader to make her or his own judgment about everything.

> The irreconcilable difference between then and now stems from the unequal attitude towards style, from the fundamental antiquarian effort for the so-called "authenticity". A commendable restoration of a past, frozen and no longer suitable for further development style, can only mean a limitation for improvisation, something that was completely foreign to the musician at the time. ... Performing music of his time was the most natural form of music for musicians, and this included his own improvisational contribution. ...
>
> But where it becomes a central concern, where the purpose is to reconstruct an unsurpassed musical model from a bygone era, improvisation inevitably loses its basis for life.
>
> One of the advantages and incomparable qualities of improvisation is that it can sometimes turn a performance into something much better and more exciting than expected. Whether through the performance of an individual or a group and regardless of the material, due to some unforeseen development caused by improvisation, music can experience a culmination.
>
> Thus improvisation continues to play a certain but strictly limited role in today's performing practice; mostly limited to filling in the gaps between what has come down to us in writing. In order to preserve what is today [1980] understood as the unchanging character of Baroque music, improvisation has been separated from its traditional function of a source of renewal and innovation and degraded to a carefully dosed decorative accessory.

Luckilly, this times and attitudes now belong to the past[44] same as swearing on the so called "authenticity", see in the Chapter 2.

1.9. "Bridge" toward Early Music II: John Bass, Improvisation in 16th Century Italy Lessons from Rhetoric and Jazz[45]

I thought that one of the interesting "bridges" toward EM, in this introductory chapter, could be the view by a renowned jazz musician and pedagogue, John Bass[46]. Author tries to look for and find common ground between the practice of diminution[47] (ornamentation, embellishment, etc.) of the 16th century and the jazz of our time.

Bass mentions the fact that the embellishment of a sung or played melody for the musicians of the sixteenth century was very important, as evidenced by numerous treatises, the music itself as well as written sources from that time. Due to a series of musicological researches and studies, we know today that ornamentation was regarded as something normal, very important and widespread.

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[44] The exceptions are mostly amateur and very rare "professional" ensembles which instead of embellishment or improvisation of original skeleton still uses the "method" of rich arrangement, where every repetition is played with different instrumentation. See more about that in Chapter 7.
[45] John Bass: Improvisation in Sixteenth-Century Italy Lessons from Rhetoric and Jazz, Copyright © 2009 Claremont Graduate University.
[46] As in all cases so far, I quote the footnotes of all the authors, if they are relevant to our subject.
[47] More extensively about this see in Chapter 3 of this study.

Bass, who as a jazz player studied jazz improvisation at the highest level, sees in treatises on ornamentation the possibility that with the help of these embellishments a new work can be created - "a work that exists only at the moment of performance."

The author decides to use the terms embellishment, ornamentation and improvisation alternately, because for him it is almost impossible to distinguish ornamentation from improvisation.

We agree that jazz performers improvise but they also rely on pre-existing material; common patterns or so-called *licks*, quoted from other jazz artists, fragments of various melodies, etc. The basic melodies of compositions are usually ornamented and often change from performance to performance.

Bass quotes guitarist Mick Goodrick saying about (jazz) improvisation:

> Even though a lot of us are “improvisers,” we spend a large percentage of time “playing” things that we already know. We mix it up a bit, to be sure, but most of it involves things that we’ve worked with (to one extent or another) and things that we are (at least somewhat) familiar with.
>
> “Pure” improvising is different than “playing.” “Pure” improvising involves things that are unknown; things that you’ve never played before; things that you are unfamiliar with. “Pure” improvising is exhaustingly hard work. If it happens to you even a few times a year, you should consider yourself fortunate.[48]

Turning to the main topic of the article, Bass makes an analysis of several Italian treatises on ornamentation from the second half of 16th century. It begins with the work “*Tratado des glosas*” by Diego Ortiz, a Spaniard who worked in Naples, while all other authors were from northern Italy; namely Girolamo Dalla Casa, Giovanni Bassano[49], Ricardo Rognoni and Giovanni Battista Bovicelli[50]. Their great contribution was writing ornaments down. Although not to be taken too literally, their work offers a direct connection to the practice of “real” sixteenth-century improvisers, and their ornamentographs (works with printed ornamentations) are the closest we have to recorded sixteenth-century improvisational performances.

Almost all of these manuals begin with a text section describing the practice, giving practical advice on making and adding embellishments, and giving warnings about material misuse. This is followed by what is their most dominant feature: a very extensive collection of interval samples, cadences, and models.

The treatise usually starts from an interval of major second in whole notes, then displays the same interval in halves, continuing this process through different intervals and cadences.

John Bass's "original tone":

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[48] Mick Goodrick, *The Advancing Guitarist* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1987), 108.

[49] For all musical examples from Bass article use the following link: https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr/vol14/iss1/1/

[50] Bass, ibid: The manuals they wrote are: Diego Ortiz, *Tratado de Glosas* (Rome, 1553); Girolamo Dalla Casa, *Il Vero Modo di Diminuir con Tutte le Sorte di Stromenti* (Venice, 1584); Giovanni Bassano, *Ricercate, Passaggi, et Cadentie* (Venice, 1585) *and Motetti, Madrigali et Canzonie Francese* (Venice, 1591); Ricardo Rognoni, *Passaggi per potersi essercitare nel diminuire terminatamente con ogni sorte di instromenti, et anco diversi passaggi per la semplice voce humana* (Venice, 1592); and Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, *Regole, passaggi di musica, madrigali et motetti passeggiati* (Venice, 1594). IP: for a (almost) complete list of those treatises see in the Chapter 3. And in the Appendix/ Lists

Following these tables, sample pieces with ornamentation written in ornamentographs are presented to show how to use these patterns in the context of a performance. As time goes by, these become a more prominent feature of the manuals as the authors feel a greater need to show how the practice occurs within the context of an actual performance. On the surface, the process here seems to be simple: ornaments and figures are chosen from the lists and inserted into performance at appropriate times, and this was the crux of Howard Mayer Brown's argument in *Embellishing 16th-Century Music* in 1976.[51] This is true to a degree, but by stepping back and looking at the embellished performance as a thing unto itself, and not just a collection of licks from the tables, something new emerges. More on this in a bit.

I believe these treatises are training manuals meant to help a student acquire the necessary musical language to function in improvisatory situations, and their approach is not terribly different from that of modern jazz pedagogy. The strategy of giving lists of ornaments and cadences strikes me as being very similar to that of Jerry Coker's *Patterns for Jazz books* (this observation is actually what started me down this path in the first place). Coker's books provide sample patterns to be used over certain chords or progressions (see Figures 2 and 3 on the following two pages) and are basically a storehouse of licks from the jazz tradition.[52] They are meant to be training tools, though, to teach the jazz language to the student to be used in an original way, and not to simply construct a solo by plugging in patterns in appropriate places (although this might be an intermediate step). It is a pedagogical strategy—one of many—but if these books were the only surviving evidence of jazz, I think that our conception of what the music is might be different, and that it might be more in line with what most of us consider ornamentation than improvisation.

Example I-8, Patterns for Jazz by Jerry Coker, Bass Fig.2[53]

Example I-9, Patterns for Jazz by Jerry Coker, Bass Fig.3[54]

The omamentographs in the sixteenth-century manuals remind me of transcriptions of jazz solos, and perhaps we can apply modern pedagogical strategies to these as well. Books of solo transcriptions are a mainstay of modem jazz education; a quick search of Amazon.com reveals 462 books featuring solos by classic and modern jazz artists. Perhaps the most famous of these books is the Charlie Parker *Omnibook*, which is a publication featuring his solos on most of his recorded performances.[55] Like the Coker book, this is a training tool. The idea is that a student should play through Parker's solos to get an idea of the language and get the patterns under his or her fingers in the hopes of using some of them in original solos.[56] These are not, however, meant to be played on the bandstand—this would be a good way to get booted from a gig.

If we accept that we are dealing with a largely improvisatory tradition when looking at these sixteenth-century sources, then I think it might be helpful to refocus our views of them through the lens of an improviser. Improvising musicians have to take a different approach to making music than composers or performers playing from the page; having to create in the moment of performance necessitates what a performer can or cannot think about. Personally, I know that I only have time to focus on big issues when I am improvising: contour, speed, colour, intensity,

[51] Brown even constructs an embellished melody of his own using this process. He uses ornaments from Sylvestro Ganassi's tables to ornament Arcadelt's O felici occhi miei. See *Embellishing 16th-Century Music*, pp.12-16.
[52] Jerry Coker, *Patterns for Jazz* (Lebanon, IN: Studio P/R, 1970).
[53] See Musical Examples A I-8, Bass fig.2.
[54] See Musical Examples A I-9 Bass fig.3.
[55] Charlie Parker *Omnibook*, ed. Jamey Aebersold (New York: Criterion, 1978).
[56] JB:In fact, after playing through several of Parker's solos, one will notice that he too uses many of the same licks or patterns across solos.

etc. I cannot get bogged down trying to insert specific patterns or scales into my playing at predetermined times—trying to force the issue usually results in a disjointed, stiff performance and does not allow me to react appropriately to the changing music. This is not to say that learned gestures do not materialize in performance but that they only do so once they have been internalized through years of practice.
The most common complaint I hear from students learning to improvise (and one of mine too when I was in school) is that they will spend hours working on patterns, scales, or specific licks that they would like to use while playing, but these gestures never seem to come out on the bandstand while improvising (it is maddening, really). My answer to them is the same one that my teachers had for me: be patient, it will come (not that it is comforting after a particularly unconvincing and uninteresting solo). That does not mean that one should not continue to work on such things in practice. On the contrary, it means these musical patterns and ideas will not materialize until they have been practiced and absorbed to the point that they become part of one's musical vocabulary. It is both a practical and a rather mysterious development.

Improvising in the sixteenth century was clearly not the same as improvising today in jazz—the languages are different as well as the social implications of the music—but I do believe there are basic tendencies of improvising musicians that can be seen in the two traditions (as well as other improvising traditions around the world) and that by comparing similarities, we might be able to understand better what was happening back then. What follows are some observations I have made about things I have seen in the ornamentography manuals and comparisons to similar occurrences in jazz, as well as other observations about the *rhetorical* effects created by ornamentation. They are case studies, if you will, and not meant to encompass the entirety of either tradition. Also, my analyses of these pieces are largely descriptive, rather than looking at specific patterns on a measure-by-measure basis, in order to try to ascertain overall approaches toward the performance and to focus on things improvisers would have time to think about in the moment.

The author further deals with the analysis of the improvisations of Miles Davis and John Coltrane.

A particularly useful and well-known example from the world of jazz comes from the late 1950s when Miles Davis and John Coltrane engaged in several recording sessions together. I often use their solos with my jazz students to show the vastly different approaches that improvisers can take toward a model—this, I think, is more valuable than the actual musical patterns each plays—and I think the lesson can serve this study as well.

Example 1 shows the solos by Davis and Coltrane on Davis 'tune "So What" recorded on the 1959 album *Kind of Blue*.[57] The most obvious difference between the two is the basic speed with which each moves—Coltrane plays faster than Davis—but the structure of each is also a contrast. Davis 'trademark is that he picks key moments to play certain notes, thus dividing his improvisation into distinct sections. The G and E at the beginning of the second chorus (measures 32-33), for example, emphasize the ninth and eleventh of the underlying harmony, rather than the root, third, fifth, and seventh, which had been his primary note choices up to this point. He is also very deliberate about where he changes rhythmic patterns (measure 49 is a good example), and these different patterns often signal new improvisational areas. Additionally, he re-uses material (measures 41-48 are similar to the opening measures) to give his entire solo a sense of unity, almost as if it were composed ahead of time.

[57] Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue*, Columbia Records, CS8163.

Example I-... Bass ex.1. Solo by Miles Davis and John Coltrane via / based on "So What" from the album Kind of Blue. Parts shown in the concert key.[58]

> Coltrane's organization of material, on the other hand, is more focused and happens in smaller increments. It is also more purely organic in that it consists of creating a pattern through improvisation and then using that pattern as a vehicle for expansion, mostly through sequence and variation. The first sixteen measures of his solo offer a tidy example of this. The figure in measures 1-2 (D-F-G) is the basic idea here and is repeated with minor variation over the first eight measures. Beginning in measure 9, Coltrane truncates the rhythm of the opening figure and extends its range, and this, in turn, becomes the source material for the development of measures 9-16. In fact, the opening idea is the raw material for the entire solo: notice how the beginnings of most major sections (in measures 25, 33, 41-42, and 49) allude to the opening idea. It is as if Coltrane's approach is to see how much mileage he can get out of a small fragment of material, interspersing it with longer florid sections.
>
> As in Davis 'solo, there is a developmental quality at work here, but the two feel very different. To my ear, the interest in Davis solo comes from hearing the new melodic and rhythmic areas that he takes the listener to (perhaps the same sensation as listening to a great composition), whereas the appeal of Coltrane's solo is based on his individual virtuosity on the instrument along with his wittiness at musing on a theme. I do not, of course, mean that either solo is greater than the other; Davis and Coltrane were both supreme improvisers at the height of their powers when this record was made. They were just two humans who came to the same task with different approaches, and whatever the differences may have been between sixteenth-century improvisation and mid-twentieth-century jazz, it should be self-evident that the ornamentographers were the same way.
>
> From a practical standpoint, the reasons for these differences make sense. When going more slowly, an improviser has more time to think of an overall structure and to use musical material in a larger scheme. In fact, it is necessary to do this in order to create interest among listeners. When moving more quickly a different approach must be taken, as there is less time to think of larger structures, and organization tends to happen on a smaller scale with idea progressing to idea on a measure-by-measure basis or faster. The listener does not need to hear the same structural cohesiveness in a more florid performance partly because the technical skill of an extravagant performance inherently creates a sense of interest (the virtuoso phenomenon), and partly because there is so much more music coming at the listener that it is easier to grasp organization in smaller units rather than trying to make sense of hundreds of notes over the course of a longer performance. One is not preferable to the other, however, and, as we will see, the ornamentographers are very careful to present their material not as the way to improvise, but as the way that one can improvise.

The author deals in detail with the *recercadas* on the theme of *La Spagna* by Diego Ortiz, which are found in his work *"Tratado de glosas ..."* (Rome, 1553)[59]

> Although they are not proper ornamentographs since they do not ornament an existing part (Ortiz writes new material over a common tenor), they give insight into how structure might have been created in freer extemporaneous situations. Since Ortiz gives only the tenor of *La Spagna* in breves of equal duration, it is up to the new melodic line to create contour and shape over the

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[58] See: in the Appendix/ More Music/ Bass ex.1-1 and 1-2 or on https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr/vol14/iss1/1/

[59] Diego Ortiz, *Tratado de Glosas* (Rome, 1553), ed. Annette Otterstedt, translated by Hans Reiners (Basel: Bärenreiter, 2003), 77, 80-81.

ground. He does not give any specific comments differentiating the *recercadas*, saying only that he gives numerous examples "...in order to satisfy the different tastes, everyone to take what seems best to him." ... Upon closer study, however, there are some interesting structural differences. Comparing these to the solos in Example 1, we can see a similar relationship between speed and organization: slower-moving examples tend to develop more on a larger scale with distinct melodic areas that develop from phrase to phrase (à la Davis), and faster moving ones develop more out of melodic variation on a smaller scale, organically springing out of the material just heard (à la Coltrane). Example 2 shows Ortiz's *La Spagna recercadas* 1 and 4, which represent the slowest and fastest moving of the bunch.

Example I-10. Bass ex.2 Diego Ortiz: recercadas primera and quarta on La Spagna[60].

Recercada 1 has a rather distinct three-part structure, divided into measures 1-16, measures 17-26, and measures 26ff.. The main structural component in the first section is a dotted half note followed by three quarter notes (starting on either F or B-flat), which occurs five times within the first sixteen measures. The second section, measures 17-26, generally moves quicker with quarter notes as the primarily rhythm, and it climaxes in measure 23, with a leap of an octave (to the high G), followed by an octave-and-a-fifth fall by step that eventually cadences on the low C in measure 26. The final section, from measure 26 to the end, develops sequentially, but in generally slower moving notes than the middle section, and it reuses material from earlier: measures 26-28 use a sequence from measures 21-22 and the structural idea from the first section (a dotted half note and three quarter notes) returns in measures 31-33. Overall, there is an arching form to the ornamentation here, in which the speed gets faster, climaxes around measure 23, and eases up over the remainder of the piece. Just as interesting is the reuse of material, which helps give the entire example a sense of continuity.[61]

By contrast, the fourth *recercada* is more florid and might appear, on the surface, to be a more advanced piece. It would indeed require somewhat greater technical proficiency on the instrument, but in terms of its overall design, it is arguably simpler. The organization here relies heavily on sequence, which becomes apparent from the beginning as the rhythmic structure of the first measure is repeated three times through measure four. Measure 5 contains a bit of florid cadential material before the next sequence is started in measure 6. This new figure is nearly identical to the first and is used until measure 11, where Ortiz truncates the idea to create a new pattern that he, in turn, uses until measure 14.[62] At this point he creates a new sequence using the opening rhythms with new intervals, which he continues until measure 19. Beginning in measure 21 is a figure that Ortiz uses in every measure through the end of the piece. Clearly, the focus in this *recercada* is on melodic sequence and getting the most mileage out of a single idea.

Ortiz gives four other *La Spagna recercadas* in his manual[63] and they show similar traits relating to speed and the organization of material. As a general rule, if there can be such a thing, the slower the material moves, the more it is divided into clear sections that create global structures over the course of the piece. As things start to speed up, this approach gradually gives way to more organic development, using smaller bits of material in sequence to create structure. As Ortiz said in the quote given earlier, no one approach is better than the others and it is left up to the taste of the reader to decide which to take in performance. It seems safe to say, though, that the slower-moving examples are not simply training pieces leading up to the more florid ones.

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[60] See Musical Examples A I-10 Bass ex.2. Ortiz.
[61] Recall a similar phenomenon in Davis' solo in Example 1.
[62] JB: This is similar to what Coltrane did in the first 16 bars of his solo, shown in Example 1.
[63] Ibid: In this manual, besides the aforementioned, Ortiz provides detailed instructions and examples on ornamenting cadences, improvising based on already composed chansons or madrigals, and based on well-known "*tenores*" such as *passamezzo antico, moderno*, and similar ones, see in Chapter 3 and 5.

Trends in Venice

Venice in the 1580s and 1590s was a hotbed of instrumental music, both in and out of the church.[64] In particular, St. Mark's Basilica became renowned for its instrumental consorts and composers such as Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli famously took advantage of these ensembles in their compositions.[65] Two of the ornamentographers, Girolamo Dalla Casa and Giovanni Bassano, were active professionals at the time and each held the position of capo de 'concerti at St. Mark's and performed as members of the consorts there. Their manuals show how the tradition of improvised ornamentation existed within the context of these large ensembles, as well as other performing situations...

At the end of *Il vero modo* Dalla Casa presents Cipriano de Rore's madrigal *Alla dolce ombra* in partbook format with embellishment written in all parts, and Example 4 is an excerpt from the *prima parte* in score format.[66] Glancing through this example, one will notice that the soprano is not necessarily more elaborate than the other voices nor does it ornament a far greater percentage of the original notes, which would seem to work against the notion that showmanship—especially that of a single performer—was the primary motivating factor.

Example I-11 Bass ex.3. Excerpt of Dalla Casa's ornamented version of Alla dolce ombra, prima parte.[67]

The sophistication here comes from the complex interaction between members of the group and their ability to create an improvisational collage on the fly. The situation, to make another jazz comparison, reminds me of the practice of collective improvisation characteristic of early New Orleans-style jazz. The typical group from the time would be divided into a front line consisting of cornet, clarinet, and trombone, and a back line made up of tuba, banjo, and drums. Arrangement of music for these groups involved members of the front line improvising simultaneously over a given tune, and a system—often unspoken— was ultimately worked out that allowed each player freedom, but kept them from clashing: the cornetist would play the melody with minor embellishments, the clarinettist would play higher and faster than the cornetist, and the trombonist would either play the bass line of the piece, or would improvise in a lower register and slower than the other instruments. This allowed for a great deal of flexibility and provided musicians with a quick way of arranging tunes for their groups.[68] Example 5 shows a transcription of the first eight measures (following a two-measure introduction, which I have not given) of "*Krooked Blues*," recorded by King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band in 1923, which exemplifies a section of collective improvisation.

Example I-..., Bass ex.4: Transcription of the first eight bars (after the introduction of two bars) of "Krooked Blues", recorded in 1923 by "King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band", which is an example of collective improvisation.[69]

Perhaps such unspoken arrangements were present in the late Renaissance as well. By looking at Dalla Casa's *Alla dolce ombra*, there are some tendencies we can take note of that might help us

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64 Ibid: In Venice, of course, much more than purely instrumental music took place, and among other things, it was the center of Italian music publishing.

65 JB: Showing this influence, Bassano included an embellished version of Andrea Gabrieli's pieces, *Caro dolce ben mio*, in his *Motetti, madrigali, et canzoni francese di diversi eccellenti autori* (Venice, 1591).

66 Dalla Casa, *Il vero modo*, book II, 38-49.

67 See Musical Examples A I-11 Bass ex.3. Dalla Casa 1

68 See Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 63-88, and Samuel Charters, *Trumpet Around the Corner: The Story of New Orleans Jazz* (Oxford, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2008).

69 See in the Appendix/ More Music/ Bass ex.4.

when trying to reproduce this idea of consort improvisation. First, the order of embellishment among the voices, with minor exception, seems to follow the order of then-polyphonic entrances—this at least can help us get started. Also, the musical material seems to spring from what the musicians themselves do and a series of reactions that follow; a figure will inspire another that gets passed among the voices, and as it does, it changes into a new figure and the process is repeated (see Example 4). Taken as single parts out of context, as in Example 3, they do appear to be rather simplistic and disjointed, but within the context of a larger piece the embellishment proves to be cunning and effective.

It is not only the pieces clearly intended for use in ensemble playing that show evidence of this consort mentality. Example 6[70] shows the first 18 measures of Cipriano de Rore's *Anchor che col partire* and two ornamented versions by Dalla Casa, the first a texted superius part intended to be sung with either a consort of instrumentalists or a solo lute, and the second intended for a solo viol in the *bastarda* style.[71]

The texted example may resemble Dalla Casa's superius from *Frisque et gaillard* in that it alternates between sections of original material and embellishment, but the rationale is a bit different here. Rather than alteration out of necessity (i.e. leaving space for others to ornament), the embellishments in *Anchor che col partire* are more closely linked with the madrigal's poetry. In fact, if we look at how Dalla Casa coloured the text, the ornamentation becomes explicitly *rhetorical*. Without delving too deep into metaphors about death and sexuality, the poem is a rather intense double entendre focusing on the pleasure, in both the innocent and the naughty sense, of leaving and returning,[72] and it is precisely these words ("*partire*," etc. in measures 2-3 and 7, and "*ritorno*" in measures 14-17) that get the most extravagant treatment by Dalla Casa. This works in conjunction with the *rhetoric* of the text, especially in highlighting each double entendre, and perhaps adds a layer of persuasiveness to the madrigal.[73]

Milan in the 1590s

The final two ornamentography manuals of the sixteenth century were also published in Venice, but their authors, Ricardo Rognoni and Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, lived and worked in Milan where the musical climate was a bit different. As in Venice, instrumental music was prominent, but the emphasis was more on individual performers than large consorts.

Milan was also one of the first regions that saw a push toward the Baroque form of the solo sonata and several of the first generation of sonata writers, most famously Giovanni Paolo Cima (c l570-1630) and Biagio Marini (1584-1663), called Milan home. With this emphasis placed on soloists, a decidedly more flamboyant brand of ornamentation emerged, and in many ways their ornamentographs are the most advanced of the entire tradition, being both technically demanding and cunningly constructed.

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[70] See Musical Examples A I-12 Bass Dalla Casa 2

[71] JB: Unlike Ortiz, which includes similar pieces, Dalla Casa uses the term *bastarda* in its manual. There is some disagreement as to what the term *bastarda* actually means: it is an instrument or improvisational style on the viola da gamba (viol in English) in general. **See more about this in Chapter 3, p.27**.

[72] JB: The metaphor relating death to sex is common in Italian madrigals of the sixteenth century (and goes back even further). For an analysis of how the metaphor works specifically in this madrigal, see Lewis Lockwood, "Text and Music in Rore's Madrigal "Anchor che col partire," in *Musical Humanism and its Legacy*: Essays in Honor of Claude V. Palisca, Festchrift 11, ed. Nancy Kovaleff Baker and Russano Hanning (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992), 243-253. For more on the sexual subtexts in the madrigals of this time, see Laura Macy, "Speaking of Sex: Metaphor and Performance in the Italian Madrigal," *The Journal of Musicology* 14 (1996), 1-34.

[73] JB: Bassano shows a similar approach in his versions of *Anchor che col partire*. See Bass, "Rhetoric and Musical Ornamentography" for a more thorough discussion along with transcriptions, 243-255.

As a contrast to Dalla Casa's examples, the same 18 measures of Ricardo Rognoni's texted superius version of *Anchor che col partire*, from his *Passaggi per potersi…* (Venice, 1592), are shown in Example 7.[74] There is a noticeably different approach here and gone is the alternation between original and florid material. Clearly, the point of Rognoni's ornamentograph is to show a single embellished line to be performed with accompaniment, rather than one that is meant to be a part of a larger improvisational performance among several musicians.[75]

One thing that becomes clear from looking at these versions of *Anchor che col partire* is that sixteenth-century improvisers seem to be concerned with the *rhetorical* effect of extemporaneously added material. This idea, which transcends individual or regional differences in style, holds the tradition together and reinforces the notion that musical embellishment was an intellectual exercise. To see how this occurs in a treatise designed specifically for singing, we turn to our final examples by Bovicelli.[76]

Giovanni Battista Bovicelli, a singer also active in Milan, published the final proper manual of ornamentography in the sixteenth century, but outside of this treatise, little is known about his life or career.

Bovicelli's work is unique because the majority of the pieces he chose for models were sacred pieces, perhaps reflecting his professional life as a cathedral singer.

Interestingly, Bovicelli actually warned—quite vividly—against this in his treatise, saying, "

> ...it is a very great fault not to ever finish the word, and always repeat the two or three first syllables, as in, for example, saying, *Benedi, Benedictus*, similarly to those who have damaged their teeth, and many times masticate the same food before swallowing it."[77]

Worrying about the placement of the words is something that singers had to do in a way that instrumentalists did not, and Bovicelli's concern for the integrity of the text is important and, I believe, strengthens the notion that improvisers were concerned with the *rhetorical* effect[78] of their ornamentation on a piece of music—at least in sung performances.

Conclusion

Taking a step back, I believe that the things we see in these manuals can be quite valuable toward our understanding of improvisatory activity in the sixteenth century. In particular, if we look at the ornamentographs as things unto themselves and not simply adornments of original pieces, we can see some trends that might help us approach improvising today. One of the most refreshing realizations is that the training modern improvisers receive might be similar to what sixteenth-century musicians underwent. Moreover modern approaches toward constructing improvisations might be applied to older forms as well. The relationship between speed and organization seen in Ortiz's manual, I think, is particularly helpful: it gives a potential improviser

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[74] Ricardo Rognoni, *Passaggi per potersi essercitare nel diminuire* (Venice, 1592), ed. Giuseppe Vecchi, preface by Bruce Dickey (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 2002). See Appendix/ Mus. Examples I-13 Bass ex.7 Rognoni.
[75]See Bass: https://scholarship.claremont.edu/ppr/vol14/iss1/1/.
[76] See Musical Examples A I-14 Bass ex.8 Bovicelli.
[77] Bovicelli, Regole, passaggi di musica, 9 (Foreman translation in Late Renaissance Singing, 132): *"...grandissimo vitio è di coloro, I quali non sanno mai finire la parola, e sempre vanno replicando le due tre prime sillabe, come per essempio, dicendo, Benedi, Benedictus, assomigliandosi a coloro, c'hanno guasti I denti, che piu volte vanno masticando o stello cibo prima, che l'inghiottiscano."*
[78] See latter in Chapter 2, p.27. by Smith, and in Chapter 6., p.9.

something to concentrate on in the moment rather than trying to recall specific patterns from the manuals and insert them at appropriate times—or even more dubiously writing them out ahead of time. To be clear, we should certainly practice and learn the patterns in the tables, but in the moment of performance, we should think about broader things and let the patterns materialize in natural ways.

Likewise, Dalla Casa's examples show first of all that improvisation was not only a solo skill (as most of the other ornamentographers would seem to imply) but something done by all the members of an ensemble, and beyond that they give an idea of how this rather different practical proposition was carried out. There are some basic tendencies we can follow, i.e. let the embellishment follow the order of entrances and have the musical material sequence among voices, but the exciting thing is how reactionary it seems to be. In such situations with well-trained performers, one can imagine what might come about when players are allowed to follow their ears and instincts.

A trend seen across the manuals—represented in this paper with examples of *Anchor che col partire* by Dalla Casa, Rognoni, and Bovicelli—and one I think that is perhaps the most useful to us today, is the idea that ornamentation follows the *rhetoric of the text* and works to reinforce its underlying meaning, even in purely instrumental situations. This is something we can run with today: after becoming acquainted with the improvisatory language of the century, we can approach a performance through the text and allow extemporaneous gestures to colour the words in new ways, maybe even strengthening its *rhetorical* persuasiveness.

We must remember, though, that these documents are not really improvisations; rather they are carefully constructed—and more or less idealized—representations of how extemporaneous performances might have taken shape. As a result, they must be viewed with some level of skepticism. Also, one of the larger problems is that many improvisatory nuances do not come across in notation, which leaves us with only part of the picture: written-down Bovicelli and written-down Coltrane alike cannot properly capture all of the intricacies of an actual improvised performance.

Ultimately, the ornamentographers were not special because they were improvisers; they were special because they decided to try to write down what they did. Despite whatever problems we can find in their treatises, their work gives us models we can follow today to train ourselves to view ornamentation through their eyes. Of course we will never be able to fully recreate their improvisatory world, but by immersing ourselves in what they left behind and viewing it from the point of view of improvisers, perhaps we can use our musical instincts to build new performances with the tools they have supplied.

1.10. "Bridge" toward the Early Music III, my personal experiences with improvisation:

From embellishment (diminution, ornamentation), through medieval, traditional and so-called "World" music - all the way to real "free" improvisation (Tanz Atelier Wien; 1999 - 2004)

To say that I got the sense or at least the will to improvise in my genes would certainly be an exaggeration, even though it was "somewhere", very close ... My father Ferdo and both his brothers, Josip and Zvonimir, in their youth, played jazz on dances parties (even on the steamer "Kraljica Marija"/"Queen Mary" but of Serbia, all over the Mediterranean) and - I guess - apart from music arrangements, they also performed it by heart or improvising. Whether this was sometimes true of my grandfather patrilineal, who played French horn all his life as a military musician and occasionally in opera orchestras, I cannot say.

My maternal grandfather played piano relatively well, at least good enough to accompany my mother Nada's (professional[79]) singing, and all accompanists were often forced to improvise something, for instance when a singer or instrumental soloist skipped a beat, i.e. "missed" the entrance or return after a certain bars of rests ...

I don't know if my mother added at least some embellishments while singing *coloratura* arias and to what extent. ...

As a child, when I was about 3 or 4 years old, I remember (a little, more through my mother's telling) that every now and then maestro Lovro von Matačić and his wife Lilly came to visit us (and slept in our appartement in Dvorničićeva 4). When Lovro played, for example, symphonies or orchestral reductions from operas on the piano, part of it was certainly improvisation and *ad hoc* extraction of the most important things - according to my mother, those present could through his piano playing really hear "the whole orchestra"!

During the first 5-6 or even seven years of my (in those years very reluctant) learning of violin in Zagreb's music school ("Pavao Markovac" and later "Vatroslav Lisinski") it is for sure that I haven't had any contacts (even the passive ones, as a listener ...) with improvisation. This changed when, after only two years of enthusiastic piano learning (as a facultative second instrument), for a whole year I began to play in Zagreb's dance and other halls with my own rock band, "Pirati" (latter "Uskoci"). No, I certainly wasn't able to improvise at the time, although there were minor additions and variations even in the piano accompaniment based on rhythmic chords. But on the other hand I could listen "first hand" to some of the extraordinary improvisations of my fellow solo guitarists and especially the saxophonist, my dear colleague and friend, Mladen Deni Kodrić from Split.

Although this experience was very short, its intensity and opening the door to a new world, once and forever "catapulted" me into the life of a full-blooded musician, in the best sense of the word! Although after this I return to the so-called "classical" or "serious" (art) music, love and interest for rock and blues music has accompanied me all my life, until today.

As an orchestral musician, violist (with minor interruptions from 1966 to 1983, as well the first years of my life in Vienna) I often played at various festivals of popular music, operetta and musical at the Zagreb *Komedija* (Comedy) Theater - which, together with his activities as a conductor, composer, arranger and director of several “light” music festivals in Croatia, was the "world" of my late father Ferdo, director and conductor of this house. As a permanent member of the RTV Zagreb Symphony Orchestra I regularly record and perform at the Zagreb Biennale festival[80] of the so-called contemporary music, which after some 150 - 200 years has "rediscovered" the beauty, charm and importance of improvisation ...

I remember well how one of Croatian contemporary composers (I don't remember who, Detoni, Malec, Ulrich or somebody of the foreign guests) predicted the so-called *clusters* where we (the whole orchestra or just one of the sections, for example violas), had to "improvise" and the only limit was the stopwatch with which the conductor controlled duration of this and other *clusters* ... Improvise how, what? All of us present there were graduate academic musicians with about 15 years of study and at least 4-5 years of orchestral experience behind, but if something was certain, in all those years of preparation for professional life we haven't learned or experienced - absolutely nothing about improvisation!

[79] My mother, prof. Nada Pirnat Pomykalo (1909-1984), was an acclaimed concert singer and solo-singing pedagogue in Zagreb.

[80] Several times, also with our EM ensemble Universitas Studiorum Zagrabiensis.

While improvisation is an integral part of traditional folk and non-Western classical musical cultures (where notation apart to tablature do not even exist, or if at all only as a demonstration of something purely theoretical), in blues, jazz and (as we have seen) as a very highly valued discipline by organists, it disappeared gradually but completely during periods of baroque, classic and romantic in European chamber and orchestral music. By vocal soloists (both in opera or oratorio) and instrumentalists it has been reduced to the so-called "cadence", which may be shorter or longer. Great soloists often perform (and publish them for other "mortals" in printed form) their own, "copyrighted" cadences, which we, students or young soloists, then perform at the beginning of our careers. Here (for bad, of course) I have to remember one of my professors at the Zagreb Academy of Music, who - just to keep everything "clear" and neatly stored in separate "drawer" - beat for me the rhythm in the cadence, the last remains of an improvisation ... All this shouldn't surprise anyone too much if we think that in those days for the majority of the reputable professors of similar institutions in whole ex-Yugoslavia jazz (imagine the rock...) was music of lower value, and that even in the city of Zagreb that was known for a number of internationally appreciated jazz soloists, smaller ensembles and orchestras ...

For me, things gradually began to change from 1969 onwards, thanks to the active involvement on the field of the so-called Early Music (of Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque) which was naturally followed by an encounter with our own, Croatian but also other, for example, Macedonian and Bosnian (Sephardic) traditional folklore, see in 1.2. of this Chapter and in the Appendix.

It is a notorious fact that composers of earlier music, (both sacred but especially secular) expected that singers and instrumentalists (same as today's jazz musicians, as well as best blues and rock musicians) knew well how to perform certain chorales, songs or dances - which almost as a rule represent a kind of "skeleton", the most basic information, a reminder of how the melody moves - without any indication of rhythm, tempo, dynamics and not to mention the embellishments or improvisation.

The best comparison would be the one with today's jazz: there are a number of editions with transcriptions, textbooks on improvisation, but intended exclusively for students. The "real" already affirmed jazz musicians do not need something like that. The big problem in the case of EM is that we simply don't have any detailed instructions[81] and contemporary music theorists are often quite vague when it comes to the performance practice of their own time[82].

All this puts us, the specialists for today's performance of the *re-created*[83] EM, in a position that is significantly different from that of our colleagues who perform "normal" chamber music of classic or romantic periods. While the composers of the late 18th and 19th century "endowed" our just mentioned colleagues with a whole series of detailed instructions for performance, we the specialists for earlier music (partly already before the 1800s and especially before the 1700s) have only those already mentioned "skeletons". And this means that we are forced to "improvise" from the very beginning: starting from the choice of instrument(s), playing technique (more or less invented by ourselves) to which are added unknowns of tempo, dynamics, melodic performances or those with accompanying (and if so which?) drone, ornamenting the melody until the "real" improvisation.

On the other hand, this is also the beauty of this music because it gives you possibilities and the freedom to decide most things according to your instinct, your invention after a series of

[81] Beside already mentioned and in Chapter 3 more in detail discussed treatises on ornamentation. See also 1.9. John Bass- Improvisation in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Lessons from Rhetoric and Jazz.
[82] Exceptions are manuscripts or printed works from the end of the 15th century onwards.
[83] See more detailed about that in the second chapter.

experiments but always aware of the danger of adding too many elements that you adopted during your studies and the like and which have nothing to do with those earlier times ...

However, I must immediately add that at the very beginning and at least the first ten years of my EM activities I was much more "dogmatic" and uncompromising than it was the case later, when I realized and accepted the fact that what I am doing whole my life is actually one of the many expressions, aspects of the music of our time – a “new” music. Our interpretation is, of course, inspired by certain elements (parts of the mosaic ...) such as the "skeleton" of melodies, rhythms, sounds of “strange” instruments of past times etc. About which we know far too little today to be dogmatic and uncompromising fighters for “authentic”, “historical” performance of early music on the so-called “original” instruments. Labels (trademarks) like “authenticity” (at least until the mid-eighties of the last century) could be read on a number of often extraordinary LP and latter CD[84] recordings and in the concert programs of many concert cycles and festivals[85].

But let’s go back to my beginnings in the EM. I remember (at least) two things related to my stay at the EM courses, which were held in Grožnjan in 1969 and 1970 by the Studio der frühen Musik (Studio for Early Music) from Munich, at this very moment one of the best and the most *avant-garde* ensembles of this music in the Europe and the world.

The first is the fact that members of the Studio[86] performed everything by heart and certainly improvised the embellishments of their singing and playing. Only those slightly longer improvised instrumental preludes and interludes and the like were very likely written down and memorized.
I fully became aware of this only when, ten years later, the late Tom Binkley kindly sent to me his arrangements of original (actually "contrafacted") music from the legendary medieval collection "Carmina Burana"[87]. I will return to this procedure, a little bit later and particularly in Chapter 7 of this compendium.

Quite early, during one of my stays in Munich with David Fallows (this today very famous and respected British expert of European music of the 15th century, at that time worked as an assistant to the director of the Studio, Thomas, Tom, Binkley) I got from him Diego Ortiz’ *Tratado des Glosas*, already mentioned treatise on the ornamentation of the solo or accompanied viol music) and a little later, during my stay on a scholarship in Copenhagen, 1974, I come in touch with both editions by S. Ganassi, *La Fontegara* and *Regola Rubertina*. These works, and their already superficial study, opened for me the door to what could have been a true performance practice of Renaissance music - quite far from the "skeletons" that have come down to us in printed or manuscript collections of the time. During my studies in Copenhagen, a short but intensive study with Danish harpsichordist and musicologist (*Generalbass* or *basso continuo* specialist) Jesper Bøje Christensen was particularly important for my further development. From him I first heard about the then relatively young branch of musicology; the performance practice of the EM. Indirectly, that study brought me also in contact with both *liras* (*da braccio* and *da gamba*) - the rest is history ...

From some point, gradually, and then more and more, I began to embellish my playing on any of the instruments I played in those years (mostly soprano viol, recorder, crumhorn and cornetto in Renaissance, and rebec, *vielle* and recorder in the performances of medieval music) and that for me and my colleagues becomes a normal and spontaneous thing. Although it was still far from the

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[84] Remember ensembles like „Studio der frühen Musik“ or „Clemencic Consort“.
[85] See Chapter 2 of this study for more information.
[86] An Estonian singer, Andrea von Ramm and three Americans "in Europe".
[87] Which, however, became a world "hit" in the form of a cantata by German composer Carl Orff, who did not know the original music notated in neumes but added his own, newly composed music to the original (Latin and early German) lyrics.

"real" improvisation, it already represented that decisive step forward and in the right direction[88]; to dare and no longer consciously "think" about it (nor to compose and memorize these "improvisations") but to spontaneously insert shorter or longer *passaggi* at each performance or during our recordings.

In the late seventies, it occurred to me that different versions of the same frottola (the original in four voices, adapted for voice and lute by Bossinensis, and the one adapted for keyboard instrument by Antico) could be combined in a simultaneous performance. This experiment was carried out several times with our ensemble "Universitas," and I can say that although it was not spontaneous improvisation but rather a performance from printed notes with written ornamentations, it provided an impression, an idea of how frottole likely sounded in their time. It could also serve as a starting point for embarking on more genuine, spontaneous "waters."

Although our ensemble (Universitas Studiorum Zagrabiensis; USZ) in the early years played and recorded mainly English and Croatian music of the Renaissance and early Baroque with a quartet of viols or in a combination of voice, recorders, viols and harpsichord, I couldn't never forget the performances of our teachers and colleagues from Studio. Thus, all this time I was dreaming of the performance of medieval - especially secular music. Sometime in 1973, this finally came true, and I sang, and in addition to recorder, started to play the Istrian *sopela*, *vielle*, rebec and lijerica as well some plucked instruments such as (guitar) lute, Albanian *sharkija* (*saz*) and Dalmatian mandolin.

It is interesting that preserved medieval dances (especially those from the late 14th or early 15th century contain elements of some, let's call it, "written", hidden, improvisation, while vocal music is mostly preserved without anything.[89] It often has no clear rhythm or gives any ideas on how to embellish and revive this skeleton of melody ... Some of sources to embellish vocal secular and sacred music of the 14th and 15th centuries are (relatively late) transcriptions for keyboard instruments, such as those found in the Codex Faenza[90] and *Buxheimer Orgelbuch*. And here begins a "long and winding" journey of searching and experimenting with different possibilities of how to perform this repertoire: whether and with which drone to accompany the melody, how to behave according to rhythm, whether to interpret it in a free, *rubato* style or decide to follow previously rhythmic transcriptions of earlier musicologists, to add one or more instruments to the performance, etc.

In preparation of the program "*Trobadors und das Vierte Kreuzzug 1202*" (performed several times in Belgium and Austria; recorded in 1992 as a CD, for the label "Preiser Records" from Vienna) our Viennese ensemble "Lyra" ("Ensemble Lyra Wien") - more precisely Mira Valenta and I - for the first time "jumped" into the "waters" of the so called and already mentioned *contrafactum,*[91] because most of the lyrics[92] were not preserved with the music. In various sources (primarily in the extraordinary work of Ismael Fernandez De la Cuesta, "*Las Cancons dels Trobadors*", published in 1980) we found songs with music and the appropriate number of syllables, and in several cases (like in the three-part *epistle* by R. de Vaquèiras, dedicated to his lord and friend, Marquis Boniface I de

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[88] In any case, to depart as far as possible from, for EM "wrong", settings I ought to learn during my academic music studies.

[89] Even if due to some more recent investigations it seems this opinion has to be changed too.

[90] It was transcribed, edited and published by an American musicologist of Croatian origin, Dr. Dragan Plamenac.

[91] *Contrafacture* (from lat. *Contra* against and *facere* to make) means the process of artistic production and its result, in which a new work of art is made from / existing / work of art while retaining certain components of form. Counterfeiting is an example of intertextuality or intermediality ... ... In music theory, both the procedure and the result of a certain process of creating a new musical song are called counterfactors. In doing so, only the lyrics of the existing work are changed, so that the new song has the same melody or motif.

[92]They have been found and chosen by linguist prof Miquela Stenta from France. She added all the relevant information and prepared an appropriate pronunciation for us,.

Monferrato) we had to do some kind of collage or patchwork because there were no other options or "models" having same poetic form. In this case I "composed" and written introductory improvisations, interludes and postludes for three of us "Westerners", Mira Valenta, Austrian flutist Reinhard Czasch, and at least to some extent for me too. However, they served us exclusively as a guidelines because we played a partially new version by each performance (or in the case of the so-called "takes", when recording). For our colleague Esmail Vasseghi (the outstanding Iranian *santur* and *tombak* player and composer living in Vienna), of course, this was not necessary. All we had to do was tell him how much time we were giving him for his solo, and after just one listening, he would feel the "tonality" and the mood of the piece and start to improvise...

I have often played with Esmail for over 20 years (1983-2004) within the "Clemencic Consort" as well as many times, in various programs, with our ensemble "Lyra" too. As much as it was possible for a Westerner (despite all the affinities and contacts with music, culture and tradition of the Balkans, the Orient all the way to India), I tried to adopt and include in my own improvisations at least bits of this enormous wealth that he has endowed us during all these years.

Also, it should be said that to my formation of first class EM musician capable to improvise contributed substantially my twenty years of collaboration and learning through performance with my most important teacher, role model, EM "father" and friend dr. René Clemencic (1928-2022). Notwithstanding all the above, an important role and contributions to my improvisations (in a variety of styles) were the unforgettable collaborations and experiences I gained playing the music of Spanish Jews, the Sephardim. This repertoire has always fascinated me because it unites in itself (and again: like another "bridge"...) the Spanish late Middle Ages, elements of Hebrew psalmoding, oriental rhythms and melodies taken over by the Sephardim in their new homelands in the Balkans, Turkey and North Africa. In addition, at least until the last Yugoslav war, a strong and very active Sephardic minority have been present for centuries in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in Sarajevo. Some of the most beautiful Sephardic romances (both in their lyrics and melodies) were recorded there or in Israel, by Sephardim who arrived from Sarajevo. It all started in Vienna, with the collaboration with the Ensemble *Accentus* (in a pseudo-medieval style and with those instruments), continued with the *Ruth Yaakov Ensemble*[93], and in the late nineties with the *Lena Rothstein ensemble*[94], in which I played exclusively my "invention", a Turbofiddle[95] My improvisations from both concerts with the Ensemble AGIL you can see and listen on one of my YouTube channels, under Igor Pomykalo Turbofiddler.

In addition to this very intense and dear Sephardic experience, in the mid-nineties and beginning of 2000s I collaborated in concerts and recordings with Austrian guitarist and composer Walter *Valdinho* Langer and had the honour and fortune to perform with two outstanding Indian musicians, already mentioned brothers Prakash and Vikash Maharaj (*tabla* and *sarod*). There was a lot of improvisation in styles from the traditional oriental, through blues, jazz and Latin, flamenco to the rock. At the same time, I made two further collaborations, which consisted almost exclusively of improvisation; on several occasions I played with German pianist and keyboardist Helmuth Fischer (he later, after 2000, made a jazz career in his native Germany) and Viennese funk guitarist Martin Hüttl.

In the last couple of years of my work and life in Vienna and later, I had several beautiful, successful and unforgettable collaborations with the Viennese ensemble of contemporary dance,

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[93] This was a more traditional performance but still with my medieval instruments; vielle and rebec. In this regard, I especially remember the short but intense and instructive collaboration with Dhafer Youseff, renown singer and player of *al oud* from Tunisia.

[94] For the first time with elements of flamenco, jazz and rock, as part of an international ensemble which included two Austrians, Greek guitarist, Turkish percussionist and me, from Croatia.

[95] An ex-violin now with six strings and pickup.

"*Tanz Atelier Wien*" (led by Cecilia Li and Sebastian Prantl) where I embarked for the first time on the so-called free improvisation.[96]

Croatian improvisation?

I have already mentioned that almost from the very beginning of my EM career I was intrigued by the possibility of creating a kind of "Croatian" improvisation. So I began to analyse of what, which motives - you could call it modules - are composed performances of mostly dance music in Istria and Dalmatia, which is of course true for all other even the interior regions of Croatia, such as Slavonia. This, I remember well, happened during my contacts with the ensemble "Lado" and the Institute of Folklore in Zagreb - especially with its leader, the late Croatian ethnomusicologist Dr. Jerko Bezić[97].

For various reasons[98], I abandoned this idea, returning to it very superficially every now and then, and only after more than 50 years I decided finally to do something more serious with it. Thus, I made at least a superficial analysis of Dalmatian dances that have been performed on the *lijerica*[99] for centuries along the entire Croatian coast and on the islands - from Cres all the way to today's Montenegro coast[100]. Towards the end of the 20th century it was limited to the area around Dubrovnik (Župa and Konavle) but after the Homeland War, lijerica began to make its comeback, and today it can be heard again on the island of Hvar, in Metković, and elsewhere.

Truth be told, the primary reason I returned to this idea was my comeback to the *lijerica* (2018), during preparatory work for my double CD "*Dalmatia zauvijek / Dalmatia 4 Ever*" (2019) and my first and second experiences with the so-called "Dalmatian metal"[101] This area, if supplemented with analyses (which, I believe, have already been done by my fellow players of *lijerica, dipli, roženica/sopila*, perhaps *tamburica*, and mandolin, at least for their own needs), of numerous recordings of Istrian, coastal, and Dalmatian dances in general, could yield interesting results and insights if one were to seek a 'pan'-Mediterranean, Southern European way of playing and improvisation in it.

In all histories of Croatian music written in the past 150 years, we read that Dalmatian, especially Dubrovnik, Renaissance poetry was sung to the accompaniment of the lute or similar instruments, just as was the practice in neighbouring Italy. In very rare cases, we have explicit statements (such as with Zoranić) regarding this practice. Now, the first and quite acceptable way to re-create the musical component of this extensive repertoire is to use the *contrafactum*. I did that in the mid-90s, and so did my colleague, the Zagreb lutenist Professor Igor Paro, while setting to music a large number of texts from Zoranić's "*Planine*" (*"Mountains"*), which mention that they were sung accompanied by "*gusle*, *chitara*, rebec," or similar instruments.[102]

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[96] I will publish a selection of the best of the preserved (mostly "live") recordings on my website together with the textual, musical and pictorial materials of this study.
[97] Even today, I regret that I did not follow his advice to study ethnomusicology (after graduating from viola) because I have always been attracted and interested in this field and nothing has changed here even today ...
[98] The most important of them was (and has remained to this day), that from my earliest childhood I was interested in far too many things, and I often wandered from one area to another and back, trying to reconcile the almost impossible; daily survival and artistic early and other music career ...
[99]See in the Appendix/ Music Examples, no.I-3 and in More Music.
[100] Where the Croatian, Catholic, minority still lives today.
[101] Some kind of my fusion, crossover, Dalmatian dances on lyric or diploma, fiddle, *ojkanje* - even singing in procession from the island of Hvar ....
[102] Under the guide of colleague, prof. Igor Paro, we prepared the program called "Mountains of Petar Zoranić" in 2019 and performed it in Imotski and Nin.

It occurred to me: why not go further (a little or a lot further) and try to create a repertoire not only of entire *frottolas* or *villanellas* (which could serve as *contrafactum*), but also to analyse a certain number of these forms to extract (harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic) "modules" that more ambitious singers (or, in a science fiction scenario, those who accompany themselves on a plucked or bowed instrument like lira da braccio) could adopt, learn by heart, and then use in improvised performances. See Chapter 7 for more details, along with a number of specific musical examples in the Appendix.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this compendium, it evolved from one of my earlier and shorter studies in English, 'How to improvise... on Lire,'[103] so it is connected to my long-standing practical and theoretical engagement with the phenomenon of these instruments - let's call it my obsession with them.

I encountered this phenomenon as early as the early 1970s, and I began taking the first concrete steps to expand my knowledge and gather information and contacts around 1977-78. I received my first instrument of the lira family, the lira da braccio, in 1981, and I immediately started playing it. I acquired my second instrument, the lira da gamba/lirone, in 1985.[104]

From 1996 to 2001, at the Department of Performance Practice of the then *Hochschule für Musik* and now the University of Music in Vienna, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Mag. Hartmut Krones, I worked intensively on the scientific project *Lira da braccio and Lirone: Reconstruction of Playing Technique and Repertoire*.'[105] In order to present the project, I held a series of lectures with concerts in Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and Croatia, and I made study research in New York. Although work on this project 'officially' ended in 2001, I have since produced several newer versions (in the original German, Italian, and Croatian languages) and concluded them all with a completely new English final version in 2018.[106] After intensive engagement with this study, particularly with the outstanding book by American musicologist Blake Wilson,[107] 'new horizons' opened up not only on the art of improvisers (*cantori ad lyram*) but also on both liras.

The liras have long been one of my (most important and favourite) early music obsessions, an obsession that still doesn't 'let me go' even today, after fifteen years of being in (relatively restless...) retirement. It is thanks to the liras that I began to engage with the issue, the phenomenon, of improvisation in a completely new, more intense way.

To remember and repeat:

[BAILEY-India] p.2 Viram Jasani on learning to perform Raga

p.3. V.Jasani on teacher's (*guru*) method

[BAILEY-Rock Music] p.6, p.7. Steve Howe on improvisation in Rock

[BAILEY-Jazz] p.10. Ronnie Scott on improvisation in Jazz

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[103] See in the Chapter 7.
[104] Both are based on the original instruments kept in the collection of historical instruments at the *Kunsthistorisches Museum* in Vienna, made by the British maker of early instruments and good friend, Mr. Robert Hadaway.
[105] Which, as always in my case, had primarily a practical purpose.
[106] See on my website: www.igorpomykalo.eu or www.academia.edu . There is every chance that there will be another, corrected, version of this text ...
[107] Almost the entire Chapter 5 of this study is based on his work.

[BAILEY-Organ Improvisation] p.13. Ferand, p.14. Methods, p.16. The essence and comparison with composition

[BAILEY-Baroque Music] p.18 Baroque music revival

[BASS-Improvisation…] p.20. Ortiz *Recercadas* on *La Spagna*
p.21-23 Comparison with jazz 1

p.25 Trends in Venice and Comparison with jazz 2,

p.26. Milan in the 1590s, p.27. Conclusion

[MY EXPERINECES] p.32. Contrafactum 1, p.33. Croatian improvisation?

p.35. Lira and Lirone

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