

Improvising: Playing the Notes not on the Page

Presenter: Steve Jenkins

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I. What exactly is improvisation?

Improvisation is “The creation of a musical work, or the final form of a musical work, as it is being performed. It may involve the work’s immediate composition by its performers, or the elaboration or adjustment of an existing framework, or anything in between. To some extent every performance involves elements of improvisation, although its degree varies according to period and place, and to some extent every improvisation rests on a series of conventions or implicit rules”. Groves Dictionary of Music Online, www.oxfordmusiconline.com. accessed 9/22/15

II. My working aesthetic of music

George Rochberg states, ‘It no longer matters what “style” a work is (or was) composed in so long as it is music.’ from Albright’s intro to his “Chorale Partita in an Old Style on ‘Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten’” Elkan-Vogel, catalogue no. 163-00032, 1971

III. Skills used in improvising

IV. Two kinds of improvising

A. on a given melody or hymn tune

French and English Suites by Bach, BWV 806-817

Methodical Sonatas by Telemann, BA 2951

B free improvising

V. Tricks of the Trade