

Free improvisation

- the improvisation journey is begun without a 'map' or pre-decided shape
- the player allows the fingers & bow to be controlled by the subconscious
- can be used to explore
 - sound worlds - *pizz.* / *arco* / *col legno* / *sul tasto* / *sul ponticello* etc.
 - techniques - *glissando* / *shifting* / *double stopping* / *spiccato* / *vibrato* etc.
- usually has no discernable tonality - no sense of going to and from keys in an organised way
- often has little or no discernible metre

Why do *Free* improvisation?

- it's fun!
- a great way to
 - start a lesson with very young pupils
 - give pupils of any age a short break after concentrating hard on something
 - can be a relaxed way of exploring shifting, vibrato, keys, styles etc
- may help pupil start to build a 'bank' of musical/technical ideas
- the improvisation session can be recorded and listened to, so the pupil can
 - re-use ideas for a more structured improvisation
 - use ideas to kick-start the early stages of a composition(but be aware that recording can make a player very self-conscious, and restrict freedom of thought)

Free improvisation is mostly about *playing*

Structured improvisation

- the improvisation journey is begun *with* a discernable shape and structure e.g.
 - call and response
 - ABA etc
 - exploring particular scales/arpeggios
 - working towards to a pre-determined ending/cadence
- the player exercises some control of the journey
- exploration of sound worlds and techniques is controlled in some way
- there is discernible metre
- there can be a pre-determined style

Why do *Structured* improvisation?

- structure gives reluctant pupils a starting point and a 'safety net'
- structure can switch on pupils' interest in musical form
- structured improvisations can be worked on and re-explored later
- 'polished' structured improvisations can be performed in concerts
- if recorded, can help a pupil remember ideas and/or structures that can be re-used or developed

Structured improvisation can get pupils *thinking* more about shape, order and style

Composition

The process of composition is different from simply writing down an improvisation

- it is a process of *development* of ideas, including
 - discerning the initial 'cell' of an idea /ideas
 - using compositional techniques to develop /manipulate these cells
 - layering ideas to create a score with more than one part
 - it worked on a bit at a time, giving the composer a chance to reflect both consciously and sub-consciously
- a draft composition can be altered and adapted and saved in more than one version
- a finished composition can be kept in more than one version

Why do *Composition*?

- a finished composition can be performed by others at a later date
- it allows someone to write for others to perform (perhaps on an instrument they don't play themselves)
- it can lead to aspirational practising, to be able to play one's own composition

Composition is about shaping ideas into a completed work, with its own existence