

AREA 1.

8/ Focussed listening to an artist will deepen your comprehension of their dialect, the nature of their talent and the appreciation of their offering. Transcribing solos will elucidate the detail. Elements of this experience will remain with you and become 'yours', undoubtedly enriching your musical appreciation and vocabulary. Again I would recommend trying to be as aware as possible about what you're *programming* in.

9/ Hearing; being conscious of the sounds of your environment, the sounds character or *textural* quality. As an exercise, try to divorce the sound you hear from your knowledge of its physical origin. This a challenge because we are so keen to identify. We mistake identification with knowing. For the mind and the ears to *get inside* the sound, we should try and bypass the need to identify. You really need to give the sound your full attention as it moves through time clashing with other sounds, stopping, starting, louder, softer. In the end it's unlikely you will hear a sound in isolation, rather in layers and levels. Even when it seems very quiet, if you attune your ears you may hear a relative racket on a micro-audio scale! To experience the sound means to move with the sound without reflection, speculation or questioning about it. This process develops aural sensitivity and perception.

10/ Critical judgment, personal tastes and expectations impact on the experience of listening. Is it possible to diminish the power that these elements exert over our facility to listen? Why would we wish to do this anyway? Firstly, to get beyond the noise in our heads requires considerable effort. Your *concerns* will always be interrupting the experience which is to JUST LISTEN now. Fine! The important thing here is to keep being drawn back into just listening. There is a freedom to be experienced here, freedom from the discriminating mind/ears and an indulgence, a simple pleasure in the phenomenon of sound. *Discriminating* listening is most definitely a part of the skills and requirements of a musicians life, but when this skill is highly developed it seems to become equally hard to disengage this discriminating power and claim the child-like joy in hearing anew.

11/ It is helpful to consider improvisation as composition when employing improvisation as an extension upon, or an involvement with, a structure that already exists (predetermined). But it is *vital* to consider improvisation as composition when no predetermined structures exist at all! In this case the term improvisation is a misnomer. A more accurate description would be a term such as realtime composition or spontaneously performed composition (or spontaneously performed interactive composition, *spic**, in the case of group activity). Meaning; the parameters and substance of the structure of the music are decided as the performance is occurring, in that moment.

What is structure and what is not structure? It is sometimes helpful to turn to the dictionary for a definition; "structure - manner of building or putting together: arrangement of parts or of particles in a substance, or of atoms in a molecule: manner of organization: an organic form". I think the use of the word 'manner' or 'way' is important here.

There is the generally accepted formal recognition of musical structure (good structure) and non-structure (poor or no structure) in different societies. Let's define it as key features or components that are used in a particular manner. These structural features give sounds a collective identity recognizable as this or that, a style. Music styles in our society are enshrined in a system that is reinforced by repetition. The system varies depending on the requirements of the style, and if a musician is performing well within that genre they will be reflecting, enhancing or extending its structures.

However, outside of these systems, there are no such limitations to the notion of 'structure'.

A 'structure' can take any form or direction imaginable. It may be unstable, it may be unpredictable, it may be inconsistent, it may be chaotic. It may also be inclusive of any existing music system/style in a way that either follows 'the rules', or not, and it will be further defined by the relationships of all the components, their interaction.

What happens when this broader definition of structure is applied to music making?

The outcomes will be highly influenced by the *manner* in which the music is made, the relationships of the parts and their interaction, the conditions of the context and environment of performance, personal 'mindsets' of performers. The scope of this approach to and thinking about structure in music, makes it highly suitable as a vehicle for expressing the depth and breadth of humanity. It allows for extreme, highly idiosyncratic and impure hybrids of collective or individual conceptions of musical form and language.