

## AREA 2.

NUANCE \* CONTEXT \* TASTE/CHOICE \* EMOTIONAL MOOD  
AURAL SENSITIVITY \* MENTAL PERSPECTIVE

*This refers to the animation of sound, the feeling given to the making of sound.  
What makes sound music.*

1/ With guitar playing it could be said that it all happens at the point of contact between fingers and strings. How we activate the string, how we fret the note, what we do with the note once it's been struck, these subtleties of touch are crucial indicators of expression. A very different feel is created when you use the left hand to hammer a string of notes rather than picking each one. Be aware of the nuance of articulation or the articulation of nuance, as a vital ingredient in the creation of subtlety. A quivering finger vibrato can infuse a single note with the energy you'd expect from a flurry of notes.

2/ An intricate and complex string of notes that sound great on their own can sound inappropriate and unmusical in the wrong context. A simplistic, insignificant idea can be highly effective given the right context. You might have a great lick that you're itching to display, but if the placement or timing is wrong (played at an inappropriate moment) it won't work, perhaps because its usage was dictated more by the mind (the desire to impress, "look mum, no hands"!!) than the intuition. There is a time and place for everything.

3/ "Oh, I've made a mistake!" or, "That was a WRONG note, I've blown it". A mistake is what you did not intend and then decided you did not like. In improvisation, this unexpected situation need not be negative if you can work with what you've created in order to maintain the *flow*. Your preferences are the result of consistent choices made over time. Patterns or tendencies emerge that are reinforced by similar decisions being taken again. The results may be described as your taste. However this state is constantly being modified, updated or transformed. It may be true that the last note you played was not what you intended but the real improviser will take this as an opportunity to discover something new. An opportunity to 'update' your taste, to expand yourself, to take in this 'mistake' and employ it in the service of musical *flow*.

I think there is an argument against any note being inherently *bad*.

4/ John likes listening to *violinist 'A'* because of her asymmetrical phrasing and her distinctive approach to pitching notes. Sue dislikes *violinist 'A'* because she doesn't play in time and her pitching of notes is out. Who is right and who is wrong? Two differing opinions in the highly interpretive world of improvised music making. The point here is not to say that anything goes in any situation. Rather, do not dismiss anything that does not immediately appeal without question, because in another context, circumstance, mood or state of mind, that thing may be exactly what is required.

5/ What expectations do you have of yourself in performance? No matter how prepared and competent you are, all the forethought and emotional build up to an event can lead to .....FREEZE!! Suddenly you don't even know how to tune up! Emotion is all powerful, be aware that your emotional state prior to and during performance will have a direct bearing on the quality of the music produced. Any skill developed for relaxation or mental focus will assist in directing emotions and ease of performance. Deep breathing, meditation, physical activity like stretching, or some encouraging words that you know help put you in the right 'head space'. It may be that you need to spend a few minutes away from everything just prior to your performance, in order to remind yourself that you are here to make music or to centre yourself after an exciting build up.