

## AREA 3.

### OPENING TO THE WORLD OF SOUND

*Psychological, emotional and physical conditions play a definitive role in music performance and the aural interpretation of sound. Aural phenomena exists even if we don't hear it.*

1/ From the motivation to make a sound on your instrument, to the audibility of that sound, is a pathway upon which influences or perhaps 'obstacles' abound. Such as; technical preoccupations or insecurities, being overtly self conscious, rampant emotion, ego ambition and so on. These are mental and consequently 'real' experiential states. If this pathway is not *reliant* upon or *dominated* by such constructs, then there is a greater freedom to play with all elements or none of them. There is a freedom to be involved in a music making process that offers less allegiance to conditioning/habit/history and more to the unique nature of the moment. It goes without saying, that everything we do in music is *coloured* by who and what we are, this is what we have to work with. Freedom is relative. Your own freedom of expression is something only you really know about. There will be a time when you sense an impediment to that freedom and it may be the influences or 'obstacles' described above interfering with the flow of inspiration. It often only takes a minor adjustment of thinking pattern or a simple strategy to regain your sense of freedom or fluidity.

2/ The nature of sound. A sound has an innate quality of its own that exists apart from us hearing it. Our powers of perception, listening, hearing, conditioning, expectations, the physicality of our ears, are forces that interact with the physical nature of the vibrational energy, to form our experience of the sound. A sound is vibrational energy transmitted through the molecules of air to our eardrums, instantly physically experienced whilst simultaneously 'decoded' and processed by the mind. Music is the organization of sound. We take sound and turn it into a kind of code, employing it to express, communicate to ourselves and each other or, simply to hear the sounds in combination without any intent beyond that.

3/ The energy generated in a music performance is like the energy that generates a wave in the ocean. The improviser is the surfer who must be highly responsive to the prevailing conditions, in order to ride the wave successfully. An open and flexible state of mind regarding the form of the next wave is needed, as each wave varies in the challenges it presents. Alongside the basic skills, speed of responsiveness and sensitivity to nuance are crucial.

4/ To change your focus away from the usual mind-set that accompanies music making procedures is to initially invite insecurity. However, it's possible that this insecure state quickly brings about the true improvising spirit or intuition, which automatically assesses its predicament of unfamiliar conditions or elements and devises unforeseen, fresh creative solutions. 'Mistakes' (or unintended actions you've instantly decided you don't like!) will occur because you are disengaging the '*watchdog*' conscious mind, to some extent. But, exactly what are these 'mistakes' and how can they have a place in true improvisation?

Let's say you suddenly decide you want to play a particular sounding chord and the chord you then play has a different sound to what you intended. Do you stop or berate yourself and shout, 'Can we try that again'? What about at the moment that you played the unintended chord, you instantly decide to *pretend* that what you just played was completely intended! Of course, this frozen moment in reality is part of a continuum, a musical flow where nothing is static. Have the mental space to allow that unintended chord to inspire you to play something else, being simply a link in the chain, a point of tension, a sentence in the paragraph.

If the same thing happens again, employ the same procedure! Yes, *you* are playing the music, even though you may feel like you're not achieving what you were intending and a little out of control.

There is another perception to be had here, that is that the music is revealing *itself* to you. You are supplying the momentum, the energy and somehow, *despite* your intentions, music is emerging, a story is unfolding.

Who owns it? Does that matter? If you do not intend it, is it music? The point is, *music is revealing itself through you*, through the group as a whole. This is precisely how to create freshness and excitement!