

Empathic Interaction: A Study of Jazz Ensemble Performance

This presentation explores empathic interaction in three contrasting improvised jazz case studies in which I perform alongside expert improvisers. Following on from Roslyn Arnold's *Empathic Intelligence* (2005) and Frederick Seddon's *The Modes of Communication during Improvisation* (2005), this research uses a methodology that focuses on interrogating group attunement communicated by aural instruction within the performance process. Case Study One (*Player Piano*, 2015) was a one-off performance that used pre-existing repertoire and relied on limited rehearsal time. Case Study Two (*Embodied Hope*, 2016) was a fourteen-day tour with a quartet that focused on developing a self-composed suite of music. Finally, Case Study Three (*(no)boundaries*, 2017) was a set of freely improvised performances that explored a lack of predetermined structure.

Attempting to describe a level of interaction beyond reaction, proaction and sympathy, my theory of empathic interaction provides a means to elevate group attunement in live performance based on an atmosphere of musical trust that 'allows for creative risk-taking, which can result in the production of spontaneous musical utterances' (Seddon, 2005: 58). Through detailed analysis of my three case studies with varying levels of predetermined composition, this presentation will describe a journey that tested Seddon's empathic creativity model with professional jazz musicians and explain how it led to increased levels of group attunement in each case. At times displaying a propensity to facilitate empathic speculation; my attempt to describe a further level of group attunement.

Exploring the existent embodied knowledge specific to each case study and its enactment by aural instruction in live performance, this presentation demonstrates how an empathically creative approach to musical interaction consistently pushed the members of each group beyond our usual boundaries in order to influence the actions of one another.

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Andrew Bain is one of the leading performers and educators in Europe having performed with luminaries such as Wynton Marsalis, Natalie Cole, Kenny Wheeler, Randy Brecker, John Taylor, NDR Big Band, Dave Liebman and Bob Mintzer.

Andrew has a trio of his own projects in action at the moment: *Player Piano* (2015) with Mike Walker, Gwilym Simcock, Iain Dixon, and Steve Watts; *Embodied Hope* (Whirlwind Recordings 2017) with George Colligan, Jon Irabagon, and Michael Janisch; and his latest project - *(no)boundaries* (Whirlwind Recordings 2020) - a free improv exploration featuring Peter Evans, Alex Bonney, and John O'Gallagher released in March 2020.

Andrew is Deputy Head of Jazz at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Director of Jazz for the National Youth Orchestras of Scotland, and sits on the steering committee for the *International Network for Artistic Research in Jazz*.