

Implementing Imagination for Evoking Teleodynamic Systems Which Create Constraints to Constitute Improvised Musical Pieces

Jaak Sikk (Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre)

Performers:

Sergio Castrillon, violoncello (University of the Arts Helsinki)

Kristjan Kannukene, viola (EAMT)

Aya Masui, percussion (Vienna – Japan)

Jaak Sikk, piano (EAMT)

Improvising freely together with their peers in a classroom setting can be challenging for a music student, as no specific guidance is provided, and students must rely solely on their inner ideas, rules, etc. This long-term exploratory study with eight Estonian music students tested imagination as a tool for providing improvisation guidelines to enhance group dynamics. A different set of methods (behavioral observation of the whole situation, detailed musical analysis of the improvisations, professional evaluation by improvisation teachers, and student feedback) was used for analysis. The results show that the implementation of conscious imagining is helpful for forming a certain constrained expressive area for improvisers, in which the improvised music is clear, stylistically coherent, and the improvisers are at relative ease in self-expression.

Jaak Sikk, PhD in Music

Improvisation lecturer at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theater

Member of Estonian Youth Academy of Sciences

Researcher

Improvisor

Jaak Sikk (PhD in Music) is a practitioner-researcher at the Department of Contemporary Improvisation, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, where he teaches contemporary improvisation and open notation. His work explores how imagination—understood as a dynamically embodied and situational process—can be implemented as a guiding structure in free improvisation. Drawing from both artistic practice and empirical research, Sikk develops methods that assist novice improvisers in accessing spontaneous self-expression through mental modeling and interactive constraint-formation. His recent studies engage with the teleodynamic nature of improvised music-making, situating it within broader frameworks of cognition, musical semiotics, and ensemble dynamics. Jaak Sikk is a member of the Estonian Youth Academy of Sciences.