

## Investigating the Improvisers' Perspective Using Video-Stimulated Recall

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### ABSTRACT

#### Background

There have been a number of studies and ethnographies investigating the complex creative activity of improvisation. Two important recurring themes are the use of multiple strategies (Norgaard, 2011) and the importance of prospective auditory imagery. Comparatively few studies have focused on the privileged role of auditory imagery strategies in validating improvisation as a creative practice, however.

#### Aims

The aim of the study is to obtain accounts of musicians' experience of idea generation in improvisation, with a focus on strategy use and the role of auditory imagery. Participants are also invited to talk about why they improvise and what they value in the practice.

#### Method

Six participants who self-identified as improvisers (1 female, mean age = 29 years, range = 30 years) were each video recorded whilst improvising to a backing track. Immediately after the improvisation, participants were asked to offer a commentary on their video during semi-structured interviews. These were then transcribed and a thematic analysis carried out (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

#### Results

Thematic analysis of the data is in progress, but preliminary results indicate the use of multiple strategies, including music-theoretic, motor and imagery-driven approaches. There is also evidence of *sketch planning* (Norgaard, 2011), and the importance of auditory imagery.

#### Conclusions

Although any conclusions must be tentative until the analysis is complete, the use of auditory imagery was important to these improvisers and motivations for improvising were bound up with concepts of freedom and creativity. It is possible that the privileged status of auditory imagery in improvisation is related to these ideas.

#### Keywords

improvisation; auditory imagery; video-stimulated recall

### REFERENCES

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