

LUKAS FOSS

STUDIES IN IMPROVISATION

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LSC-2558

LIVING STEREO

STUDIES IN IMPROVISATION

LUKAS FOSS

IMPROVISATION CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

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"... musical history in the making... a stimulating and live experience in musical spontaneity... the beginning of an inspired concept in instrumental music!"
—Maurice Faulkner, Saturday Review

"... one of the most notable feats of contemporary music."

—Ernst Bacon

"... extremely refreshing, truly fascinating and stimulating..."

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"... incredible delicacy, suggestive at times of the fiery imagery of Webern. And what virtuosity! Each of these men is a creative artist..."

—Louis Biancolli, N. Y. World Telegram & Sun

Ideally speaking, an improvisation should not be recorded. It is music which, when heard live, varies with each playing. It is chance transformed into a moment of significance. The pinning down of the moment, the perpetuation through recording is in conflict with the very idea of improvisation. However, if one thinks of a record not as a perpetuator but as a means of making the new known and available, then the recording of these improvisations becomes imperative and all opposing arguments fade into the background.

Ensemble improvisation as attempted here is new. It is based on new premises. It is an informal, spontaneous type of chamber music, proposed not in lieu of traditional chamber music practice, but in addition to it.

The Improvisation Chamber Ensemble is a pioneering group of four, who believe in improvised chamber music: (1) as an essential new outlet for the many excellent performing musicians in the world; (2) as a new hunting ground for the composer; and (3) as a challenge to the musical curiosity of the listener.

Says Lukas Foss, composer, originator of the technique and pianist of the group:

"The music on this record is the result of extensive research and practice, of constant critical listening to one another, of developing from childish beginnings to the rather complex structures attempted on this record. I should welcome other musicians to follow suit, to form improvisation ensembles, to build on what we have accomplished, and to learn from our limitations and errors. It will take more than one approach to establish the art of ensemble improvisation as a way of making music. May this record make new friends for the art."

Lukas Foss has been a professor of composition and conductor of the university orchestra at the University of California at Los Angeles since 1953. He studied in Berlin and Paris before coming to the United States in 1937. He continued his studies at Curtis Institute, the Berkshire Music Center and Yale University. He has appeared as piano soloist and conductor with American symphony orchestras and in Europe. His diverse interests and talents are reflected in his compositions, which include three operatic works, two piano concertos, a symphony and other works for orchestra, chamber music in various combinations and several works for voices.

Mr. Foss' interest in the possibility of ensemble improvisation dates back to the spring of 1957 when, together with Richard Dufallo and Charles Delancey, he formed the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble. Howard Colf joined the group in 1959. A year later the ensemble went on its first national tour which included appearances with the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra. The music of the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble is documented for the first time on this recording.

Produced by Peter Dellheim

Recording Engineer: Edwin Begley

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STUDIES IN IMPROVISATION

LUKAS FOSS AND THE IMPROVISATION CHAMBER ENSEMBLE



LUKAS FOSS, piano
RICHARD DUFALLO, clarinet
CHARLES DELANCEY, percussion
HOWARD COLF, cello
assisting: David Duke, French horn

Side 1

FANTASY and FUGUE for Piano, Clarinet, Percussion, Cello (11:10)
MUSIC FOR CLARINET, PERCUSSION AND PIANO (7:15)
VARIATIONS ON A THEME IN UNISON
for Clarinet, Horn, Cello, Percussion, Piano (7:09)

Side 2

QUINTET (Moirai) for Clarinet, Horn, Cello, Percussion, Piano (12:30)
ENCORE I (Bagatelle) for Piano, Clarinet, Cello, Percussion (1:59)
ENCORE II (Air Antique) for Cello and Percussion (4:30)
ENCORE III (Circus Piece)
for Clarinet, Cello, Percussion, Horn, Piano (3:30)

Public performance clearance—ASCAP

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STUDIES IN IMPROVISATION / Improvisation Chamber Ensemble

Notes by Lukas Foss and Richard Dufallo

The music on this record is not composed, not the result of random ad-libbing, not jazz. It falls into the category of what might be named: **SYSTEM AND CHANCE MUSIC**. A specific formal or textural musical vision is committed to paper. Instead of traditional musical notation, the paper contains instructions set down in symbols, letters, numbers. Example: $S^1 \longrightarrow H^L$ (signifies: supports player 1 until ready to lead the harmony). The musicians, as they play, translate the symbols into sound. They do not stake their hope on the element of chance and its capacity for yielding interesting musical results,—they do not put their trust into the order, the system, which coordinates the chance happenings. System and chance form the basis for ensemble improvisation, but *the performer holds the reins*. He does not passively translate his symbols into sound, he listens critically and plays accordingly. His task is to find the appropriate note, rhythm, phrasing, dynamic, register on his instrument, and at a moment's notice. He corrects chance rather than surrenders to chance—chance controlled rather than chance *in* control.

The resulting music sounds at times as contrived as a written-down composition. Advance planning, ordering, is responsible for the “composed” effect. Actually it is the rigid planning which makes spontaneity, improvisation possible.

THE THEORY

It would be presumptuous as well as impossible to reproduce the technical procedure here *in toto*. We shall limit ourselves to such theoretical data as are essential for those who wish to follow the score (the charts) while listening.

Guide-Sheets Each musician has a guide-sheet in front of him on which his tasks are listed. The guide-sheets are like individual parts extracted from the score (the charts).

Guide-Tones—predetermined, appear on the guide-sheet. They are used only in pieces (or parts of pieces) where tonality is desired. Guide-tones usually consist of easily memorizable four-tone patterns. (Example: F E^b B^b F) These may be rigidly transposed to the degree of the second or third note. (Example: E^b D^b A^b E^b—B^b A^b E^b B^b) Or inverted. (Example: G A D G)

Guide-Tones are not themes, not even musical motives. They are points of reference, helping the musicians stay together; sometimes they are “roots,” sometimes just a degree of the scale on which to form the “preferred-intervals series.”

Preferred-Intervals Series Over a given guide-tone the musician has the choice of the major second, minor and major thirds, the fifth, the minor and major seventh. These intervals are the least likely to undermine the supremacy of the guide-tone. Their use is therefore safer for vertical (harmonic) control than the use of the remaining five intervals. Naturally all existing intervals may be used wherever it is possible to arrive at a choice of note by way of “listening.” The restriction to preferred intervals is recommended only when such listening is impossible (for instance, when

a chord is struck by all, simultaneously). When the guide-tone shifts, the preferred-interval series is transposed accordingly.

Duration of a guide-tone, or of a particular area, is sometimes indicated on the individual player's guide sheet in terms of bar numbers, but more frequently it is not fixed in advance: an area, or guide-tone duration will be shorter or longer depending on the moment of entrance of the subsequent leading instrument.

THE ROLES*

Melody or Theme—usually the leader unless otherwise indicated.

Support This is the most characteristic role in ensemble improvisation: the critical listening to another, and playing accordingly.

Harmony, when called for on the guide-sheet, usually stands for chords, struck on cue from either the melody player or harmony leader.

Counterpoint A line, resulting from the interplay between three instruments who keep “out of each other's way.” Each of the three usually has a specific part of the bar assigned. If guide-tones are in effect the counterpoint players will adhere to the preferred-intervals series.

*Only the four basic roles are listed here. The chart will reveal many subsidiary roles.

THE PRACTICE

No matter how often the musicians play from the same guide-sheet, the music emerges changed: “We try to remember the good notes, forget the bad ones. We work toward a goal, the realization of the basic, initial, musical vision. The piece changes, grows in unity and clarity as we keep playing it. We do not play ‘anything that comes to mind,’ rather, we play ‘anything that comes to mind within a pre-determined, limited sound-conception.’ After we have performed a piece a dozen times, it usually emerges a new piece, one in which the first attempt can barely be recognized. In a word, we evolve our pieces through the process of improvisation. Even when we feel that a piece has been achieved, even then we do not memorize. We cannot; since one of us will invariably inject an unexpected element which forces everyone to change his course. Only when a player is on a solo, may he end up by repeating, memorizing his improvisation (example: the pizzicato cello-solo in *Air Antique*). Short themes, motifs, might be remembered, spontaneously altered, exploited. Then comes the point when the musicians feel the need to improvise new themes, or abandon the piece altogether, discard that particular guide-sheet. Improvised pieces seem to have their own life-span. The basic vision which prompted the piece may yield so much and no more. Other pieces stay, as it were, in the repertoire, yielding ever new ideas for improvisation.

The following charts will reveal the interrelation between the *predetermined* basis and the *improvised* content. Bracketed indications in thin print are meant to facilitate following the score. They refer mostly to tempo changes, repetitions, and other occurrences particular to the recorded improvisation. (In other performances of the same piece the bracketed indications are likely not to obtain.)

FANTASY and FUGUE for Piano, Clarinet, Percussion, Cello.

The FANTASY (*featuring the piano*). The massive chords sounded by the clarinet and cello are played on cue from the leader (the piano) who indicates with his hand or head where he wants the chords, whether they are to be played loud or soft, long or short, high or low, struck once or several times.

The FUGUE (*four voices*). The musicians have improvised many short fugues before the present lengthy double-fugue was attempted. The two fugue-themes are the result of improvisation remembered, adopted. All other notes and rhythms, counterpoints, episodes, etc. vary with each playing. It is interesting to note that the fugue expositions are tonally determined and have a definite bar scheme, the episodes are free.

[Agitato] [TEMPO 1] Vivace

PIANO ① M ———→ M ———→ M ———→ S³ (VIVACE)

CLARINET ② H¹ H¹ H¹ H¹ S ———→ H¹ [x x x] H¹ H¹ H¹ [x x]

PERCUSSION ③

CELLO ④ H¹ H¹ H¹ H¹ S ———→ H¹ [x x x] H¹ H¹ H¹ [x x]

G A D G A B E A D E A D G A D G

- T — THEME
- T₂ — SECOND THEME
- T₁ — THEME INVERSION
- T_d — THEME DIMINUTION
- M — MELODY
- S — SUPPORT. If followed by a number (S³) — SUPPORT PLAYER ③
- H — HARMONY
- H¹ — ON CUE FROM LEADER (PLAYER ①)
- R¹ — LEADS RESPONSE
- C — COUNTERPOINT
- FC — FREE COUNTERPOINT
- x — REPEAT
- — ENTRANCE
- G.T. — GUIDE TONE (indicated under staves)

TEMPO 1 PIU MOSSO [RIT. AL.] TEMPO 1 RECIT.

PIANO ① → M ———→ M ———→ H M H

CLARINET ② H¹ H¹ H¹ M — S¹ — H¹ * [H] M M H

PERCUSSION ③

CELLO ④ H¹ H¹ H¹ → S² ———→ H¹ * [H] † M H M H H H

G A D (G) D G *LEADER DECIDED TO ADD CHORD †MELODIC FRAGMENT

T

TEMPO 2

PIANO ① 4 T — S — FC — 4 T — (4) M — 4 S —

CLARINET ② 4 T — S — 4 T — S — 4 T — S — 4 T — S —

PERCUSSION ③ 4 T — S — 4 T — S — 4 T — S — 4 T — S —

CELLO ④ 4 T — S — 4 T — S — 4 T — S — 4 T — S —

BARS 4 4 4 4 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 2

G A D G A B E A D E A D

PIANO ①

CLARINET ②

PERCUSSION ③

CELLO ④

BARS

2 2 2 2 1 1 1 1

F E^b B^b F F G A D G G

T_T

p

etc.

[POCO SOST.]

PIANO ①

CLARINET ②

PERCUSSION ③

CELLO ④

D B E D *B G[#] C[#] B E C[#] F[#] E D B^b

[PIU MOSSO]

PIANO ①

CLARINET ②

PERCUSSION ③

CELLO ④

TEMPO 1

TEMPO 2

G A D G F F E^b B^b ‡(F) G

* B G.T. IN EFFECT AS CELLO STOPS

‡ THEME FRAGMENT

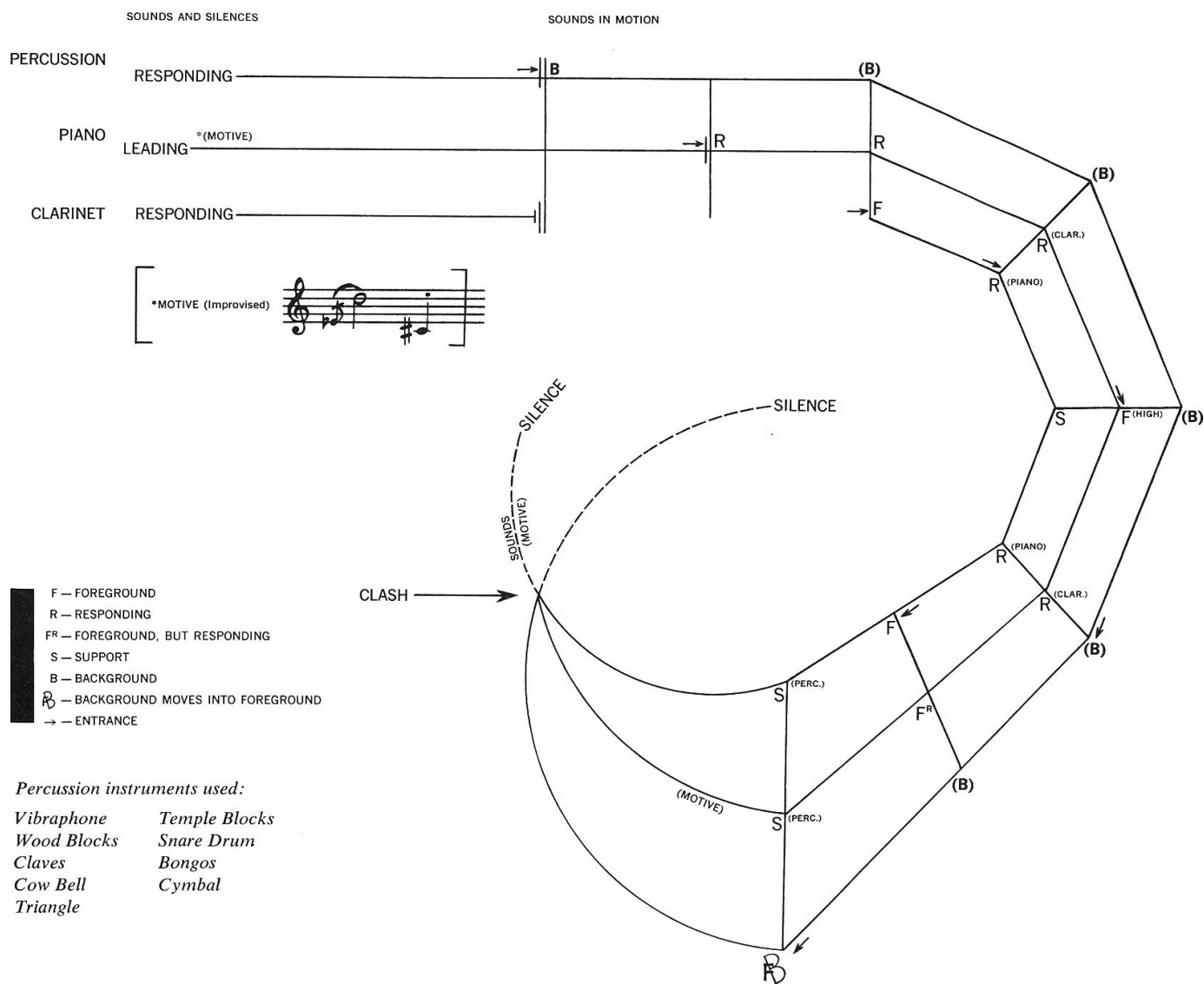
‡ OMITTED BY LEADER (Piano)

MUSIC FOR CLARINET, PERCUSSION AND PIANO

This piece, being atonal, uses no guide-tones. Nor do the musicians make up themes. There is a short motif. This varies with each playing. So does the length of the piece; at times it lasts five or six minutes, other times ten.

The introduction is appropriately entitled: SOUNDS AND SILENCES. Out of silence, single sounds emerge, return to silence. This may be described as an expression of "not yet music" or "introduction to music." With

SOUNDS IN MOTION the music proper begins. The percussion sets the pulse. The use of high wood blocks and claves, with marimba sticks, suggests electronic "white-noises." Some of the unmotivated dynamics in the clarinet and piano have similar electronic connotations. At the end, the percussion in the background moves in on the foreground (clarinet and piano) and ultimately takes over. (See chart symbol $\mathcal{B}$.) Such ideas form the pre-improvisation plan, the musical vision, which, incidentally, recalls Mr. Foss' Time-Cycle, composed at the time.



VARIATIONS ON A THEME IN UNISON *for Clarinet, Horn, Cello, Percussion, Piano.*

The theme notes are composed. We have here a simple succession of single notes moving from the tonal center A-flat to F.

- T — THEME
- — SHOWS RHYTHMIC VALUES (Thematic)
- M — MELODY
- H — HARMONY
- H^L — LEADS HARMONY
- H^L — ON CUE FROM LEADER (PLAYER ①)
- C — COUNTERPOINT
- S — SUPPORT
- TS — THEME SUPPORT
- — ENTRANCE



THEME

Allegretto

CLARINET ①				(①) RECIT.
HORN ②				
PIANO ③	T			
PERCUSSION ④	T			
CELLO ⑤	T			

A^b E^b F C C^b B^b A^b E^b F A^b E^b F C C^b B^b A^b E^b F F D^b G^b D^b G^b D^b G^b D E A^b E^b F C C^b B^b A^b E^b F

VARIATION I.—The piano and vibraphone exchange chords, back and forth, imitating the rhythmic pulse of the theme. The clarinet frames the variations with short, questioning recitative-phrases.

CLARINET ①	SOFT	RECIT.	RECIT.	RECIT.	RECIT.
PIANO ③	M	M	M	M	M
PERCUSSION ⑤	M	M	M	M	M

F F F F F

VARIATIONS ON A THEME IN UNISON

VARIATION II.—the theme plus improvised harmony (guide-tone controlled). Theme and first two variations are played without interruption forming what may be termed the first movement.

	SOFT	LOUD	SOFT	LOUD
CLARINET ①				
PIANO ③				
PERCUSSION ④				
CELLO ⑤				
	A ^b E ^b F C C ^b B ^b A ^b E ^b F	A ^b E ^b F C C ^b B ^b A ^b E ^b F	F D ^b G ^b D ^b G ^b D ^b G ^b D E	A ^b E ^b F C C ^b B ^b A ^b E ^b F

VARIATION III.—the slow movement. The harmony on cue from the clarinet provides a background for the solo horn. The latter implies the theme in design though not in interval-structure.

	SLOW			
CLARINET ①	H ^L H H H	H H H H	H H H H	H H H H
HORN ②	M	M	M	M
PIANO ③	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹
PERCUSSION ④	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹
CELLO ⑤	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹	H ¹ H ¹ H ¹ H ¹
	E ^b B ^b C E ^b	B ^b F G B ^b	C G A C	E ^b B ^b C E ^b

VARIATION IV.—the scherzo. The theme is heard over a pointillistic texture made up of single notes sounded by the piano, vibraphone and cello.

	Scherzo			
CLARINET ①				
HORN ②				
PIANO ③	C	C	C	C
PERCUSSION ④	C	C	C	C
CELLO ⑤	C	C	C	C
	3 F	3 C	3 D	3 F
	4 F	4 C	4 D	4 F

QUINTET (Moirai) for Clarinet, Horn, Cello, Percussion, Piano.

The Moirai (*Fates*) are Greek goddesses who control the destinies of man. CLOTHO, who spins the thread of life (birth), LACHESIS, who determines life's length, and ATROPOS, who cuts it off (death). This is program music. In accordance with their guide sheets, the musicians

begin by improvising four quiet chords, the Motto, which opens the first and second movement and develops in the last. On the programmatic plane, this Motto takes us on the journey: birth, life, death.

I CLOTHO—An invocation; the piano weaves around the clarinet tune.

A bell-like cradle-song is heard in the middle of the movement.

*MOTTO

	A	F	G	A
CLARINET ①	H ²			
PIANO ②	L			
PERCUSSION ③	MOTTO (H)			
	H ²	H ²	H ²	H ²
CELLO ④	H ²			
HORN ⑤	H ²			
	F		F	

Allegro

CLARINET ①	M (SUSTAINED)			M
PIANO ②	P		M	P
PERCUSSION ③			S	
CELLO ④	H		P	H
HORN ⑤	H		H	H

BARS 4 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 2 2 4 4 2 2 4

F E^b B^b F G F E^b D^b A^b E^b F E^b B^b F

PIANO ②	S
PERCUSSION ③	M
CELLO ④	S

BARS 4 2 2 4 4 4

G A D G F G

CLARINET ①	M
PIANO ②	P
PERCUSSION ③	
CELLO ④	H
HORN ⑤	H

BARS 4 4 4 4 4 2 2 4

F E^b B^b A^b F E^b B^b F

- M — MELODY
- H — HARMONY
- H^L — LEADS HARMONY
- H¹, H² — ON CUE FROM LEADER
- (PLAYER 1, PLAYER 2, RESP)
- MH^L — LEADS HARMONY IN MOTTO
- S — SUPPORT
- P — PULSE
- C — COUNTERPOINT
- FC — FREE COUNTERPOINT
- — ENTRANCE

*MOTTO MELODY NOTES AFGA PREDETERMINED.
Harmonization improvised for initial statement.
Each time motto occurs, players attempt to recall the initial sound.

II LACHESIS—This forms the main body of the piece. Different sections cover a wide dynamic range. An extended cello solo, accompanied by a few sparse horn notes, gives way to a short scherzo. There follows a struggle climaxed by the re-entrance of the horn. Finally, return of the cello melody, older, wiser.

MOTTO

A F G A

Lento

CELLO ① H² H²

PIANO ② L H H H (H)

PERCUSSION ③ H² H² H² H² H²

CLARINET ④ H² H²

HORN ⑤ H² H²

F G A^b E^b F A^b

Scherzo

CELLO ① 3 C H C

PIANO ② 3 C S C

PERCUSSION ③ 4 C M C

CLARINET ④

HORN ⑤

BARS 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4

D B E D B G[#] C[#] B E C[#] F[#] E D B E D A^b F

Lento

CELLO ① M

PIANO ② H

PERCUSSION ③ H

CLARINET ④ H

HORN ⑤ S (GUIDE TONES ONLY)

A^b E^b F A^b

CLIMAX

CADENZA

S

FC

FC

FC

M

III ATROPOS—The Motto is heard, is expanded, but remains dispassionate, objective. A semblance of life is attempted, breaks down. The Motto resumes. There is no motion, no drama. “End” is, as it were, spelled out in tones.

	MOTTO				(EXPANDED)							
	A	F	G	A								
PIANO ① *MH	L											
CLARINET ②	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹			H ¹			
CELLO ③	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹			H ¹			
PERCUSSION ④	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹			H ¹			
HORN ⑤	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹	H ¹			H ¹			
	F	E ^b	B ^b	F	G	A	†(D)	†(G)	F	(E ^b)	(B ^b)	(F)

*MHL conducts all chords, plays along or in between at will.

†MHL chose to omit these two chords, indicated return to F. G. T. (1st chord) by finger sign, then chose to omit remaining three G. T.s by inviting clarinet to proceed.

PIANO ①	3	S	etc.				
CLARINET ②	3	M	etc.				
CELLO ③	4					M	etc.
		D	B	E	D		

	MOTTO											
	A	F	G	A								
PIANO ① MH	L											
CLARINET ②		H ¹		H ¹	H ¹				H ¹			
CELLO ③		H ¹		H ¹	H ¹				H ¹			
PERCUSSION ④		H ¹		H ¹	H ¹				H ¹			
HORN ⑤		H ¹		H ¹	H ¹				H ¹			
	F	E ^b	B ^b	F	G	(A)	(D)	(G)	F	(E ^b)	(B ^b)	(F)

THE THREE ENCORES

ENCORE I (Bagatelle) *for Piano, Clarinet, Cello, Percussion.*

This is the first of three improvisations of lesser pretension.

The piano strikes a theme, the clarinet continues, fanfares build to a climax, the theme returns.

ENCORE II (Air Antique) shows the use of only two instruments, rarely coupled: the cello, playing mostly *pizzicato* (*à la* guitar), the percussion, playing mostly on vibraphone (without vibration).

The three *da capos* force the cellist to recall his solo in detail.

This task resulted in a piece which, unlike the others on this record, is not so much improvised as it is the result of improvisation.

ENCORE III (Circus Piece) features the clarinet in a boisterous theme, the cello in a display of mock-sentimental virtuosity, the percussion in a droll combination of pitched and pitchless instruments, the horn in bass notes *à la* tuba, and the piano in a cadenza accompanied by chords struck by other instruments, who take their cue from the “conducting” pianist. This is an example of the *joyful noise* with which the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble likes to end its recitals.



LUKAS FOSS: *Notes On Ensemble Improvisation*

To the classically trained musician, improvisation means something makeshift, random, haphazard. Also, it invariably means *solo* improvisation to him, and he is likely to regard it as a form of self-indulgence. Let us make no mistake about it: solo and ensemble improvisation are two different procedures not to be confused with each other. In solo improvisation the artist is in full control, in ensemble improvisation he is part of the whole. In solo improvisation the artist is responsible to himself only, in ensemble improvisation he listens to his fellow players and plays accordingly. In solo improvisation the artist need not adhere to any preconceived structural principle, in ensemble improvisation he must abide by melodic, harmonic and structural rules lest anarchy and chaos take over. Without order, direction and discipline, there can be no ensemble improvisation. In fact, ensemble improvisation is not possible unless specific ordering principles have been determined beforehand. This involves a study of musical freedom within a controlled field: a study of the predetermined coordination of non-predetermined musical ideas.

Our approach to the idea of ensemble improvisation is the result of research I conducted at the University of California at Los Angeles since 1957. It was in the spring of that year that I founded the first IMPROVISATION CHAMBER ENSEMBLE. This "founding" was at the time no more than a declaration of intent, an expression of faith in a possibility; the possibility of a procedure, of a skill which would enable musicians to literally "make (invent) their music as they make (play) music."

That musician and listener alike would benefit from this additional dimension to musical performance no one would deny. The question is: can one provide a technique which makes ensemble improvisation *workable*, without constant recourse to set tunes, set chord-patterns, set rhythm patterns, to given "entities" which already are music, thereby relegating improvisation to the sphere of variation and ornamentation? The question is: can one set up an order which will give the performer sufficient free rein for the flight of his imagination, and at the same time set up controls for keeping the musicians together? (An order of abundant horizontal leeway and some vertical control.)

Walter: "Wie fang ich nach der Regel an?"

Sachs: "Ihr stellt sie selbst und folgt ihr dann!"

—RICHARD WAGNER—DIE MEISTERSINGER

Our earliest attempts were built on the idea of skeleton compositions (some notes written down, others to be added at the moment of performance). This proved to be a failure. In fact, many of our earlier premises had to be discarded because they restricted invention, or did not guide invention properly, or would give us a freedom which we did not know how to use. Our present procedure is something we arrived at through trial and error. It does not claim to provide the complete answer to all questions and expectations. Rather, it lays a *foundation*, at this writing, the only one of its kind known to us, the only systematic attempt at organizing the materials of music for ensemble improvisation.

The new mode of music-making,—which I do not propose in lieu of traditional chamber music practice but in addition to it,—may best be understood as a classical counterpart to jazz improvisation, or to various oriental improvisational forms of ensemble playing. It can also be viewed as akin to the pre-classic practice of continuo playing (improvised harmony over a given base). Improvised ensemble music, music which is the result of diverse minds creating simultaneously, is of course vastly different from music carefully plotted by one individual, the composer, whose supreme effort goes into the producing of enduring work, of a masterwork. In our masterpiece-conscious time, one welcomes a musical expression which need not claim immortality in order to claim validity. While the virtue, the watermark of a masterwork is the measure of its durability and hence its repeatability, improvised ensemble music, on the other hand, derives its fascination from its ever-changing contours. It is unrepeatable. Listener and player alike become absorbed in a process wherein anything may happen any time—and never again. Sounds may emerge unlike any that any one member of the group would have envisioned. Time and again we experienced that, meager though the individual contributions may be, they "add up" when part of a combined effort. (The total is more than the sum of its constituents.) Furthermore, gifted musicians will discover that any random note-group can be turned into a melodic phrase which makes musical

sense. Mere chance formations can become the source for new musical ideas; new possibilities can open up, vistas of new musical simultaneities, answering the need, conscious or dormant in every artist, to experiment, to find a new approach, to make something new, surprising and enjoyable to ourselves and to others.

Seen in this light, ensemble improvisation is likely to stimulate *composition*. In fact my own interest in ensemble improvisation is that of the composer first, the educator second and the performer third.

The basic conception, the planning of the structure, the "lucky accidents" which occur in abundance when we play, give the composer valuable hints and ideas for his own work and point toward areas worthy of his investigating powers, worthy of that curiosity which is at the bottom of the composer's need to compose... "The next work [in this period of exploration]... will mix composed with improvised elements."

—IGOR STRAVINSKY, *Memories and Commentaries*

As to *music education*, it will have to take into account and foster the instrumentalist's capacity for inventing imaginative passages on his instrument. This capacity is hampered at present by the gaps in even the best performing musician's training. Many musicians who have attempted our ensemble improvisation have felt a shock upon realizing how unprepared they were to hear what need be heard, to find notes on their instrument, to assume the new responsibilities which come with ensemble improvisation. Solfege, ear training and general musicianship courses seem, in the light of our need, unimaginative and inadequate.

A word about *the audience*. In our recitals we have had occasion to notice that the audience, after a while, adopts a new listening attitude which is in sharp contrast to the devotional listening rightfully customary at concerts when the music of the masters is played. I dare say that the listener will be in a better position to follow complex compositions if he has had the experience of the kind of "active" listening required from him at improvisation concerts. This active listening is a combination of curiosity and excitement similar to that which we feel when we watch a game or contest. (Peculiar to ensemble improvisation is the element of danger, of "hit-or-miss," which an audience is quick in grasping and enjoying.)

Finally, a word about ensemble improvisation and its function within contemporary music. To the historian, it will be significant that the recent renaissance of interest in improvisation has followed close on the heels of the discovery of electronic music. Both improvisation and electronic music have a vital stake in *chance*. Apart from this they stand at opposite poles: electronic music is produced directly on tape. Whenever the piece is played it will be identical in every detail. Improvised music, as we have seen, is ever-changing, unpredictable, unrepeatable, and should be heard "live." Electronic music eliminates the performer. Improvised music, on the other hand, allots the performer new responsibilities.

To the long conflict between composer and performer—partners who, ideally speaking, should complement one another in a relationship built on mutual need (and who are separated today by the widest gulf) electronic music offers one solution: divorce. Ensemble improvisation offers another: it brings composition, or more accurately, musical invention, together with performance. In fact, the two become an undistinguishable process. Good therapy for a distinct marital problem.

At the risk of being proven wrong, I should like to predict that in due time, ensemble improvisation, in one form or another, will be studied in conservatories and universities.* String and wind groups, etc. that will try their hands at it, will play masterworks the better for it. Chamber groups of three to six players will spring up and bring informal, improvised concerts to the devotees of the new way of making music. Because: as a natural outlet, as a joyful exercise of one's musical gifts, as an education of musical spontaneity, alertness, sensitivity, restraint, and as a listening discipline few things can take the place of ensemble improvisation.

*Since these lines were written, a program charging the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble with the recruiting of other improvisation ensembles has been inaugurated at the University of California, Los Angeles under a grant by the Rockefeller Foundation. Also, in preparation: a text book on ensemble improvisation as practiced by the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble.