The Art and Science of Improvisation

Stord/Haugesund University College, 8th - 12th June 2015
Welcome to the Summer School 2015

A warm welcome to the June 2015 GRS interdisciplinary course in music studies. This course is part of a summer school event organised in collaboration with the research school NAFOL and Stord/Haugesund University College.

The theme for the course is "The Art and Science of Improvisation". Interdisciplinary approaches to the subject of improvisation are emphasised and through the course participants will be asked to engage with improvisation as method, theory and practice-based knowledge. The course offers an exciting range of ways to participate via lectures, workshops, panel sessions and seminar groups. Some sessions will include performances and interactive improvisation music/dance sessions.

As usual the course is designed with a focus on candidate project work, and candidates are offered the opportunity to present their own project work and gain feedback from senior researchers and peers. Candidates can participate and gain credits via oral presentations that focus on their own project or related key texts.

For the first time we offer the opportunity to participate in a candidate led round table debate. We hope that candidates will take up this opportunity to discuss the theme in relation to their own discipline and research work.

There is also a full diary of social events including a fjord cruise and a conference barbeque.

We look forward to a productive and inspiring week on the idyllic island of Stord.

Dr Jill Halstead,
Director
GRS

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# The Summer School at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday 8/6</th>
<th>Tuesday 9/6</th>
<th>Wednesday 10/6</th>
<th>Thursday 11/6</th>
<th>Friday 12/6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>9:00 – 11:15</strong> Videoanalysis (III) Prof. Carey Jewitt</td>
<td><strong>09:00 – 10:30</strong> Keynote Prof. Keith Sawyer Teaching as disciplined improvisation</td>
<td><strong>09:00 – 10:30</strong> Keynote Prof. Gert Biesta Virtuosity in teaching: On improvisation and embodied judgement</td>
<td><strong>09:00 – 10:30</strong> GRS SEMINAR Candidate presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11:45 Artistic tableau</strong></td>
<td><strong>10:30 – 10:45 Pause / Speaker’s corner</strong></td>
<td><strong>10:30 – 10:45 Pause / Speaker’s corner</strong></td>
<td><strong>10:30 – 10:45 Pause</strong></td>
<td><strong>10:30 – 10:45 Pause</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12:30 – 14:00</strong> Keynote Prof. Anna Lena Østern Narrative philosophy in improvisational theatre. A lecture performance with the playback theatre group Theatre Momentum Quartet</td>
<td><strong>13:15 – 14:15</strong> NAFOL Paper presentations/master classes/process seminars</td>
<td><strong>13:15 – 14:15</strong> GRS SEMINAR GRS Research Installation</td>
<td><strong>13:15 – 14:15</strong> GRS SEMINAR Reconsidering Improvisation</td>
<td><strong>13:15 – 16:00</strong> GRS SEMINAR Candidate Roundtable: Discussions on the theme «Improvisation»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>13:30 – 14:30 LUNCH</strong></td>
<td><strong>14:45 – 16:00</strong> GRS keynote Dr. Sigbjørn Aipeland Improvising with the harmonium: Stories and Sounds</td>
<td><strong>14:30 – 16:00</strong> GRS keynote</td>
<td><strong>14:30 – 16:00</strong> Summary panel debate: Keynote speakers + Research schools, IMTE repr. Moderator: Magne Espeland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14:45 – 16:00</strong> Improvisation in teacher education (The IMTE project) - Introduction &amp; parallel sessions</td>
<td><strong>16:00 – 16:30</strong> break</td>
<td><strong>16:30 – 18:00</strong> Grieg Academy Research Group for Jazz &amp; Improvisation (GAIMPRO) : Teaching Improvisation for Real</td>
<td><strong>16:00 – 16:15 Closing &amp; farewell</strong></td>
<td><strong>16:30 – 18:00</strong> Grieg Academy Research Group for Jazz &amp; Improvisation (GAIMPRO) : Teaching Improvisation for Real</td>
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<td><strong>18:00 – 19:00 Tone Østern &amp; Luis della Mea Dance improvisation – contact improvisation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>19:00 – 22:00</strong> FJORD CRUISE, DJ/STORD</td>
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GRS Keynotes
Keywords: Creative processes in music, improvisation, composition, Iranian music, alterity, discourse.

Abstract
Since the late 1980s, an important strand of my research has sought to understand the underlying creative processes of Iranian classical music (musiqi-ye asil), a tradition in which the performer plays a central creative role and which is therefore often described as ‘improvised’, both in the literature and – since the mid-20th century and drawing on concepts initially adopted from European music – by musicians. Methodologically, one of the greatest challenges has been tracing the relationship between musicians’ verbal discourses - usually taken by ethnomusicologists as evidence of cognitive processes - and what happens in practice. Of course, the relationship is a complex one and the dual ethnomusicological methods of (a) ethnography and (b) transcription and analysis don’t always tell the same story. In the case of my work, I found a disjuncture between musicians’ discourses of creative freedom, albeit underpinned by the central memorised repertoire known as radif, and the analytical evidence which showed the music to be highly structured around a series of what could be termed ‘compositional procedures’, but which are not explicitly discussed by musicians. The results of analytical enquiry thus led me to problematise the dominant discourses which reify improvisation (bedāheh-navāzi) and emphasise the oral, ephemeral and improvised nature of Iranian classical music against something more planned and structured as represented by the concept of (usually implying notation) composition (āhang-sāzi); and ultimately to an interest in the implications of such binary thinking, both for the study of Iranian music and more broadly for (western) musi­cology.

More recently, I have been working with younger musicians - university-educated and cosmopolitan - who are developing new discursive frameworks for their creative practice, including an explicit articulation of compositional intent and an intellectual-analytical approach to performance which are quite new to Iranian music. From the researcher’s point of view, this closer alignment of practice and discourse makes it easier to discuss finer details of creative process with musicians. Of particular interest are the ways in which some of these musicians are moving beyond the accepted oppositional discourses of creativity and are re­imagining notions of musical difference, including a more porous understanding of creative practice and a more integral relationship between the ‘improvisational’ and the ‘compositional’.

This keynote address will explore various themes and issues arising from my work on creative processes in Iranian classical music, particularly in relation to questions of alterity. As well as discussing specific examples from Iranian music, I will engage broader questions concerning musicological paradigms, particularly where these have been mobilised as a marker of ‘otherness’, as in the case of (western) musicological discourses of creativity or in Iran where some scholars have drawn on notions of difference to distinguish a local ‘indigenous’ musicology from an externally-imposed (Euro-American) ‘imperialist’ musicology. I examine the implications of such paradigms for the analysis and understanding of musical creativity.

Key questions addressed by the lecture
❖ What is the relationship between the creative processes we usually refer to as ‘composition’ and ‘improvisation’?
❖ How have musicological paradigms and discourses around musical creativity been mobilised as markers of ‘otherness’?
❖ Is it possible to transcend existing binary thinking in understanding creative processes in music?

Recommended reading

Preparation for the session
Read the above texts and research key terms.
Keywords: Improvisation, broken instruments.

Abstract
In this presentation, I will take a distanced position towards my own playing, trying to analyze what is happening when a contemporary improviser puts a forgotten, but historically and symbolically loaded instrument into play.

I will use the harmonium as a point of departure for problematizing the genres, contexts, stories and memories that are parts of the social event that any musical statement represents.

Improvising on the harmonium is not only about making sound. It is about relating to more or less broken instruments, logistics and solving a lot of practical challenges. For me the “musical” and the “extra-musical” (or text/context) becomes an inseparable unity.

Quote from an album review:
“Glossolalia (HUBRO CD2503) is harmonium player Sigbjørn Apeland’s debut solo album, recorded for the relatively young Hubro imprint. It is a sombre, droning affair that hones in rather intimately on the harmonium, allowing ample airtime to the various incidental creaks and cranks that accompany playing any instrument that is in a state of disrepair. Instead of bringing the listener out of the experience, however, the imperfections lend the recordings a sense of honesty; this feels like an album that was recorded in a room with hardwood floors, with Apeland and the harmonium sharing the space alone.
Compositionally, the tracks highlight the gentle, almost insidious nature of the instrument, with the tones often feebly aligning into chords; it’s only the deep low notes that convey any real sense of power, giving certain moments a considerably more meaty feel than others. This fluctuating pattern produce a record that ebbs and flows in terms of intensity; coupled with the innate sound of the harmonium, the album takes on a distinctly nautical sound. Tuneful yet freely flowing, Glossolalia reflects true affection for an instrument Apeland has been playing his whole life.”
(The Sound Projector, UK)

Key questions addressed by the lecture
♦ Are there any limits between music and context?
♦ How important is the difference between musical improvisation and everyday human action?

Recommended listening
Glossolalia (HUBRO CD2503).
GAIMPRO

Wednesday 10th 16:30 pm

Teaching Improvisation for Real – philosophical and didactical issues related to the process of teaching students how to be high-skilled jazz improvisers

Keywords: Jazz, improvisation, teaching.

Abstract
Improvisation skills are emphasized as important in many different areas, and it is common to generalize and transfer knowledge about improvisation between different professions. In some research literature, jazz practice is used both as an example and a metaphor for the nature of improvisation. In this presentation the members of GAIMPRO (The Grieg Academy Research Group for Jazz and Improvisation) will use their insider-position in jazz, improvisation and education to present and reflect on their own practice, both as jazz musicians and jazz educators. The purpose of this presentation is to go in the opposite direction of generalizing knowledge and understanding of improvisation, and instead go more deeply into what improvisation means in jazz education. The following discussion will show whether this resonates with the understanding of improvisation in other areas/practices. The presentation will also include some music performance by the members of GAIMPRO.

Some questions that will be discussed are:
- What is improvisation?
- What do we want our students to learn during their BA-degrees?
- What kind of improvisation-related competencies are emphasized in our jazz study?
- How do our students develop their improvisation competence?
- How do we balance and integrate the relationship between theory and practice?
- What is our role and mission as jazz educators in our students learning processes?

Key questions addressed by the lecture
- What is improvisation?
- How fruitful is it to generalize knowledge on improvisation and transfer it to different practices, related to developing a deeper understanding of improvisation in its own context?

Recommended reading

Preparation for the session
Each candidate should try to develop a definition of what improvisation means, based on the literature available for this course.
Improvisation and Post-Minimalism: Implications for the Development of Clinical Musicianship

Keywords: Post-minimalism, aesthetic Music Therapy, clinical and artistic improvisation, Paul Nordoff, clinical musicianship, therapy and performance.

Abstract
Art and clinical improvisation share many creative components that are similar. In clinical improvisation the creation and establishment of musical structure is integral to the ongoing aims of the therapeutic process. In artistic improvisation musical forms are freely created reflecting the spontaneity of players and potential listeners. The creative awakenings of both have much in common and if considered from an equal artistic perspective should be thought of as allies. If music therapy is to develop its artistic potential then post-minimalist stylistic influences could be seen to be crucial in the development of clinical improvisation. By comparing the post-minimalist movement with current theoretical trends in music therapy a new of critical thinking could emerge, one that considers equally the musical and clinical qualities inherent in improvisation. This presentation will highlight the balance between the musical qualities of clinical improvisation and the therapeutic potential of improvisation as art. Through the celebration of musical diversity contained in performance and therapy the artistic qualities of clinical improvisation can become equal to the non-musical formations of therapeutic aims. Based on the authors developing theory of Aesthetic Music Therapy audio extracts from improvised music therapy sessions will be presented. Through recent research comparing the compositional and improvisational processes of Paul Nordoff further questions will be raised with regard to the interface between artistic and clinical musicianship. This presentation will include two post-minimalist performances of works for tape and piano. Merging audio extracts from improvised music therapy sessions alongside live compositional responses, a new way of artistic/clinical music will be explored.

Key questions addressed by the lecture
♦ How can the stylistic components of post-minimalism be integrated into the developing resources of clinical improvisation?
♦ Is there a fundamental difference between the post-minimalist structures of composition as art and the free flowing character of improvisation as therapy, and how can the two be integrated?
♦ How important is it that music therapy acknowledges and is directly influenced by contemporary musical trends?

Recommended reading

Preparation for the session
For candidates who are music therapists I would ask that they consider the balance between artistic and clinical focus in their work. How important are the compositional and aesthetic qualities of their practice? Does music aim to serve their clinical aims or is music itself the focus of their therapy? For music therapists rather than specific readings I would ask that they spend time reflecting on the role of music by practising their clinical musicianship, as outline in Chapter 1 of ‘Improvising in Styles.’ To return to pieces they have learnt as students and consider how these pieces may be used as musical building blocks in improvisations with clients.

For candidates who are musicians and not music therapists I would ask that they consider aspects of their musicianship that are therapeutic and why? What are the musical components that facilitate feelings and potential therapeutic effect? Also do they consider the quality of music used by music therapists in improvisation to be equal to trends in contemporary art improvisation? The text that I think is most useful for musicians to read is ‘The Study of Music Therapy.’
**Sigbjørn Apeland.** Education from Rogaland Conservatory of Music (organ) and The University of Bergen (Ph.D in etnomusicology). He holds a position as associate professor at Arne Bjøndal’s collection of Norwegian folk music at the University of Bergen. He collaborates with musicians within a wide range of genres, especially church music, Norwegian folk music, electronics and improvised music. He has also composed/performed music for mixed-media projects, most recently: The Organ Tower (installation/performance for about 25 harmoniums and electronic organs), Kanskje aller helst der (play by Ragnar Hovland), Jeanne d’Arc (silent movie). Participates on about 40 recordings. Two of those have got the Norwegian “Grammy” – Spellemannsprisen. (With Alog, electronica 2005, and Sigrid Moldestad, folk music 2007). Apeland is one of the few musicians who frequently plays the harmonium on professional occasions. As an academic, Apeland has been teaching, supervising and writing within the fields of musicology, cultural studies, church music, theology and folklore studies. He has also extensive experience as a folk music collector and researcher, basically focused on material from Western Norway.


**Laudan Nooshin.** Senior Lecturer in Ethnomusicology in the Music Department at City University London, UK. Her research interests include creative processes in Iranian music; music and youth culture in Iran; music and gender; neo/post-colonialism and Orientalism; and music in Iranian cinema. Recent publications include the edited volumes Music and the Play of Power in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia (2009, Ashgate Press) and The Ethnomusicology of Western Art Music (2013, Routledge), as well as book chapters and journal articles in Iranian Studies, Ethnomusicology Forum and the Journal of the Royal Musical Association. Laudan is currently on the Editorial Boards of the Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication (Brill) and Ethnomusicology Forum (Routledge). From 2006-9 she was a member of the International Advisory Panel of the Journal of the Royal Musical Association and between 2007-2011 was co-Editor of Ethnomusicology Forum. Her forthcoming monograph is entitled Iranian Classical Music: The Discourses and Practice of Creativity (Ashgate Press).
Assistant Professor Eivind Austad teaches piano, improvisation, jazz theory and jazz history. His research interest is in jazz performance practices in modern jazz from the 1950s and up till our time, aural-based improvisation methods with an emphasis on harmony and rhythm and arranging/composition.

Associate Professor Thomas T. Dahl teaches guitar, improvisation, combo classes and jazz theory. His research interests are in performance practices on modern jazz guitar, improvisation techniques, ensemble development and music production.

Associate Professor Steinar Sætre is the leader of the GAIMPRO research group and teaches in jazz theory and jazz history. His research interests are in the pedagogy, culture and practices of jazz education, performance practices in early jazz, arranging/composition and jazz history.

Associate Professor Magne Thormodsæter teaches bass, combo classes and jazz theory. His research interests are in performance practices – especially in piano-trio and quintet format, methods for ensemble playing and research on beat placement and general improvisation methods.
Summer School Keynotes

Abstracts to follow

Virtuosity in teaching: On improvisation and embodied judgement

Gert Biesta is a professor of Educational Theory and Policy at the Faculty of Language and Literature, Humanities, Arts and Education at the University of Luxembourg. He is particularly interested in questions about citizenship, democracy and democratization.

Teaching as disciplined improvisation

Dr. R. Keith Sawyer is internationally known as an expert in the learning sciences and in the psychology of creativity. The last years he has been strongly associated with the phenomenon of improvisation in education. Sawyer has published several scholarly articles and is editor of several books, like “Structure and improvisation in Creative Teaching”.

Narrative philosophy in improvisational theatre. A lecture performance with the playback theatre group Theatre Momentum Quartet

Anna-Lena Østern is a professor in arts education at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway. She is scientific leader of the national graduate school NAFOL. Østern’s research interests concern multimodal educational design, aesthetic approaches to learning, and supervision in teacher education and research.
Ways to Participate

The GRS invites presentations from anyone actively involved in research, such as Ph.D. candidates, artistic research fellows, ‘førstelektor’ candidates and senior researchers.

**Oral Candidate Presentations**
We invite candidates to choose between 3 kinds of candidate presentations:
- Oral Ph.D. presentation (related to ongoing research projects and Ph.D. work specifically). Format is 20 minutes presentation + 20 minutes feedback.
- Oral presentation related to key text material. Format is 20 minutes presentation + 20 minutes feedback.
- GRS Candidate Roundtable
  GRS candidates are invited to participate in a roundtable discussion on the conference theme "The art and science of improvisation". The discussion will involve up to 5 candidates each giving 15 min presentation followed by questions and discussion.

**GRS Research Installation**
Candidates that choose to give an oral presentation are also expected to present their work in the GRS Research Installation. Candidates can present their current research project in a special installation which will be displayed for the duration of the Stord Summer School. The installation will be one way to communicate about GRS research to all the Summer School participants. The format for presentations is open and may take the form of posters, displays of images, artefacts or multimedia.

During the course GRS will host a special session where those involved will be given 5-10 mins talk about their poster/display and answer questions. We hope everyone connected to GRS, both candidates and senior researchers, will take the opportunity to disseminate their work in this way, so we can represent the breadth and depth of the research undertaken by the GRS community.

Please submit a 300 word abstract describing the display and a list of resources/technical requirements.
Oral Presentations - How to Prepare?

Ph.D. presentation (oral submission): 20 minutes
This presentation should be directly related to the candidates Ph.D. research. These presentations will be followed by feedback from keynote speakers/GRS senior researchers and other Ph.D. candidates.

How to prepare for the oral presentation?
This presentation should take the form of a research lecture considering one or two key questions or issues important to the work. Candidates should choose carefully how much to present given the time limitation. Use of appropriate audio/visual materials is recommended where possible. It is also recommended that candidates give clear information as to how the material of the presentation fits within the context of the Ph.D. as a whole.

Key text presentation: 20 minutes
Candidates can give a short presentation on an article or book chapter of their choice. The text chosen should be important to their Ph.D. research. Candidates can choose texts that strongly support or have influenced their thesis, or texts that challenge or oppose their work.

How to prepare for the key text presentation?
All presentations should be a clear, concise summary of the text, key questions and findings conclusions. Candidates should also consider including discussion of one or more of the following points.
- Summary of how the text has been significant to the candidate’s work specifically, or their field more generally.
- Summary of any opposition to/critiques of the text and its conclusions.
- Suggestions for further reading on the topic.

GRS Candidate Roundtable: 15 minutes presentation + active participation in the roundtable discussion
Candidates are invited to participate in a roundtable discussion on the conference theme “The art and science of improvisation”. The discussion will involve up to 5 candidates each giving 15 min presentation followed by questions and discussion.

How to prepare for the Roundtable?
Candidates that are selected to participate in the roundtable will receive mentoring from a senior researcher to prepare their presentation.
Førstelektor candidates are invited to a meeting to focus specifically on their work.

Candidates are encouraged to give a short presentation outlining their current work and progress towards førstelektor status. Presentations should be around 20 minutes and can be in Norwegian. Support and feedback will be given by members of the Scientific Advisory Board of the GRS and other førstelektor candidates.

If you would like to participate in this session register with liv.qvale@uni.no by 15th January.
Credits awarded
3 ECTS credits:
Active participation (full attendance and approved presentation).

5 ECTS credits:
Active participation and approved written assignment.

Requirements
Active participation means to
- actively participate in the course activities
- give one presentation during the course (oral presentation and/or participation in roundtable)
- present your research project in GRS Research Installation
- take responsibility for giving peer feedback to other candidates

All tuition is compulsory, and there should not be absence of more than 20%. Submitting a written assignment after the course is optional.

NB. Candidates can participate in more than one type of presentations if they wish and if there is space in the programme.

Registration
Please register online at the Summer School website:
http://prosjektsider.hsh.no/r15/

Registration opens:
February 1st

Registration closes:
March 1st
Submission Deadlines

Important Information

Written assignment submission (optional)
♦ An assignment of 5000-6000 words should be submitted to liv.qvale@uni.no within September 1st.
♦ The assignment should either be an essay based on the oral presentation at the course, or an essay from a choice of 3 topics related to the course theme (the topics will be announced later).

Abstract submission for Ph.D. presentation and Key text presentation
♦ There should be submitted an abstract for both Ph.D. presentation and for Key text presentation.
♦ The abstract should be no more than 300 words, include 4-8 keywords and cite between 2-4 references.
♦ Abstract + a short biographie (50-100 words) should be submitted to liv.qvale@uni.no within January 15th.

Signing up for participation in the Candidate Roundtable discussion or in the Førstelektor Group Meeting
♦ The candidate should register for participation by sending an email with a short biographie (50-100 words) to liv.qvale@uni.no within January 15th.

Abstract submission for GRS Research Installation
♦ A 300 word abstract describing the display and a list of resources/technical requirements should be submitted to liv.qvale@uni.no within January 15th.
Important Information

GRS members
The course is free for candidates and staff from the GRS owner institutions (HiB, HSH, HVO, UiS, UiB/GA).

External participants
There will be a course fee of NOK 3000.

Seminar Venue
The campus of Stord/Haugesund University College, Address: Rommetveit, Stord

Accommodation
Grand Hotel Stord
Address: Osen 5, 5405 Stord

Single room:
NOK 895,- per night incl. breakfast

Double room:
NOK 1095,- per room incl. breakfast

Accommodation will be booked centrally by the course administration.

The hosts provide
- Lunch all days
- Coffee/tea and fruits in the breaks
- Boat trip
- Summer School Barbeque

Questions?
If you have any questions about the course please contact:

Liv Gunnhild Qvale liv.qvale@uni.no

If you have any questions about the Venue please contact

Øystein Kvinge oystein.kvinge@hsh.no

Social Programme

Tuesday 9th
Boat Trip

Wednesday 10th
Summer School Barbeque

Thursday 11th
GRS dinner
The GRS course in November 2015 will be hosted by the University of Bergen.

Theme of the course:

**The study of musical practices:**

Methods in practice-led research/research-led practice

During spring 2015 keynotes will be announced and call for submissions will be posted on our website:

www.uib.no/en/rs/grieg

**AUTUMN COURSE 2015**

**The study of musical practices:**

Methods in practice-led research/research-led practice

University of Bergen, 24th - 27th November 2015
A MusicNet West Cooperation

Bergen University College – Stord/Haugesund University College – Volda University College
University of Stavanger – University of Bergen