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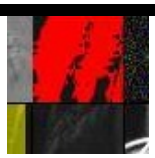

OLYMPIC CELLO WORKOUTIMPROVISATION

Creative break.

- Use different part of your brain
- Learn to listen to what you're playing in a different way.

PREPARATION	DESCRIPTION
No metronome, no scales. 5 minutes in length	Even if you have no intention of performing improvisation you can benefit from a little each day. You will learn more about yourself, what kind of ideas you gravitate to, what things you play well and vice-versa.

LEVEL 1

Play freely for 1 minute (approx.). Before each improvisation think of a mood or an image you will try to express in your improvisation. After you're done move on to a new image or mood. Anything is possible; anger, darkness, comic. Think of a scene from a movie (love scene, murder), your mood right now, a childhood experience, anything. Just be clear in your thoughts about what the feeling is exactly.
Please, do not judge yourself at all in this exercise. If you are like me and learned the cello in the usual classical model than you have internalized a very judgemental character who informs you whenever you play out of tune, with poor sound, and all the other things we try not to do. Unfortunately this character makes it very hard to improvise because it will constantly tell you what's wrong with what you are doing and make it impossible to continue. Give this character a break, some time off. Just play and try to enjoy your creative process without evaluating the results.

LEVEL 2

Continue as you did in Level 1 but consciously add more dynamic variation, different bowings, stops and starts, varying tempi. Create as much variety as possible. You may divide up the 5 minutes as you wish.

LEVEL 3

Do a series of short improvisations and concentrate on making clear beginnings-middles-and ends. Try to vary how you start; for example, start softly and end with a bang, or the reverse. What should the middle be about? Experiment.

Further Study

Transcribe a "lick" or part of a solo from a recording that you especially like. Make it pretty small to start; half a bar or a bar, not a long, long phrase. And try this *lick* in a different key or just freely improvise using this bit of a solo as a starting point and see where it takes you. Again, this isn't easy so don't be hard on yourself.

As you play listen to what you are doing and when you play something you like try to develope this idea by examining what makes it tick. You may play with the ideas intervallic content (for example maybe the idea is 6th followed by a major second.) which you try

out using different starting notes. Check out the idea's general shape (down then up) and play with that; its rhythm, anything about the idea that can be repeated somewhere else on the fingerboard in some new way.

NEXT LESSON ▶