

## Gestural Improvisation

I define my concept of gestural improvisation as a set of procedures that isolates those musical elements traditionally considered ornamentation or aspects of expression and elevates them to the level of most significant extrapolative detail. Examples of fundamental gestural improvisation techniques would be the implementation of glissando/pitchbend/vibrato in the area of frequency, active filtering/overtone isolation in the area of timbre, and tempo modulation/syncopation/rubato in the area of rhythm. This detail, however, is only one set of co-ordinates in a field of continuous energy. It is a simple function that results in a multiplicative reaction—like the ripples caused by tossing pebbles into a pond. The improviser chooses (or, often, is assigned) a promising area—a pitch, a rhythm, a texture—to light upon and attempts to establish a sphere of transformative influence over the entire system.

Gestural Improvisation can also be practiced by making minute rates of change in any number of processing techniques such as delay lines, panning, phase, etc. It breaks down singularities into microscopic scales and shadings in order to find deeper singularities— a single half-step frequency range or pulse rate may comprise the entire exploratory material for minutes at a time. The player sweeps through a particular circumscribed region with the intention of discovering a unique sonic dimension—an electrical, mesmerizing charge—that is the direct product of an acoustical fusion between his/her gesture and the surrounding energy field. Once this area has been identified and its epicenter determined, the player then develops a range of misalignment values that are used to create structures of tension and release.

Gestural improvisation is, above all, an exercise in friction—one rubs in the same area with the same motion until the heat produces sparks. The resulting sound of this activity, in the best of circumstances, takes on a sort of illusory depth as the two axes (player and field) beget an ultra-vivid third entity not unlike moiré patterns that trick the eye and re-orient the mind into accepting a new expanded reality.

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