

andrea la rose

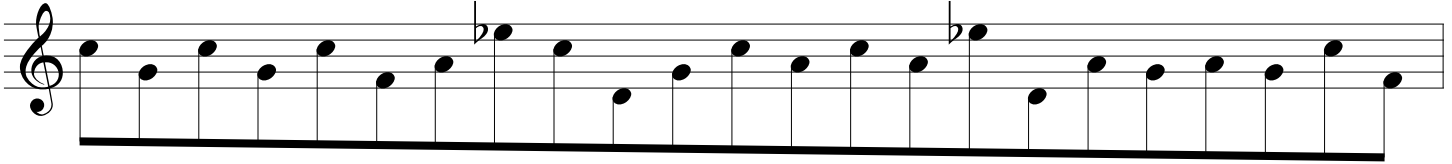
s e v e n w a y s t o s u n d a y
for any three players

(2004)

As a classically trained musician, I have only dabbled in jazz. Some people manage to do a serious study of both jazz and classical, but not me. I love jazz, but I've been turned off by the frequent presentation of it as the music that has exclusive rights to improvisation. In fact, improvisation used to be a large part of classical composition, performance, and pedagogy. Certainly improvisation is a part of many musics around the world, but despite this knowledge, it took me a long time to forgive myself for never studying bebop. Several composers in the 20th century, particularly American ones, began to experiment with various types of improvisation in their compositions. At the beginning of my exploration in including improvisation in my work, I looked at pieces by John Cage, Christian Wolff, Fredric Rzewski, and others. The result was a concerto, in which the soloist freely improvised over the "guided" improvisations of the accompanying ensemble.

With *seven ways* I wanted to explore different degrees of improvisation. Some of the movements are very open and some are more like games, in which the rules are rather strict but the results are never quite the same. I wanted to blur the lines between composition and improvisation. I didn't want everything to be totally free (then there's no need for notes on the page, which is fine, but obviously gives me nothing to do as a composer), but I wanted to avoid the traditional play-the-song-improvise-on-the-song-repeat-the-song forms usually found in bebop. I wanted to make it difficult to pinpoint where the written directions end (or even what they were) and where the improvised parts begin.

i. beat them handsome



The tempo is as fast as everyone in the group can play it cleanly.

If time is an issue, omit repeats as you wish.

Dynamics, articulation, and tone color should be experimented with freely.

Each player decides individually when to move to the next step.

1. All start in unison. Repeat at least four times.

2. Part I adds a new pitch to the end of the melody; repeat at least four times. Continue to add pitches to the end of the melody, at least ten new pitches and up to as many as the player cares to remember. Each new permutation should be repeated at least four times.

Part II substitutes a new pitch for the last pitch; repeat at least four times. Continue to substitute new pitches, one note at a time from the end of the melody towards the beginning, until you have an entirely new melody. Each new permutation should be repeated at least four times.

Part III substitutes a rest for a pitch randomly within the melody OR removes any pitch. Continue to either substitute pitches with rests or remove pitches until there's nothing left. Each new permutation should be repeated at least four times.

3. All improvise based on the previous material. (or wherever you may wish to go)

4. Part I plays the last note of the original melody, then play ten other pitches; repeat at least four times. Then play the last two notes and nine other pitches. Then the last three plus eight others, etc. When you run out of new pitches, keep adding on the previous pitches from the melody. Repeat original melody until all are ready to stop.

Part II repeats the first note of the original melody at least four times, the first two notes at least four times, then the first three notes, etc., until you have the whole melody. Get in unison with part one anyway you like (e.g. change tempo, or skip notes, or whatever). Repeat original melody until all are ready to stop.

Part III substitutes all notes of the melody except one (at any point in the melody; repeat four times. Replace the melody one note at a time, repeating each permutation four times, until you have the whole melody. Get in unison with part one anyway you like. Repeat original melody until all are ready to stop.

ii. if i have a soul, then you must have one, too

part I



part II



part III



All parts start simultaneously. Play quietly and fairly quickly, somewhere with the quarter note between 120-160 bpm.

Repeat the melody, but change the duration of one pitch. Continue to repeat the melody changing a note's value with each repeat, retaining previous changes.

Once all the note values have been changed, improvise.

Repeat original melody three times.

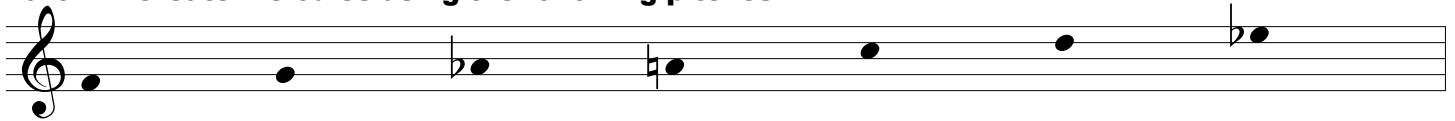
iii. bangle, spangle, & shimmer

Dynamics, articulation, and tone color should be experimented with freely. You may use the entire range of your instrument. The three sections connect without pause.

Part I: Play long tremolos between any two of the following pitches (every new tremolo, you can pick a new pair).

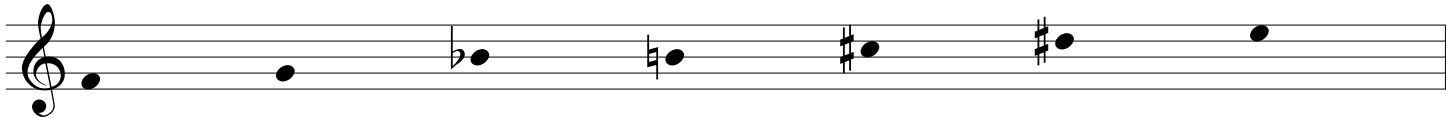
Part II: Make "pointillistic" melodies using the following pitches.

Part III: Create melodies using the following pitches.



Part I: Play "reverse" bell tones using the following pitches.

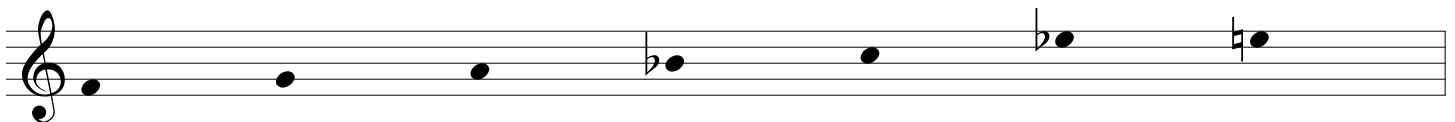
Parts II & III: Play bell tones using the following pitches.



Part I: Play melodies with long durations of rapid rearticulation using the following pitches.

Part II: Play long tremolos between any two of the following pitches (every new tremolo, you can pick a new pair).

Part III: Make "pointillistic" melodies using the following pitches.

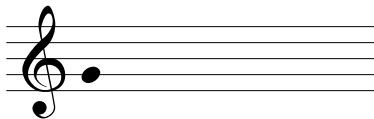


iv. wax/wane

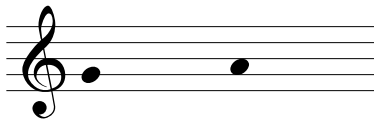
The pitches can be used in any way you like.
If possible, all players should play in the same register as each other and
throughout the piece.

Part III begins the piece alone.

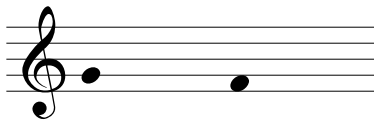
Part III, throughout.



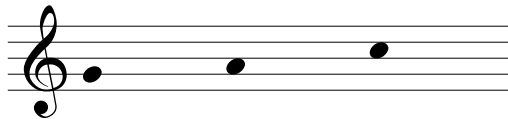
part I



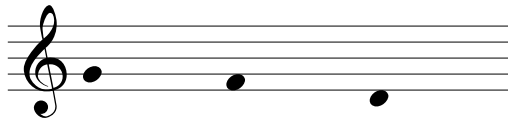
part II



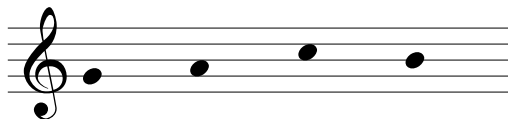
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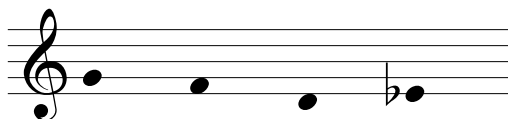
II

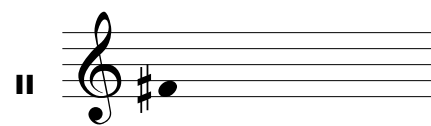
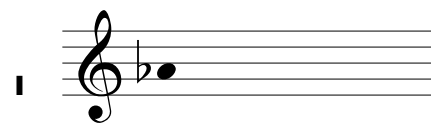
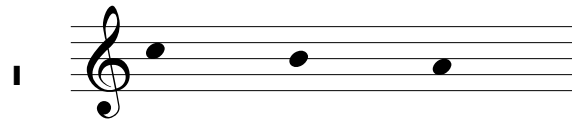
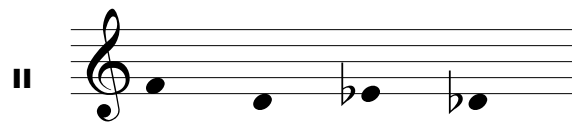
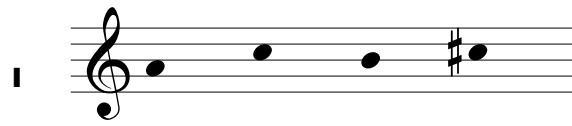
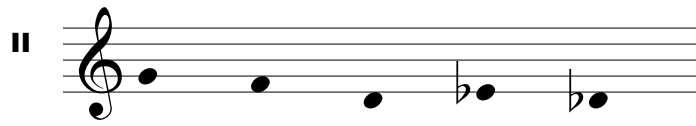
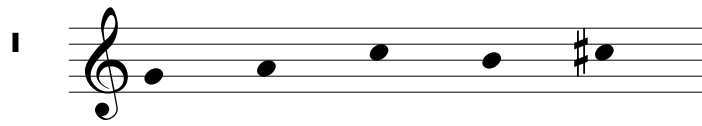


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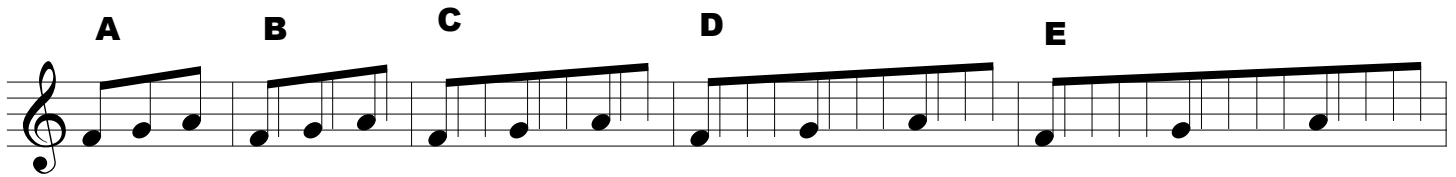


II





v. three little notes i know you'll understand



Headless stems can be played as any pitch or a rest. They can be tied together or subdivided, but must be counted.

**Part I plays the groups in the following manner:
ABCDEDCBABC... etc.**

**Part II plays
ABABCBAABCDCBABCDEDCBABCDCBABCBAABABCB
CA etc.**

Part II plays the groups in any order at any time.

All end by repeating group A numerous times.

vi. if/then

The goal is to create a fluid, yet hocketed, melody.

The beat should be steady throughout, but for a challenge, a gradually accelerando or decelerando could be interesting. (If the beat isn't steady, that's just part of the fun.)

The melodic fragments can be played in any register, but keep the melodic shape within the beat.

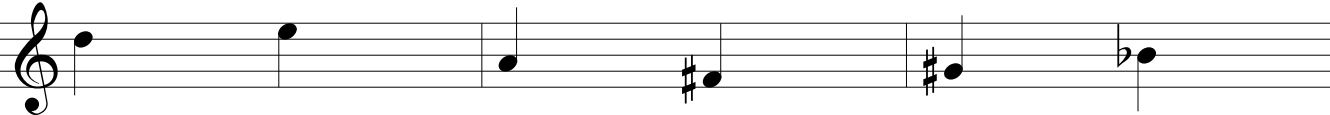
To begin, part I plays the "if" of the first measure and part II answers with the "then" in time. On the very next beat, part III is free to play any "if" in the first system and will be answered by part I playing the appropriate "then." If the third measure is chosen at any time, it is answered by the "then" in the next system. Each system's first "if" is the previous system's "then/if." Once the first measure of a system has been played, that system can always serve as material for the melody; in other words, the piece is played accumulatively.

If you get lost, or you think the previous player has made a mistake, play the first measure. You are not starting the whole piece over, so you do not have to "reaccumulate" everything you have already covered.


The last measure in system 10 loops back to the very beginning. This may be used as an ending, where the "then/if" is answered by everyone else playing "then."

To add complexity, two or three melodies can be played at the same time, for example parts I and III would play different "ifs" simultaneously, part two would answer part I and part I would answer part III.


1 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**



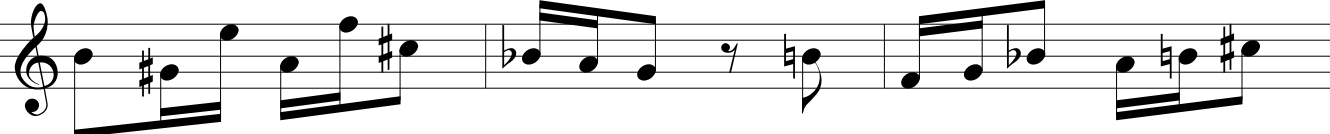
2 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**




3 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**




4 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**



5 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**




6 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**




7 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**



8 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**



9 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**



10 **if** **then** **if** **then** **if** **then/if**



vii. eight ways to sunday



Part II starts after 11 beats; Part III starts after 23 beats.

All parts play the notated rhythm, but none of the notated pitches; as you repeat the melody use one notated pitch per repeat, working towards the complete notated melody. Once the actual melody is reached, repeat it three times.

The tempo may be very fast, very slow, or with a gradual accelerando, but all players should agree on the tempo.