

# Unit 2: Creating and Performing Improvised Solos

Content Area: **Music**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**  
Length: **weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Brief Summary of Unit

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A study of the theoretical and artistic elements that are used in performing improvised solos

## Standards

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ELD standards: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wdmsiGOdCHlrjU-WPvAtENnEgi0EStZXo0uiFYv1Nu4/edit>

MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Cr1a	Compose and improvise musical ideas for a variety of purposes and contexts.
MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Cr2a	Select and develop composed and improvised ideas into draft musical works organized for a variety of purposes and contexts.
MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Cr3a	Evaluate and refine varied draft musical works based on appropriate criteria, including the extent to which they address identified purposes and contexts.
MU.9-12.1.3C.12adv.Cr3b	Share varied, personally developed musical works (individually or as an ensemble) that address identified purposes and contexts.

## Transfer

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## Essential Questions

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- • How do improvised solos function in jazz?
- • What do artists use as inspiration?
- • What is art and how is it created?

## Essential Understandings

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- • artistic expression can be predetermined or improvised.
- • improvised solos utilize common musical concepts such as rhythm, melody, scales, modes, chords, form, articulation, repetition, etc.
- • the musical interaction between performers is an essential element of performance.

- • the understanding of music theory is an essential part of creating improvised solos.
- • there is a difference between live and recorded music.

## **Students Will Know**

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- • the theoretical and artistic elements that are used in creating unique solos.
- • the importance of improvised solos in jazz.
- • how you spell the chords used in jazz and how are they used in improvised solos.
- • how a soloist identifies chord changes in the rhythm section?
- • how common melodic compositional devices (fragmentation, inversion, augmentation, diminution, sequence, repetition, extension, truncation, transposition, retrograde, rhythmic adaptation, etc.) are used in jazz soloing.
- • how musicians locate a chord tone or scale degree (root, third, fifth, ninth, thirteenth, etc.) and how can they be altered (flat, double flat, etc.)
- • how to identify and develop musical thoughts and phrases.
- • the basic language of jazz
- • the listening responsibilities of the soloist and rhythm section during improvised solos.
- • what a blues scale is and how is it used in improvised solos.
- • what modes are and how are they are used in jazz soloing.

## **Students Will Be Skilled At**

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## **Evidence/Performance Tasks**

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- • analyze recorded examples of improvised solos.
- • analyze transcriptions of famous solo artists.
- • create and/or analyze improvised solos with application of the appropriate music theory
- • create improvised solos using jazz “charts” within small and large group settings.
- • evaluate and critique improvised solos from within the ensemble: written; verbal.
- • improvise rhythms and melodies within a desired jazz classification.
- • listen to and describe improvised solos in each of the major classifications of jazz music (ragtime, Dixieland, swing, bebop, cool jazz, hard bop, avant-garde, fusion, contemporary).
- • participate in group discussions on the essential questions.
- • perform improvised solos in private and public.

## **Learning Plan**

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- • Analyze and perform appropriate examples of improvised solos.

- • Analyze improvised solos—written; aural.
- • Discuss and experience the essential questions and connect to learning throughout the unit
- • Evaluate performances—written; aural.
- • Expose students to chords and scales—learn formula, apply to various key signatures, use in rehearsal warm up, use in improvised solos.
- • Introduce concepts of repetition, chromatic approach, ebb and flow, phrasing, varying range, etc.
- • Introduce concepts of trading phrases, stop time, communication between performers.
- • Perform improvised warm-ups.
- • Perform in private and public.
- • Provide technology (band-in-a-box, etc.) to aid students with improvisation.
- • Provide the opportunity for each student to solo during open solo sections in musical literature.
- • Quiz students on music theory.
- • Record concerts—require each student improvise at least once.

## **Materials**

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## **Suggested Strategies for Modifications**

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- • Give different solos to students based on their current level.
- • Have the students work on different sets of chords based on their level.
- • Within a harmonic framework, require students to apply varied levels of improvisational technique to match their learning levels.