What makes a good musical improviser? An expert view on improvisational expertise

Citation for published version (APA):

Wopereis, I., Stoyanov, S., Kirschner, P. A., & Van Merriënboer, J. (2013). What makes a good musical improviser? An expert view on improvisational expertise. *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind, and Brain*, 23(4), 222-235. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pmu0000021>

DOI:

[10.1037/pmu0000021](https://doi.org/10.1037/pmu0000021)

Document status and date:

Published: 01/12/2013

Document Version:

Other version

Document license:

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Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
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- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

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What Makes a Good Musical Improviser? An Expert View on Improvisational Expertise

Iwan G. J. H. Wopereis¹, Slavi Stoyanov¹, Paul A. Kirschner¹, and Jeroen J. G. Van

Merriënboer^{1,2}

¹Open University of the Netherlands, Centre for Learning Sciences and Technologies

²Maastricht University, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences

Address correspondence to Iwan Wopereis, Open University of the Netherlands, PO-Box 2960,
6401 DL, Heerlen, The Netherlands, email: iwan.wopereis@ou.nl

Abstract

This study presents an expert view on musical improvisational expertise. A group concept mapping procedure was used to identify key characteristics of such expertise among a group of 26 renowned musical experts. Multivariate analyses, including 2-dimensional multidimensional scaling (MDS) of unstructured sort data, hierarchical cluster analysis of the MDS coordinates, and the computation of average ratings of 169 statements resulted in a 7-cluster concept map. The cluster self-regulation was located at the heart of the cluster map and was, therefore, regarded a core constituent of improvisational expertise. The other clusters were basic (musical) skills, affect, risk-taking, creation, responsivity, and ideal. Implications for instruction, limitations of the study, and future research are commented upon.

Keywords: improvisation, expertise, concept mapping, music, instruction

This abstract summarizes:

Wopereis, I. G. J. H., Stoyanov, S., Kirschner, P. A., & Van Merriënboer, J. J. G. (2013). What makes a good musical improviser? An expert view on improvisational expertise. *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind, and Brain*, 23, 222-235. doi:10.1037/pmu0000021

<http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2013-45610-004>