

MUSICAL IMPROVISATION

A NECESSARY TEACHING TOOL

► TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL TRAINING

- Focuses on Right and Wrong
- Uses largely Didactic vs. Socratic pedagogy
- Categorizes students into a hierarchy
- Provides predominantly negative feedback
- Emphasizes a product-oriented curriculum

► TRAINING WITH IMPROVISATION

- Removes Right and Wrong
- Breaks down self-judgment
- Is Creative vs. Re-creative
- Engages the artistic imagination
- Develops active listening skills
- Enables singers to perform *their own music*
- Focuses the mind “in-the-moment”

► IMPROVISATION IN LESSONS, REHEARSALS, PERFORMANCES

- Develops a broader expressive vocabulary
- Encourages risk-taking
- Cultivates courageous performers
- Frees up voices, ranges, and diction
- Stimulates authentic acting and movement
- Reveals hidden performance personalities

► REASONS TO USE IMPROVISATION

- To develop a “What if...” state of mind in teachers and students.
- To open teachers’ own thinking to explore different teaching options.
- To reduce students’ (and teachers’) negative self-talk and fears.
- To discover different sides of students’ capabilities & talents.
- To consider and acknowledge students’ ideas without judgment.
- To bring a playfulness into lessons, rehearsals and performing.

► SELECTED RESOURCES

- Video and sound clips: www.ann.baltz.com/media
- Music Improv Books:
 - Mildred Portney Chase, *Music from The Inside Out*, Creative Arts Book Co., 1988
 - Stephen Nachmanovitch, *Free Play, Improvisation in Life and Art*, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam Book, 1990
- Improv Scene Books:
 - Philip Bernardi, *Improvisation Starters*, Best Way Books, 1992
 - Mick Napier, *Improvise. Scene from the Inside Out*, Heinemann, 2004