

Good news!

The class went really well and the recording worked!

Since people have been asking me about the recording...

It's uploading now. I expect to be able to deliver it within 24 hours complete with chapters and links.

As promised, we had attendees playing almost the entire time, and we covered three approaches to help you improvise confidently in different musical contexts, without fear of playing wrong notes.

I wanted to offer more help to boost your musical growth, to somehow make it a "no brainer" for you to be able to grow your skills and enjoyment.

To be transparent, I have an ulterior motive- to entice you to consider joining my summer courses ([online](#) or [in-person](#).)

I figure the best way to entice you to consider these, aside from this free class, is by **bribing** you- with 8 of my books, a free private lesson, and other crazy giveaways.

If that sounds enticing and you don't want to wait,

[here's the bribe](#).

Within 24 hours I'll get you a link to the Zoom class with my notes, documents, etc. It will be available for a limited time.

There's a short intro to the class. The video will have chapters so you can skip around.

I'll include the intro/outline here in case you want to read as opposed to listen (as well as for anyone who attended who would like to review what we did today!)

Structure of Class

1. **Short intro** (7 minutes)

2. **You Play** following my prompts (45 minutes)

15 minutes "Structured Free Improvisation"

15 minutes "Mindful Integrated Creative Practice" (Improvise w/ major scale and pentatonics)

15 minutes "Voice Leading" Improvise w/ benefit of knowing the chord tones

3. Offer ways to learn more (5 mins)

4. Q&A 5 mins.

How I Developed This Method

I was a Suzuki-trained classical violinist from the age of five.

By 15 or 16 I got jealous of my high school friends who played in a rock band. They seemed **creative and cool**. I joined their rock band and felt like I knew NOTHING about music.

I assumed that I just wasn't a creative person.

After that I spent decades trying to fit in with many musical communities:

Rock, fiddle styles, Cuban, Brazilian, Flamenco, R&B, Black church, traditional to modern **Jazz**, experimental classical music, EDM, playing with DJ's, singer-songwriters, etc.

I often felt stuck on the outside.

- I was required to play a cowbell and practice a two step for months before being allowed to play my violin with an R&B band,
- made to wait for hours at Jazz jams without ever getting called up,
- laughed at on stage, threatened, insulted..

Undeterred, I eventually developed a method to teach myself *harmony, groove, and other fundamental skills that I could apply across different genres.*

and...

I developed a *process to discover my own personal recognizable creative voice and sound-* independent of the conventions of these particular communities and musical styles...

I spent the past 20 years refining my method and teaching thousands of musicians from classical and fiddle training.

My students include:

Adult amateurs with as little as one year of experience (who often excel in improvisation because they have less "baggage")

Kids (including 2 of my own). I've visited several hundred school orchestras in K-12 and college

Elite classical players with jobs in major orchestras and master's degrees from top conservatories.

Teachers (private and classroom)

Stars of Folk, Pop, Jazz, Rock, etc. **who credit my teaching** include:

Jeremy Kittel & Mads Tolling (Turtle Island String Quartet),

Leah Zeger (Hanz Zimmer)

Alex Hargreaves (Billy Strings)

Andrea Whitt (Shania Twain)

Mike Barnett (Ricky Skaggs)

Michael Doucet (Grammy-winning Cajun fiddler)

Aubrey Haney (probably the most recorded session fiddle player in Nashville)

Ken Ford (several major hip-hop and R&B artists)

Mia Asano- Pop violinist with massive following

Jason Anick- Professor at Berklee known for Django-style Jazz.

And many more...

CONTEXT

There are three “separate cultures” of music education:

1. **Classical music education**
2. **“Jazz Studies”** (the Academic institutional approach to teaching Jazz)
3. **The Participatory Culture.** (Rock band, the Black American Church, Flamenco, fiddle music, Brazilian musical culture, Cuban musical culture, etc.)

Each of these communities has its own point of view.

Musicians trained in each gain certain **strengths** and certain **deficits**.

From time spent in all three, I've developed a method to teach Fundamental Skills which can be broadly applied across all.

These fundamental skills are useful whether you want to focus on **one style**, or **many**.

They will also help you develop **your own recognizable personal voice and sound**, independently of the rules/conventions/language of particular styles and communities.

Myths and Common Problems

“I'm not creative”. (Everyone is creative. You just need a process.)

“I'm not good at theory” (this doesn't require as much theory as you think)

“I already studied theory” (If you studied theory in college, there is a difference in applying it. I will show you how to internalize harmonic material and apply it on your instrument.

“I don't like jazz” (this isn't only for Jazz, it's for any style)

“If I try and listen harder I should be able to hear my way through improvisation”

- In some musical situations, we can hear what to play.
- In others, we can use a scale.
- In others, we need to access the Chord Tones.

- In ALL we need structure

Conflating the Learning Mind with the Creating Mind- AKA Fast Thinking vs Slow Thinking.

One of the most devastating mistakes we make is trying to be Creative with musical material which we have Not Yet Learned.

-Materials to **learn** include scales, grooves, song forms, and chord voicings. I'll give you a starting point for this in class. This will build competence and save time practicing.

-Materials to **CREATE** with include those which you have **total comfort** with now.

I'll give you a way to **structure creative improvisation** with the skills/knowledge you currently have.

This will help you develop confidence and create a virtuous cycle of enjoyment and improvement.

Look for the recording within 24 hours.

Good night!

Chris

[Summer in-person retreats](#)

[Summer Online 7-week course](#)

[Download the books](#)