



Accredited

OCR LEVEL 3 CAMBRIDGE TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE/DIPLOMA IN **PERFORMING ARTS**

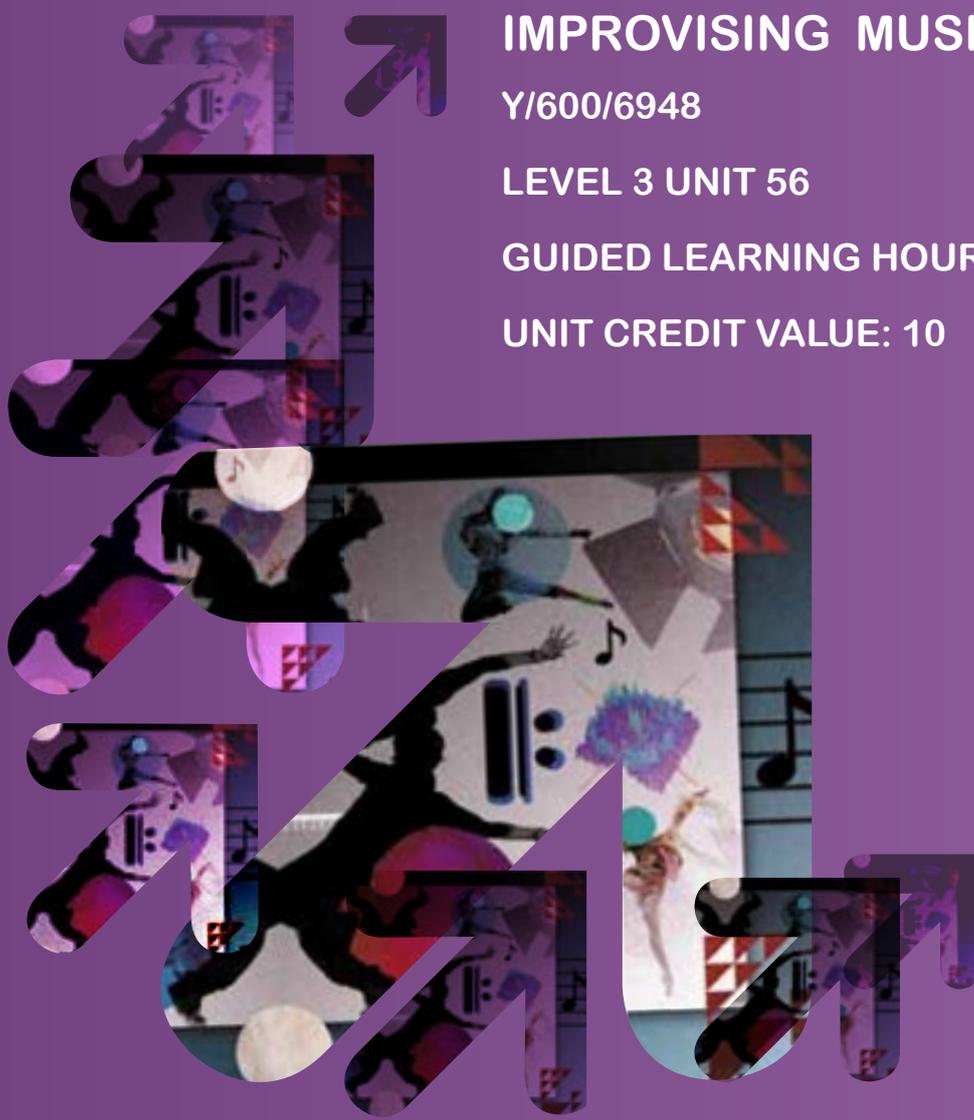
IMPROVISING MUSIC

Y/600/6948

LEVEL 3 UNIT 56

GUIDED LEARNING HOURS: 60

UNIT CREDIT VALUE: 10



IMPROVISING MUSIC

Y/600/6948

LEVEL 3 UNIT 56

AIM OF UNIT

Improvisation is an integral element of both music technique and performance. This unit allows learners to explore and develop the creative skill of improvisation and understand its place in the development process of composition and performance. It should help learners to extend their musical vocabulary and increase their analytical and evaluation skills.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

Learning Outcome (LO)	Pass	Merit	Distinction
The learner will:	The learner can:	To achieve a merit the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
1 Understand the stylistic elements of improvisation across a range of musical genres	P1 explain the stylistic elements of improvisation across a range of musical genres	M1 discuss the style and features of any one major practitioner from any given genre	D1 compare and contrast the style and features of two major practitioners from any given genre
2 Be able to develop instrumental or vocal techniques appropriate for improvisation in contrasting styles	P2 develop instrumental or vocal techniques appropriate for improvisation in contrasting styles		
3 Be able to improvise music in response to a stimulus in contrasting styles	P3 improvise music in response to a stimulus in contrasting styles	M2 improvise music demonstrating real engagement with the material and a developing sense of personal style	
4 Be able to improvise music responding to other musicians	P4 improvise music responding to other musicians	M3 improvise music responding to other musicians whilst fluently integrating technical and interpretative skills	

TEACHING CONTENT

The unit content describes what has to be taught to ensure that learners are able to access the highest grade.

Anything which follows an i.e. details what must be taught as part of that area of content.

Anything which follows an e.g. is illustrative. It should be noted that where e.g. is used, learners must know and be able to apply relevant examples to their work although these do not need to be the same ones specified in the unit content.

Understand the stylistic elements of improvisation across a range of musical genres

- Technical control of the instrument or voice.
- Communicating intention and interpretation.
- Learners should be made familiar with approaches to improvisation within the context of the instrument or voice, taking account of stylistic elements, e.g. melody, harmony, rhythm, tonality, lyricism; technical effects such as sliding, distortion, synthesiser sounds, vocal effects.
- Learners should be made familiar with approaches to improvisation within the context of a particular genre or style: e.g. rock, pop, techno, R and B, blues, jazz, funk, soul, country and western, reggae, classical.
- Learners should be familiar with the historical and contemporary practice of improvisation in performance and the possibilities in various styles and genres.

Be able to develop instrumental or vocal techniques appropriate for improvisation in contrasting styles

- Expressive aspects – tempo, phrasing, dynamics and colour.
- Technical tools – bowing, breathing, fingering, pedalling, amplification, groove.

Be able to improvise music in response to a stimulus in contrasting styles

- Visual images – photographs, artwork, media imaging, film.
- Aural stimuli pitches.
- Melodic incipit.
- Rhythmic incipit.
- Chord sequences.
- Sound effects, spoken text poetry, prose
- Themes – emotions, ideas.
- Learners need to develop technique during improvisation to maintain:
 - Fluency and formal shaping
 - Technical control of the instrument or voice
 - Development of the stimulus.

Be able to improvise music responding to other musicians

- Giving and taking musical ideas
- Aural and stylistic understanding

DELIVERY GUIDANCE

This is an exploratory unit that is best delivered in practical workshop sessions. Teachers should allow time for learners to investigate a full range of improvisation methods and structures and demonstrate development. The unit provides a framework for learners development and gives teaching staff the flexibility to decide on the most appropriate delivery methods for their centres. Where possible, contact time with skilled practitioners should be available. Learners will benefit from studying the practice of those currently working in the industry by attending workshop sessions.

Constant awareness of, and adherence to, health and safety practices is essential when delivering this unit.

Understand the stylistic elements of improvisation across a range of musical genres

To help contextualise their own work, learners should study existing practitioners and works which have used improvisation in performance (e.g. Keith Jarrett, Evan Parker, George Lewis, Gary Burton, The Grateful Dead) to demonstrate the effect of improvisation and the variety of music created. A useful approach might be to begin with a visit to see a live performance of pieces from any of the genres suggested. It is helpful for learners to survey and assess what live music is near and within the institution. If resources are limited then a class hearing of a commercially produced CD would suffice. Learners could also look at musical traditions where Improvisation is a much respected skill such as Flamenco or Indian Classical music. This can help with identification of free improvisation and improvisation as part of devising and teachers could lead activities related to this. Learners should then spend time practically exploring a range of genres and styles for themselves.

Be able to develop instrumental or vocal techniques appropriate for improvisation in contrasting styles

The process of improvisation is one of exploration and discovery. Learners should be encouraged to move beyond their comfort zone and challenge their range of movement and technical ability. They should work in pairs and small groups to develop appropriate techniques during the rehearsal process.

Be able to improvise music in response to a stimulus in contrasting styles

Learners should be exposed to as wide a range of stimuli as possible. This could include visual images, aural stimuli, themes, response etc and these can be incorporated into games and activities or developed for more performance

focused work. Learners should be given time to select and shape performance material and explore and develop their skills as appropriate. It is helpful for learners to spend some time considering the effectiveness of the stimuli in discussion and written activities to develop their evaluative skills. Learners should record their work and development in a suitable format (e.g. log books, note books or diaries).

Be able to improvise music responding to other musicians

Opportunities should be available for learners to perform their work with peers and to peers during practical sessions. Note should be taken of the importance of performance skills during these activities. Artistic skills and technical skills should be identified and evaluated possibly with the use of video/ audio recording.

It is good practice to observe and feed back to peers and work could be recorded to aid reflection and evaluation on self and others. Developing improvised work into small performance pieces will allow learners to refine and shape material, analysing the quality of their work in the process.

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT SCENARIOS AND GUIDANCE ON ASSESSMENT

Assessment and Grading Criterion P1, M1, D1

Evidence for this criterion should consist of a portfolio that includes consideration of the stylistic elements of at least three music genres. This will consist of class notes, written tasks, assignments and any relevant charts and illustrations to evidence the learner's studies.

P1 will be demonstrated by detailing the history and context of one music genre.

M1 will be demonstrated where **P1** is extended to give an account of one practitioner within the chosen genre.

D1 will be demonstrated where **M1** is extended to give a comparison of two practitioners within the chosen genre.

Assessment and Grading Criterion P2

The assessment criterion should be evidenced during participation in practical workshop and rehearsal sessions exploring a range of improvisational techniques. The assessment should be ongoing and teachers, or an appropriately-skilled observer should keep observation records at no less than two points during the course of the unit. It is helpful if observation reports are produced in a standard format and these are used consistently by all staff. The development of a 'house style' for these observations is recommended as the advantage of a common format is that all involved become used to creating and using the same document. Centres are advised to develop formats that record times, places, description of activity/event, structures and methods used and details of level of attainment. The observation report is the centre's opportunity to provide significant and additional evidence and can make explicit reference to the grade descriptors in the assessment evidence grid.

To support the reports, recorded evidence (DVD/CD) should also be made available for moderation purposes. All DVD/CDs should be correctly formatted and clearly labelled. The DVD/CD should be supported by a witness statement by the teacher indicating the criteria achieved by the learner.

Assessment and Grading Criterion P3, M2

For **P3** learners will provide at least three examples of musical performance in contrasting styles in response to a given stimulus. The choice of stimulus is to be determined by the teacher who must ensure the stimulus has the potential to allow for creative engagement and variation in possible outcomes. It is recommended that learners experience this process several times before assessment takes place using a variety of stimuli. Performance should take place in workshop sessions with feedback and questions from peers and this should be recorded on DVD/CD and formatted and labelled appropriately. The DVD/CD should be supported by a witness statement by the teacher indicating the criteria achieved by the learner.

M2 should be awarded where performance skills are enhanced so that the learner is moving towards an accomplished performance and the learner demonstrates understanding of the techniques applied.

Assessment and Grading Criterion P4, M3

For **P4** learners will provide at least three examples of musical performance responding directly to other musicians. This could be in the form of a 'jamming' session and should include some variety in the styles of music explored. Performance should take place in workshop sessions with feedback and questions from peers and this should be recorded on DVD/CD and formatted and labelled appropriately. The DVD/CD should be supported by a witness statement by the teacher indicating the criteria achieved by the learner.

M3 should be awarded if the learner has fully embraced the style and is displaying real skill and flair in their performance and understanding of the techniques applied.

LINKS TO NOS

Suite	Ref	National Occupational Standards
Use digital production technology in composing music	CCSMR15	produce and evaluate music compositions for relevant markets Review and respond appropriately to feedback on music compositions
Improvise music	CCSMR31	Demonstrate musical sympathy while making spontaneous music in response to other musical elements, showing relevant and appropriate use of dynamics, rhythms, pitches etc. Create music spontaneously using a musical vocabulary that is consistent with and authentic to a range of contrasting musical styles. Improvise music demonstrating a combination of technical proficiency and musical knowledge that is relevant to at a range of contrasting musical styles.



CONTACT US

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