

A Fear-free Approach to Composition for the Improvising Musician tm

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6 Important Components to consider that are inter-connected and impact each other:

- 1) Melody
- 2) Form
- 3) Style
- 4) Harmony
- 5) Meter
- 6) Rhythm

Use **rearranging** and/or the **contrafact** concept as a way to begin composing - by using an established composition which offers all of the elements, one can use it as a template to create a new melody, reharmonization, rhythmic feel, etc., and work with the other various elements...which can lead to creating an arrangement or an entirely new composition (depending on how many of the elements are altered or changed).

Examples of each:

- 1) I Got Rhythm - Anthropology (new composition)
- 2) Little Help From My Friend - original vs. Bossa nova
- 3) Bach Siciliano in Eb - original vs. jazz feel/reharmonization

Important Elements to think about:

(note: **Context is crucial** - All music is heard and/or written in a **stylistic context/genre** and while characteristics that make up good compositions are often the same, they have to fit the context

Important elements to think about, notice, listen for, consider:

- 1) **Balance**
- 2) **Contrast**
- 3) **Strong motif**
- 4) **Melodic Development - Repetition, Augmentation, etc.**
- 5) **Compositional Arch - tension and release, consonance/dissonance**
- 6) **Form**
- 7) **Harmonic implication - modal, diatonic, chromatic, functional**
- 8) **Feel/style**
- 9) **Meter**

Tips:

- Listen a lot! Use your intuition from having listened to Western music for years!
- Transcribe melodies, bass lines, voicings in different styles to understand the elements and language/characteristics of those style, especially if you want to compose music in those styles.
- Learn and absorb as many tunes as you can which will enforce a good sensibility for melody, balance, cadence, phrasing, etc