

Improvisation and Real-time Composition in Double Bass Solo Performance

Abstract. The genre of improvising solo double bass performance started around half a century ago. Barre Phillips became an inventor of this new genre with his first solo album *Journal Violone* in 1969. Many improvising bassists have followed the idea of an improvising solo performer creating a real-time composition and through the years have recorded their music without any accompaniment in most cases. But only a minor part of the improvising bassists' community has decided to take part in this experiment and challenge. Despite this fact, the total number of improvised bass solo albums was increasing with every year and now it has reached over 600.

Having analyzed and summarized the data of all improvised solo bassists' recordings, different classification is presented, dividing albums by structure and style. The author investigates the term, conducive conditions, factors of time, place and sound aesthetics in order to achieve an objective evaluation of the improvising bass solo recording process including the factor of real-time composition.

Keywords: double bass, solo performance without accompaniment, improvisation, real-time composition, new genre, experiment, music album.

The term

In the first place, let's discuss and purify the term improvised solo double bass performance. This term might have four different meanings, so let's run briefly through all of them:

1. It's well-known that since the Baroque era creative and innovative double bass performers were improvising and playing ornaments over the harmony with figured bass¹. Later classical bass virtuosos Domenico Dragonetti² and Giovanni Bottesini³ improved a lot while practicing or during their cadences of tune parts. In the process of their solo improvisations new pieces and performing techniques were born or developed.
2. Double bass solo improvisations were part of various jazz styles in the 20th century. In a jazz ensemble, almost every member of the band had a chance to take a solo as the tune developed. Bassists were no exception in this process, and they took solos as well.
3. Double bass improvisations or solo performances are related to a concert performance of a double bass soloist, or a virtuoso, while solo pieces for double bass are presented among improvisations with accompaniment. The main point of this kind of performance is to showcase the double bass soloist and his special virtuoso repertoire.
4. Double bass solo improvisations in a performance or a recording of a single musician without any accompaniment. It is double bass solo performers who use perpetual improvisation while performing. They are improvising on themes, motives, and scales during a piece of music or creating new real-time compositions via spontaneous improvisation. In this paper, we will concentrate on this particular kind of bass solo performer.

The beginning of an improvised double bass solo performance

Improvised double bass solo performance can be called a new music genre (Fabbri, 1982). The beginning of this genre is marked by the album *Journal Violone*⁴ recorded in November of 1968 by American jazz and avant-garde bassist Barre Phillips⁵ in one of London's churches. This recording consists of two long, contrasting, and spontaneous improvisations, which became real-time compositions in *Journal Violone*, released in the United States in 1969. In the same year, it also came out in England under the different title of *Unaccompanied Barre*, and in 1970 it was released in France under the title *Basse Barre*. The geography of this album reminds us of Barre's changes of living places, at first from the West coast to the East coast, later to Europe, England for the beginning, and finally to southern France where he still resides today.

¹ Paul Brun, Baroque Performance Practice, in: *A New History of the Double Bass*, Paul Brun Productions, 2000, p. 69.

² Domenico Dragonetti (1763–1846) is an Italian classical double bass virtuoso and composer, who later moved to London.

³ Giovanni Bottesini (1821–1889) is an Italian double bass virtuoso, composer and conductor.

⁴ *Journal Violone* is Phillips' first solo album and the beginning of new improvised solo double bass genre.

⁵ Barre Phillips (b. 1934) is an American bassist and composer, the founder of improvised double bass solo genre.

Phillips became the inventor of a new genre and one of the most productive solo performers, who recorded 6 solo albums. His *Journal Violone* became a creative impulse for many generations of improvising double bass players. More than 100 bassists from all over the world decided to create recordings of improvised solo double bass. Other significant and productive bassists of this genre were Joëlle Léandre (France) (7 solo albums), Barry Guy (England; 7), Peter Kowald (Germany; 7) and Motoharu Yoshizawa (Japan; 6).

It's a big challenge to create and record a full-length album of improvised double bass solo music without accompaniment, even for an experienced bassist who knows how to improvise. It is a huge difference to perform one solo piece for double bass in the context of a concert or a recording, rather than a one-hour solo performance or a solo recording of improvised double bass music. Therefore, only a minor part of the bassists' community goes for this challenging experiment.

Conducive circumstances

Why did Barre's album *Journal Violone* come out at the end of the sixties and what determined the breakthrough of a new genre? We should note that there were at least five conducive musical circumstances for the appearance of this album, which were formed around the instrument of double bass, bassists and composers in the second half of the 20th century:

1. Jazz influence. Thanks to the mastery of jazz creators and talented double bass performers (Charles Mingus⁶, Scott LaFaro⁷, Oscar Pettiford⁸, Charlie Haden⁹ and others), the double bass became a more audible and expressive instrument in the growing number of jazz bands while bassists quite often became the ensemble leaders.
2. The emergence of new experimental jazz styles during the sixties (free jazz, hard bop, fusion) was the perfect time for innovation and the appearance of one more new genre.
3. Contemporary classical composers rediscovered and dedicated their works for double bass (Paul Hindemith¹⁰, John Cage¹¹, Nikos Skalkottas¹², Eduard Tubin¹³, Lars-Erik Larsson¹⁴, Gunther Schuller¹⁵, Hans Werner Henze¹⁶ and Frank Proto¹⁷).



Barre Phillips

⁶ Charles Mingus (1922–1979) is an American jazz bassist, pianist, bandleader and composer, he crossed different music styles and created his own music way known as *Charles Mingus style*.

⁷ Scott LaFaro (1936–1961) is an American jazz bassist, virtuoso and composer. He was among earliest bassists using counterpoint and collective improvisation especially with pianist Bill Evans and drummer Paul Motian.

⁸ Oscar Pettiford (1922–1960) is an American jazz bassist, cellist, bandleader and one of the earliest bass soloists of the bebop era.

⁹ Charlie Haden (1937–2014) is an American jazz bassist, composer, leader of many chamber ensembles and co-founder of non-traditional *Liberation Music Orchestra*.

¹⁰ Paul Hindemith's (1895–1963) *Double bass sonata* (1949).

¹¹ In John Cage's (1912–1992) *Concert for piano and orchestra* (1958) one part is *Solo for double bass*.

¹² Greek composer Nikos Skalkottas (1904–1949): *Concerto for Double bass* (1942).

¹³ Estonian composer Eduard Tubin (1905–1982): *Concerto for Double bass* (1948).

¹⁴ Swedish composer Lars-Erik Larsson (1908–1986): *Concertino for Double Bass* (1957).

¹⁵ Gunther Schuller (1925–2015): *Concerto for Double Bass* (1962).

¹⁶ German composer Hans Werner Henze (1926–2012): *Double Bass Concerto* (1966).

¹⁷ American bassist and composer Frank Proto (b. 1941): *Concerto No. 1 for Double bass* (1968).

4. New double bass soloists and virtuosos emerged at the beginning of the sixties. They were not only great players but also pursued educational and pedagogical activity (Gary Karr¹⁸, François Rabbath¹⁹, Bertram Turetzky²⁰). Especially important recordings for the improvised double bass solo genre were Turetzky's album *In a Recital of New Music*²¹ (1964)—the first double bass solo album of contemporary music where half of the music was composed for unaccompanied bass; and Rabbath's *The sound of a Bass*²² (1963)—an improvised double bass duo album (with drummer Armand Molinetti). Both these bass performers along with Charles Mingus were the first ones, who crossed the border of different styles in their performances or records.
5. Two important technical factors, which significantly increased the quality of double bass performance in the second half of the 20th century are steel strings and new ways of amplification for double bass²³. Steel strings were the primary choice over gut strings because of their better sound, loudness and tuning possibilities for technical and virtuoso bass compositions, while special low-frequency microphones and piezo pickups for double bass introduced new ways of expression via amplification.

Structure of improvised double bass solo records with real-time composition: Pure and mixed recordings

Improvised double bass solo albums could be categorized according to their structure into pure and mixed types of recordings²⁴:

Pure double bass solo recording is recorded in real-time performance or live in the concert: only natural means of expression, no overdubbing, effects or other instruments. The majority of double bass solo albums belong to the pure type of recording, including Phillips' *Journal Violone*.

Meanwhile mixed recordings could be further divided into two additional groups:

Mixed solo recordings by one bassist/composer are the appearance of only one artist using more double bass layers, other music sources or instruments, including voice, in a solo performance or a recording with no other musicians involved. Examples of this type of recording are Henri Texier's²⁵ albums *Amir*²⁶ (1976) and *Varech*²⁷ (1977), where Texier (besides the double bass) plays flute, oud, bass guitar, percussion, and sings. In some of the recordings, ambient sounds and recorded noises could be used as well. A good example of this kind of recording is Mark Dresser's²⁸ album *Invocation*²⁹, where various train sounds are presented next to solo bass playing.

In *mixed solo recordings, the ones that feature minor participation(s) of a guest musician(s)* the essence of the record remains an upright bass solo performance, involving a guest musician(s) in a minor part of the album's compositions. However, the contribution of a guest musician(s) is not big enough to present it as group work. This type of recording constitutes the smallest part of improvised double bass solo albums. A good example would be Gary Peacock's³⁰ work *December Poems*³¹ (1979). In two out of the six compositions of this album, Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek is performing together with Peacock, but the other four tunes are a double bass solo showcase, including a tiny use of piano by Peacock in one of the compositions.

¹⁸ Gary Karr (b. 1941) is an American double bass virtuoso, teacher and educator.

¹⁹ François Rabbath (b. 1931) is a French of Syrian origin double bass virtuoso, teacher and composer.

²⁰ Bertram Turetzky (b. 1933) is an American double bass virtuoso, educator and composer.

²¹ More about Turetzky's album *In a Recital of New Music*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Bertram-Turetzky-Recital-Of-New-Music/release/3710128>> [seen 2022 02 20].

²² More about Rabbath's album *The Sound of a Bass*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Fran%C3%A7ois-Rabbath-The-Sound-Of-A-Bass/master/462644>> [seen 2022 02 20].

²³ Fumi Tomita, *Equipment Technology and Technique in Jazz Bass*, 2018, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, <<https://fumitomitamusic.com/files/416171/equipment-technology-and-technique-in-jazz-bass-history-basseurope-2018-presentation.pdf>> [accessed: 2022 02 18].

²⁴ The author's concept and terms.

²⁵ Henri Texier (b. 1945) is a French bassist and group leader.

²⁶ More about Texier's album *Amir*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Henri-Texier-Amir/release/723468>> [seen 2022 02 20].

²⁷ More about Texier's album *Varech*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Henri-Texier-Varech/master/540792>> [seen 2022 02 20].

²⁸ Mark Dresser (b. 1952) is an American bassist and composer.

²⁹ More about Dresser's album *Invocation*: <<https://www.allmusic.com/album/invocation-mw0000091716>> [seen 2022 02 20].

³⁰ Gary Peacock (1935–2020) is an American bassist and composer, a long-time member of Keith Jarrett trio.

³¹ More about Peacock's album *December Poems*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Gary-Peacock-December-Poems/release/1242647>> [seen 2022 02 20].

Styles of improvised double bass solo albums

The genre of improvised double bass solo performance has contained many different performing styles, approaches and various playing techniques presented by more than 100 bassists. In this huge variety of recordings, we can distinguish five musical styles³² among extremely different double bass solo albums:

1. *Free improvised style* is music based on spontaneous improvisation and real-time composition: this style is based on the beauty of improvisation, natural flow, unpredictable decisions and instant composition. Sometimes performers use precomposed motives, melodies or harmony, but then it constitutes just a small part of the whole composition. Free improvised style is heard on most of Barry Phillips' records including *Journal Violone*, as well as Peter Kowald's³³ *Was Da Ist*³⁴ (1995), Joëlle Leandre's³⁵ *No Comment*³⁶ (2001) and much more.
2. *Compositional style with improvisation* is music based on a clear structure of composition, where the performer has a lot of space for improvisation. Sometimes improvisation could become a real-time composition when the precomposed structure could be changed if needed. Performers have a clear idea of composition before entering the stage or recording studio, but improvisation is also very important here. Sometimes, this improvisation could lead to new real-time compositions because these performers are open to development and changes during the creative process. Examples of compositional style with improvisation are Gary Peacock's album *December Poems*, Miroslav Vitous's³⁷ *Emergence*³⁸ (1986), Anders Jormin's³⁹ *Alone*⁴⁰ (1991) and others.
3. *Jazz style with improvisation* is music based on the use of jazz musical language (rhythm, articulation, phrasing, harmony changes, improvisation) during a double bass solo performance. Performing in "jazz style" requires elements of jazz, blues and popular music, especially including improvisation on certain harmony changes. The repertoire of jazz style usually consists of arranged jazz standards, songs or original jazz tunes for solo upright bass. Examples of jazz style with improvisation are Red Mitchell's⁴¹ album *Virtuoso*⁴² (1982), Dave Holland's⁴³ *One's All*⁴⁴ (1995), Brian Bromberg's⁴⁵ *Hands*⁴⁶ (2009), Larry Grenadier's⁴⁷ *The Gleaners*⁴⁸ (2019) and more.
4. *Contemporary classical style with improvisation* is music based on contemporary western classical music using improvisation. The contemporary classical style of solo double bass follows the tradition of western classical music but could be influenced by other styles as well. Clear composition is the main and dominant part of the whole tune, but improvisational episodes are presented here as well. Barry is a specific example of a virtuoso performer for this style, mixing Baroque and improvisational music in his solo performances. Examples of contemporary classical style with improvisation are Claude

³² Style classification according to the author.

³³ Peter Kowald (1944–2002) is a German bassist, improviser and free jazz performer.

³⁴ More about Kowald's album *Was Da Ist*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Peter-Kowald-Was-Da-Ist/release/1308550>> [seen 2022 02 20].

³⁵ Joëlle Leandre (b. 1951) is a French bassist, improviser. She has recorded 7 improvised double bass solo albums.

³⁶ More about Leandre's album *No Comment*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Jo%C3%ABlle-L%C3%A9andre-No-Comment/release/3409177>> [seen 2022 02 20].

³⁷ Miroslav Vitous (b. 1947) is a Czech virtuoso bassist and composer, who lived more than 20 years in the US.

³⁸ More about Vitous' album *Emergence*: <<https://www.discogs.com/master/303600-Miroslav-Vitous-Emergence>> [seen 2022 02 20].

³⁹ Anders Jormin (b. 1957) is a Swedish bassist, composer and educator.

⁴⁰ More about Jormin's album *Alone*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Anders-Jormin-Alone/release/2982968>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁴¹ Red Mitchell (1927–1992) is an American bassist, composer, lyricist and poet, who spent 24 years in Sweden.

⁴² More about Mitchell's album *Virtuoso*: <<https://www.discogs.com/release/9335905-Red-Mitchell-Virtuoso>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁴³ Dave Holland (b. 1946) is a British jazz bassist, composer, bandleader, bass guitar and cello performer.

⁴⁴ More about Holland's album *One's All*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Dave-Holland-Ones-All/release/5358928>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁴⁵ Brian Bromberg (b. 1960) is an American acoustic and electric bassist.

⁴⁶ More about Bromberg's album *Hands*: <<https://www.discogs.com/master/1511622-Brian-Bromberg-Hands-Solo-Acoustic-Bass>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁴⁷ Larry Grenadier (b. 1966) is an American bassist, long-time member of Brad Mehldau trio.

⁴⁸ More about Grenadier's album *The Gleaners*: <<https://www.discogs.com/master/1502591-Larry-Grenadier-The-Gleaners>> [seen 2022 02 20].

Tchamitchian's⁴⁹ album *Jeu D'Enfants*⁵⁰ (1993), Stefano Scodanibbio's⁵¹ *Geografica Amorosa*⁵² (2000), Barry Guy's⁵³ *Symmetries*⁵⁴ (2002), etc.

5. *Improvisational world music style* is music based on a certain folk music tradition involving improvisation. Here, the musicians create and perform in a style, which is based on a certain folklore tradition, or their interpretation of folk music language. Performers improvise in a specific world music style, ranging from the Middle East to East European or Gypsy culture. Examples of improvisational world music style are Henri Texier's album *Amir*, Renaud Garcia-Fons's⁵⁵ *Oriental Bass*⁵⁶ (1998), Vitold Rek's⁵⁷ *Bassfiddle alla Polacca*⁵⁸ (1999) and others.

We should point out that this classification of musical styles for improvised double bass solo albums is a conditional subject, because often the album cannot be attributed to a single style, but contains at least a few of them. Even so, it's hard to draw the line between these styles, one of them usually prevails as a more dominant, therefore, stylistic trends and directions that we have distinguished here exist.

Time and place for improvised double bass solo recordings with real-time composition

Time. An improvised double bass solo performance comprises around 600 recordings and creative attempts by more than 100 double bass performers from across the world during the fifty years of this special activity. In 1968 Barre Phillips started this genre with *Journal Violone*, which was released in 1969 and since then until 2020 there were 589 albums recorded that came out in various music formats including digital releases. During the first two decades, improvised double bass solo albums were an exceptional and rare phenomenon. However, by the end of the 20th century, the number of albums had increased and by the beginning of the 21st century, at least ten such albums were released per year (see The table of improvised double bass solo albums). In the 21st century, the number of albums dramatically grew, especially during the second decade from 2011 to 2020, when 328 records were released, but the record of the year was achieved during the pandemic in 2020 when a total of 54 albums were presented by different improvised double bass solo performers.

Place. An absolute majority of improvised double bass solo albums were created in Europe and North America. While during the first five years of the new genre, all albums were recorded in Europe, from 1974 the genre spread to Japan thanks to Motoharu Yoshizawa⁵⁹ and later to North America. And now most of the albums, one-third of the whole number, were recorded and produced in the United States. In Europe, the dominant countries were France and Germany. Other important places for this creative process were Italy, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, Norway, Denmark and Sweden. The list of the records' origin consists of 34 countries including Lithuania. Three of Barry Guy's albums were recorded in Lithuania: two in the Church of St. Catherine^{60,61} in Vilnius and one during the *Improdimension* concert at Mama Studios⁶² in Vilnius.

⁴⁹ Claude Tchamitchian (b. 1960) is a French bassist and composer.

⁵⁰ More about Tchamitchian's album *Jeu D'Enfants*: <<https://www.discogs.com/release/2942408-Claude-Tchamitchian-Jeu-D'Enfants-Contrebasse-Solo>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁵¹ Stefano Scodanibbio (1956–2012) is an Italian composer and double bass virtuoso.

⁵² More about Scodanibbio's album *Geografica Amorosa*: <<https://www.discogs.com/release/1672099-Stefano-Scodanibbio-Geografica-Amorosa>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁵³ Barry Guy (b. 1947) is an English composer and double bass virtuoso.

⁵⁴ More about Guy's album *Symmetries*: <<https://www.discogs.com/release/2317106-Barry-Guy-Symmetries>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁵⁵ Renaud Garcia-Fons (b. 1962) is a French double bass virtuoso.

⁵⁶ More about Garcia-Fons' album *Oriental Bass*: <<https://www.discogs.com/master/1365175-Renaud-Garcia-Fons-Oriental-Bass>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁵⁷ Vitold Rek (b. 1955) is a Polish bassist, composer and educator.

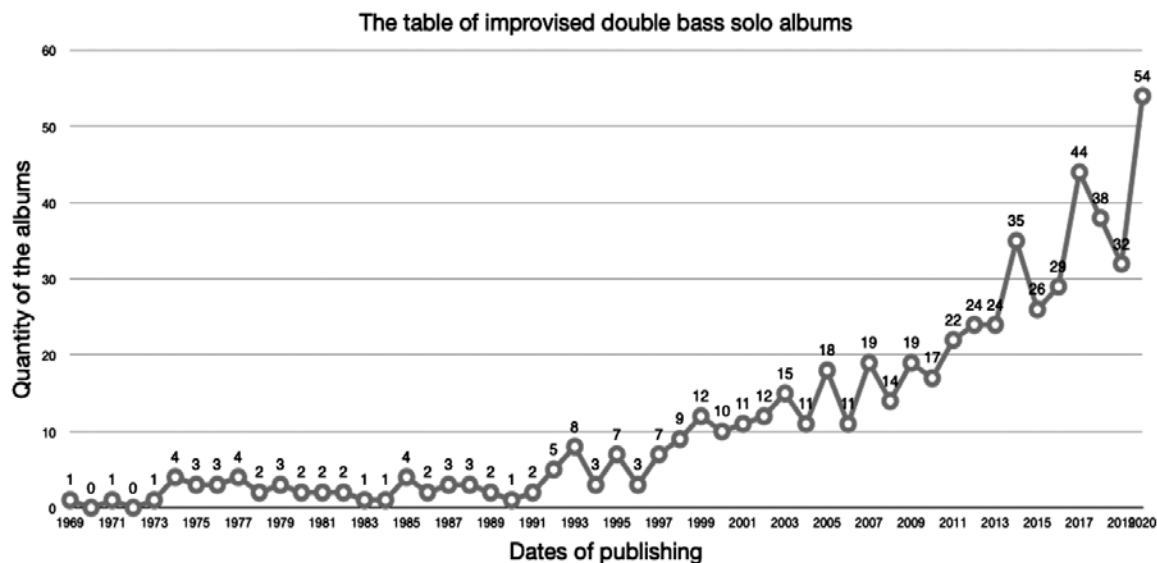
⁵⁸ More about Rek's album *Bassfiddle alla Polacca*: <<https://www.discogs.com/release/10744273-Vitold-Rek-Bassfiddle-Alla-Polacca>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁵⁹ Motoharu Yoshizawa (1931–1998) is a Japanese bassist and improviser.

⁶⁰ More about Guy's album *Sinners rather than Saints*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Barry-Guy-SoloDuo-With-Mats-Gustafsson-Sinners-Rather-Than-Saints/release/2009786>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁶¹ More about Guy's album *Five Fizzles For Samuel Beckett*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Barry-Guy-Five-Fizzles-For-Samuel-Beckett/release/6378037>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁶² More about Guy's album *Irvin's Comet*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Barry-Guy-Irvins-Comet/release/16297877>> [seen 2022 02 20].



Circumstances of the recording process: Aesthetics of the place

Circumstances of improvised double bass solo recording were different in each case, but there were always creative, courageous, innovative double bass performers on the one hand and enthusiastic and professional masters of sound recording on the other hand, who helped to deliver exceptional low-frequency music to the sound gourmets around the world.

According to the number of released albums, we could note that the main record companies for the improvised double bass solo recordings are ECM (11 albums), Acoustic Records (11), Creative Sources (9), Kadima Collective (7), Setola Di Maiale (7), NoBusiness Records (5), IEL Records (4), Émouvance (3), Enja (3), Maya Recordings (3) and others. Approximately 20% of all recordings have no label of a record company and were produced and released by artists themselves. This kind of tendency especially intensified in the 21st century, when music releases were more often virtual and available only on the Internet.

ECM (Editions of Contemporary Music), the leader of the company list, declare in their motto that they are recording and producing “the most beautiful sound next to silence”⁶³ which in the case of double bass solo performance sounds sensitive and familiar. It’s an interesting fact that Manfred Eicher founded the ECM company in the late sixties, around the same time when Barre Phillips recorded his solo debut album starting the new improvised double bass solo genre.

Speaking about local record companies in Lithuania, “NoBusiness” is the only one, however, it is among the leading companies of this genre in Eastern Europe. “NoBusiness” has released five albums of improvised double bass solo music including three Barry Guy albums mentioned before, Mark Dresser’s album *Modicana*⁶⁴ and Joe Morris’⁶⁵ album *Sensor*⁶⁶.

The recording places for improvised double bass solo performances are extremely different, often non-recurring, but we could mention at least three more used recording studios in Europe: La Buissonne studio in the southwest of France (5 recordings), Tonstudio Bauer in Ludwigsburg, Germany (4) and Talent studio in Oslo, Norway (4). About 40 recordings from the list were recorded during live double bass solo concerts.

⁶³ ECM motto: <<https://www.city-journal.org/ecm-german-music-label>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁶⁴ More about Dresser’s album *Modicana*: <<https://www.discogs.com/Mark-Dresser-Modicana/release/10868728>> [seen 2022 02 20].

⁶⁵ Joe Morris (b. 1955) is an American bassist, guitarist, improviser and composer.

⁶⁶ More about Morris’ album *Sensor*: <<https://www.discogs.com/fr/Joe-Morris-Sensor/release/2618135>> [seen 2022 02 20].

Conclusions

Improvised double bass solo performance first appeared in 1969 and since then it has become an improvisational music genre. Improvisation and real-time composition were major landmarks of this new genre. There were 5 conducive musical circumstances at the end of the 60s for this genre to come and unfold. All these double bass solo recordings were proof that double bass could be a solo instrument and not only a part of an ensemble or an orchestra with a main function to accompany the other soloists. The increasing numbers of recordings witness a growing interest in the double bass as a solo instrument.

I have suggested categorizing improvised double bass solo albums by structure into pure and mixed recordings. Also, I have offered the idea to distinguish five different musical styles for the diversity of this genre.

Improvised double bass solo performance is a process, which requires maximum concentration, the highest performance technique and exceptional creativity. Thanks to this process new experimental ways of playing double bass and fresh innovative methods of sound extraction were discovered and developed.

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Improvizacija ir momentinė kompozicija kontraboso solo pasirodyme

Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariama improvizacijos ir momentinės kompozicijos reikšmė improvizacinių kontraboso solo albumų kontekste. Apžvelgiama improvizuojančių solo kontraboso atlikėjų veikla, įamžinta įvairiuose muzikos albumų formatuose.

Straipsnio autorius pateikia savo improvizacinių kontraboso solo albumų klasifikaciją pagal sandarą ir stilių. Albumai pagal sandarą skirstomi į grynuosius ir mišrius, o pagal muzikos stilių klasifikuojami į penkis stilius, juose pažymint improvizacijos ir momentinės kompozicijos svarbą: laisvąjį improvizacinį, kompozicinį stilių su improvizacija, džiazinį stilių su improvizacija, šiuolaikinės akademinės muzikos improvizacinį stilių ir *world* muzikos improvizuotą stilių.

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama improvizuojančio kontraboso solo pasirodymo termino reikšmė, aptariamos muzikinės aplinkybės, padėjusios atsirasti ir susiformuoti improvizuojančių kontraboso solo atlikėjų reiškiniui bei žanrui septintajame dešimtmetyje, išskiriant penkis pagrindinius veiksniai: 1) džiazio atlikėjų ir kūrėjų įtaką, 2) naujų eksperimentinių džiazio stilių atsiradimą, 3) atgimusį šiuolaikinių akademinė kompozitorių dėmesį kontrabosui, 4) ryškių kontraboso solistų, pedagogų ir (ar) švietėjų atsiradimą, 5) priežastis, dėl kurių taikomos techninės plieninių stygų technologijos ir nauji kontraboso įgarsinimo būdai.

Šio žanro pradininkas – kontraboso atlikėjas ir improvizatorius Barre'as Phillipsas – straipsnyje sulaukia išskirtinio dėmesio. Straipsnyje taip pat apžvelgiami laiko, vietos ir garso estetikos veiksniai, nulėmę improvizuojančių kontraboso atlikėjų solinių įrašų be akompanimento atsiradimą, augimą ir vystymąsi. Laiko kontekstui atskleisti pasitelkiama 1969–2020 m. laikotarpį apimanti improvizacinių kontraboso solo albumų lentelė – joje aiškiai matoma įrašų augimo kreivė ir ypač nuo XXI a. pradžios augantis albumų kiekis. Atliekant įrašų sukūrimo, įrašymo ir išleidimo vietas analizę, pirmiausia akcentuojant senojo Europos žemyno ir JAV svarbą, įvardijamos minėtam žanrui palankios šalys, vėliau nurodomos daugiausiai tokio pobūdžio įrašų išleidusios kompanijos ir garso įrašų studijos.

Straipsnio išvadose pažymima, kad kūrybiškai brandūs, meistriškai atlikti, novatoriški ir gausūs improvizuojančios kontraboso atlikėjų bendruomenės įrašai liudija naujo žanro susiformavimą. O improvizacinio solo kontraboso pasirodymas yra maksimalios koncentracijos, aukščiausios atlikimo technikos ir išskirtinio kūrybiškumo reikalaujantis procesas, dėl kurio susiformavo naujos atlikimo technikos, novatoriški kompoziciniai sprendimai ir iki šiol nenaudoti šio instrumento garso išgavimo būdai.