Vol 8(2), July 1, 2008
mi40008000271

Attunement and Free Jazz

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My personal experiences with sound and rhythm began at age four, sitting underneath the family baby grand piano and listening to the sounds as my father practiced scales. Listening to and absorbing sounds and rhythms continued at age five through piano lessons and later in my youth, playing piano alone, in school plays, and in small groups with friends. The experience of sound and rhythm consumed my life during college studying jazz piano, playing in bands and being a disc jockey on the local radio station.

It was at this time in my early 20's that I began to notice unusual experiences occurring when playing with sounds and rhythms including shifts in consciousness, and felt states of heightened sensory awareness. These extraordinary experiences also occurred when listening to sounds in nature or when listening deeply to a piece of music. Once while meditating in the early morning at the Petrified Forest in Arizona, I heard an unusual deep low tone that sounded like an intense buzzing or hum. This sound was so loud that I thought there must be an electrical transformer nearby. But all that was around me was billion year old petrified wood. This was one of several unusual experiences I began to notice associated with sound and rhythm. While playing improvisational music with others, I often noticed changes to my internal state, such as a sense of losing time, and a felt sense of merging with the rhythms and with the other sounds coming from the players around me. I often had experiences where my hands seem to know what to do before my mind could catch up. In all of these experiences I began to wonder what was occurring and if others experienced sound and rhythm similarly.

While I have studied and performed improvisational music and practiced as a clinical counselor for the past 30 years, I am not a music therapist. I am a licensed counselor and expressive arts therapist. My orientation is focused on improvisation as a professional performing musician, trained in jazz techniques and theory. My other orientation is as an expressive arts therapist. In my teaching and clinical practice I follow the theoretical perspective of the pioneers in my field (Johnson, 1984, 1985, 1999; Knill, 1995, 1999, 2005; Levine, 1992; McNiff, 1981, 1992, 1998, 2003; Robbins, 1994. 1998; Rogers 1997). This theoretical perspective encompasses an interdisciplinary approach to arts based therapies with the understanding that expressive arts therapy is itself a discipline unto itself. As an expressive arts therapist, I use a range of art forms in clinical practice including improvisational music.

In 2006-2008 I conducted a research project as part of my dissertation, to study the phenomenon of improvisation related to embodied transcendent experience. In this research study I was interested in how other musicians experienced improvisation and what correlations there might be for therapists that use sound and rhythm in clinical practice. For this research I was particularly interested in the phenomenon of attunement (defined in more detail below).

I realize that here has been much written in the music therapy literature about improvisation (Brucia, 1998; Ruud, 1995, 1998). I have been particularly interested in Even Ruud's thoughts regarding improvisation as a transitional ritual and the relationship to Victor Turner's liminal state. More specifically the research described above focused on the ways improvisation can strengthen personal, interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects. This is closely related to what Ruud refers to when he states "improvisations in music therapy seek to build a community

(communitas) through a temporary leveling of all social roles. During the improvisation all traditional role expectations toward the therapist are set to point zero. Instead, music therapists try to reach spontaneous and immediate 'free collective improvisations' where complementary and symmetrical forms of social interaction originate spontaneously out of the musical interaction" (as cited in Kenny, 1995, p. 105). Others have written about the relation of musical improvisation and human interaction (Aldridge, 1989; Lichtenstein, D. 1993; Meares, R. 2001; Nachmanovitch, S. 2001; Raeburn, B. 2004).

In addition, there has been much written about attunement in relation to music therapy and improvisation especially from the view of attachment theorists (Sonkin, 2005; Stern, 2004; Treverathen, 1977). In the music therapy literature the conceptual framework of attunement associated with psychological development through the lens of attachment theory has been referred to in several excellent articles (Lowey, 2004; Hallan, Gro E. & Hauge, Tonhild; 2003, Salmon, 2008).

While much of the background material in the research cited in this article referred to the theoretical positions of attachment theorists and more recent finding from neurobiology and the importance of mirror neurons (Gallese, 2001; Ramachandran, & Oberman, 2006) it is my intention here to focus more narrowly on the connections between the influence Free Jazz, free improvisation and attunement can have in the practice of psychotherapy in general and therapies that use sound and rhythm more specifically.

Attunement

It may be useful to begin with a definition of attunement. The phenomenon of "attunement" has been defined in various disciplines such as music, philosophy, religion, and psychology. Attunement is defined here as a sensorial felt embodied experience that can be individualistic as well as communal, that includes a psychological, emotional, and somatic state of consciousness often reported in spiritual, mystical, or transpersonal experiences. This aspect of attunement is most closely referred to in the psychological literature as a "unitive" or "peak experience" (James, 1902/1982; Maslow, 1964). The psychologist Richard Erskine (1998) called attunement, "a kinesthetic and emotional sensing of others – knowing their rhythm, affect and experience by metaphorically being in their skin, and going beyond empathy to create a two-person experience of unbroken feeling connectedness by providing a reciprocal affect and/or resonating response" (p. 236).

Steven Jeddeloh (2003), in his qualitative research looking at jazz musicians' experience while improvising, comes the closest to describing the intuitive and felt experience of attunement when he reports that jazz musicians' improvisational experiences are embodied and ecstatic. He labels these experiences as "magic moments," defined as moments of transcendence, or a sense of the sacred, or spiritual, experienced while improvising. He views this kind of playing as an actively embodied rather than merely a passive experience, described by improvisers as being carried along by the music. He reports that neurologically there is an internal process of integration, including increased central nervous system activity, while at the same time a reduction of peripheral circulatory and metabolic processes.

In another qualitative research study, improvisational musicians describe moments while playing as "achievement of a higher consciousness" or a "state of ecstatic being in the moment which transcends the person's everyday experience of the world" (Burrows 2004, p. 16). For Burrows, playing music is a sacred moment of communion with fellow human beings and with a greater unseen force. In this study improvisational musicians reported that they felt "truly alive and awake, fully embodied yet beyond the body" (p. 18). Folk rock musician Bonnie Raitt describes this sense of communion or attunement when she says, "This incredible exchange of energy goes on onstage, where you're almost transported. It's the band when we really lock in and the audience knows you're locking in" (as cited in Barron et al., 1997 p. 126). And jazz pianist Marilyn Crispell says, "When you're really hooked into the music you reach another level of energy that goes beyond the mechanics of it. I think it comes through getting in touch with your energy or with the primal energy that exists in the universe" (as cited in Tucker, 1972, p. 218). More specifically, Burrows (2004), in his research with improvisational musicians states that there are moments while playing that could be characterized as "achievement of a higher consciousness" or "state of ecstatic being in the moment which transcends the person's everyday experience of the world" (p. 140).

Another word often used synonymously with attunement is entrainment, where resonant fields rhythmically synchronize together such as brain waves, circadian rhythms, lunar and solar cycles, breathing, circulation, and rhythms found in the nervous system (Hall, 1983; Thaut, Kenyon, Schauer, & McIntosh, 1999). When musicians talk about feeling the groove, they are

referring to a rhythmic synchronization with the sounds and pulsations, or an attunement.

Additionally, philosophical and musical language often draw parallels to the phenomenon of attunement, referring to an intimacy that involves shared moments of transcendence or what is known as spiritual intimacy where there is a feeling of merging with the universe or a primordial unity (Byram, 1999). This state of shared transcendent intimacy has often been reported by improvisational musicians (Bailey, 1992; Berendt, 1983; Borgo & Goguen, 2005; Burrows, 2004; Fischlin & Heble, 2004; Jeddeloh, 2003; Rouget, 1985).

While musicians, music educators, and clinical therapists all use the language of attunement are they talking about the same thing?

Jazz Musicians and Therapists

In my experience I enter into the emotionally intimate world of the client or patient, in a similar way that I enter into the emotional, physically, and spiritually intimate world of vibration and rhythm. In both approaches, I enter into an uncertain, chaotic situation that must be addressed through experimentation and free exploration. These chaotic states may lead to relational connectivity to self, an external connectivity with others, and a greater sense of connection to the world if uncertainty and chaotic states are tolerated. Music educator Frederick Seddon (2005), in his study of communication modes in jazz musicians, found that empathy is achieved by understanding the thoughts and feelings of self and others through what he calls an "empathic attunement," and found that improvisational experiences "prepared individuals for exploration, risk-taking, concentration and rapport and requires the development of trust between individuals" (p. 53).

From my experience experimentation, risk taking, discovery, and meaning making are some of the similar protocols followed in improvisational music making and in clinical practice. For example, through exploratory musical improvisations, (jazz, rock, blues, bluegrass, world music) my intent is to expand meaning and communicate to the listener or audience something that is spontaneous and significantly of the moment. This communication is often achieved through attempting to express an emotional state, be it joy, excitement, sadness, fear, anxiety, anguish, or a sense of deep connection to myself, other, and to a greater universal presence. In the background material for my research I found that studies of jazz performers demonstrate that this kind of communication results in a deeply felt embodied experience shared by the improviser and the listener (Bailey, 1992; Berendt, 1983; Berliner, 1994; Borgo & Goguen, 2005; Burrows, 2004; Fischlin & Heble, 2004; Jeddeloh, 2003; Rouget, 1985). Many jazz musicians in these studies reported that when they play improvisational music the experience often results in a lost sense of time and space and an entry into a continuous and unbroken flow of heightened sensitivity to each passing moment.

Similarly I have found that when sound and rhythm is used therapeutically, an improvisational form is often utilized involving experimentation, risk taking, discovery, and meaning making. Additionally, the form in a therapy session usually follows a sequence similar to a jazz improvisation session where issues or themes are stated, followed by a period of time where these themes are explored, and embellished in an attempt to bring a new understanding of the presenting issues (or musical theme).

Free Jazz

Synthesizing this further, I would like to look more specifically at the jazz tradition known as "free jazz" where there is no formal structure or pre-constructed composition (Bailey, 1992; Berendt, 1983; Berliner, 1994; Eisenberg, 1990; Fischlin & Heble, 2004; Green, 2003; Heble, 2000; Nunn, 1998). Looking at the performances of musicians such as John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane, Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Pauline Oliveros, Marilyn Crispell and the Art Ensemble of Chicago, who were all free jazz pioneers, reveal similarities to the use of sound and rhythm in clinical practice. For example in free jazz acute listening practices with the goal of group cohesion are very important. Charles Ford (1995) suggests that improvising in this attentional way creates a community of true equality and equanimity in which the contributions of all are recognized, valued, and used in the process of creation. "For as long as the music lasts, the players are completely dependent on listening to and trying to understand each other in service of a creative goal beyond their own personal desires" (Ford, 1995, p. 106).

Tom Nunn (1998) has called free improvisation "the imagination unleashed through the impulse" (p. 5). Impulse here implies the immediate influence of both somatic and emotional feelings and mental states that emerge from the unconscious. Impulse can also be seen as the

moment of surge when actions draw upon available cognitive, affective, and material resources (in this case sound and rhythm) to create an effect. Impulse in free jazz is a "non-idiomatic" structure (Bailey, 1992), implying that there is no specific form followed. This style of playing is therefore open and non-structured and calls for entering into unfamiliar territory without reservation with another person or a group. In this way improvisers learn to be separate and communal, to withdraw and embrace at the same time (Eisenberg, 1990).

Improvising in this free form also necessitates a process of careful listening and responding in the moment. Improvisers playing in this way report similarities to being engaged in a spontaneous conversation (Sawyer, 1992). In these spontaneous moments, the flow of leader and follower are often ambiguous and a heightened state of listening and focused presence needs to be employed. It has also been documented that this form of improvisation may also increase a sense of anxiety, because the non-structured parameters are sometimes boundless and leave more room for miscommunication and mistakes (Borgo & Goguen, 2005; Heble, 2000; Nunn, 1998). However, it has also been reported that improvising in this way can lead to a sense of freedom or liberation from habitual somatic and psychological patterns, as dormant creative energies are unleashed (Borgo & Goguen, 2005; Burrows, 2004; Fischlin & Heble, 2004; Heble, 2000; Jeddeloh, 2003). Additionally, exploration and experimentation in free jazz improvisation is an accepted part of the creative and exploratory process and what makes the music feel fresh and alive. The experimentation that takes place in free jazz involves a process of relational connection and disconnection as well as discordant rhythmic flows (Nunn, 1998) that is very similar to what takes place when music is used in therapeutic practice.

Chaos Theory

For a broader understanding of relational connections and discordant rhythmic flow it is important to look at the underpinnings of chaos theory. Barbara Crowe in her book Soul Making (2004) has done an excellent and much more comprehensive job of making the connection between chaos theory and music therapy then will be outlined here. However it is important here to highlight some of the important connections to the concepts found in free jazz and in the practice of psychotherapy.

Non-linear dynamical systems described in chaos theory utilize the extremes of cooperation and competition, which are always present as tensional dynamics (Borgo and Goguen, 2005). The theory proposes that the potential for adaptation and change occurs when the non-linear system is open to energy influxes and exchanges from outside as well as from inside the dynamical system. Inner and outer connectivity take place through rhythmic changes in time and non-linear spatial localities. The former creates surprise and fragility; while the latter implies unpredictable outcomes as seen in ecosystems such as earthquakes, weather patterns, and tides.

Like in complex dynamical systems, free jazz depends on the synchronized timing or resonance of each musician playing together in the context and sense of unpredictable outcomes. In free jazz as well as when improvisational sounds are used in clinical practice, divergent dissonant chaotic energies often run into each other forcing new directions and configurations through changes in tempo, harmony, or dynamics (loud/soft, slow/fast, etc.). Similarities can also be seen in states of confusion or chaos, which can result when improvisers are not listening to each other or not giving space to the collective dialogue. Dissonance can be thought of here as relational misattunement (also mentioned in the language of attachment theories). Therefore, it can be inferred that the experience of interpersonal connectivity is evoked in both free improvisations used for performance or in clinical practice, when deep listening and a willingness to hold and give space are part of the individual, dyadic, or group goal.

The point/counterpoint dynamical reality found in free jazz and in music used in clinical practice where errors, shifts, or breaks in the continuity of improvisational flow are treated as compositional problems that require instant collectively creative solutions, can be both liberating and intimidating.. At any moment, any player can spontaneously take the music in any direction by breaking its continuity, which can lead to unexpected outcomes. This reality requires a capacity to act and react instantaneously with equanimity. In this kind of improvisational playing together there is a ceding of complete individual control in favor of interpersonal contact, "not just a spontaneous action but an empathic hermeneutic interaction . . . a cohabited space for embodied collective learning" (Heble, 2000, p. 95).

Risk taking within a creative cooperative collaboration (Kamoche, Pina e Cunha, & Vieira da Cunha, 2003) is the backbone of this style of playing as well as when improvisational music is

used in therapy. Improvisation in this manner then necessitates a large degree of interpersonal risk taking or exploration by venturing off into unknown ways and practices. As the great jazz alto saxophonist Benny Golson said, "The creative person always walks two steps into the darkness. Everybody can see what's in the light. They can imitate it, they can underscore it, they can modify it, they can reshape it. But the real heroes delve in darkness of the unknown" (as cited in Green, 2003, p. 53).

Exploratory experimentation that involves unpredictable or chaotic moments found in free jazz is also utilized in therapeutic situations, where a process of "decentering" (Knill, Levine, & Levine, 2005) is utilized. Decentering occurs when sound explorations are utilized improvisationally to engage the client in experiential, exploratory activity. Improvisational risk taking and experimentation can create a sense of feeling decentered or in unfamiliar territory. If this felt sense of decentering is held in a therapeutically safe way, the experience can increase the range of play and can lead to shifts in cognitive, emotional, psychological, and/or somatic awareness. Again it is important to note that these shifts occur when the need to know is postponed in favor of staying with uncertainty.

It can therefore be said that both clinical situations that use sound and rhythm and free musical improvisations as found in free jazz, share a process of experimentation and risk taking that involves chaotic and unpredictable states that can lead to shifts in cognitive, emotional, and somatic states of consciousness. The poet John Keats (1984) referred to this ability to experience uncertain states, as "negative capability" or the capacity to sustain uncertainty, mystery or doubt. Negative capability was called the perfect state for creation, since it left the imagination "completely free to seize Beauty as Truth" (as cited in Gittings, 1968, p. 175). Along these lines the psychologist Wilfred Bion (1978) wrote that negative capability was a necessary and useful state in the therapeutic encounter.

Research

Turning now to the research study cited at the beginning of this article (Kossak, 2008) I would like to begin to tie in the idea of attunement in relation to chaos theory and the conceptual frameworks of free jazz. In this research study one group of therapists that use sound and rhythm and one mixed group of therapists and professional musicians each engaged in a one-hour-long free improvisation (unstructured) session using sound and rhythm. In addition, two individual improvisation sessions, one with a professional musician and one with a clinical psychologist, also occurred. All four research sessions were followed by an hour-long interview and discussion of the improvisational experience in relation to attunement and misattunement, altered and embodied states of consciousness, and relational empathy.

All four research sessions and follow up interviews were videotaped. These videotapes were then cataloged for observable behaviors and words that suggested ideas of attunement, mis-attunement, altered states of consciousness and relational empathy. These behaviors and words were then sub grouped into 10 functional developmental stages including:

1. Warming up to space, sounds, and self
2. Seeking safety through what is familiar
3. Initial risks with sounds and rhythms (cycling between moving forward and retreating)
4. Increased risk taking and vulnerability
5. Misattunement; connection/disconnection; experimentation
6. Relational connections/empathy
7. Relaxing the mind, finding flow (allowing sounds and rhythms to guide)
8. Merging or entrainment with the sounds and rhythms begins
9. Embodied shift in consciousness
10. Attunement

Expanding further on these stages, the first stage involved an initial phase of warming up, where individuals showed an inclination to connect to themselves through stretching, exploring the space, and experimentation with sound and rhythm. This warming up phase was followed by a second phase where individuals tended toward finding safety through familiar sounds, rhythms, and/or melodies. After finding individual safety, there was a third stage of increased risk taking with other individuals. In this third stage there was a consistent tendency toward cycling between moving forward and retreating, a kind of playing with space, sound, and rhythm. In this sense it can be concluded that there were inclinations within the individuals in this study to find

personal comfort and safety before venturing off into collective and unknown territory. These inclinations occurred when trying to connect relationally with other individuals as well as when trying to connect explicitly through sound and rhythm.

Once individuals in this study began to feel safe and take risks, a fourth stage emerged where there was observable increases in risks taken, which was described as a kind of vulnerability similar to what a small child or baby might experience. The next phase that emerged included an observable level of further experimentation, which appeared to lead to chaotic moments of disconnection. This phase can be associated with a sense of misattunement when relational connectivity was described as feeling "too individual" or like "noise." This phase can be thought of as a place where mistakes are made, and are not only accepted, but have the possibility of deepening the creative process. Conversely, these so-called mistakes or misattuned moments might also increase a sense of anxiety. Once individuals in this study cycled between connecting and disconnecting, a phase of greater connectivity or empathy appeared to emerge. In the interviews, empathy was referred to as "conversational" and allowing for a "letting go" to happen. Empathy was also referred to as flow.

This sense of empathy as "flow" appeared to lead to a seventh stage where the experience was described with words such as "energetic," "waves," "fluid," and "universal creativity." It could be observed that this felt sense of flow led to the next stage of merging or entrainment with the sounds and rhythms. In this stage many of the individuals in this study felt that the sounds and rhythms themselves created an energetic state that shifted the individual's awareness. Participants alluded to this shift as if something else has taken over, some kind of other energy. Others said it felt like there was a flow emanating from an unconscious or collective unitive state. "There can be a tremendous amount of energy, but it's not me doing it." This shift in awareness led to the next stage, which included a shift from mental activity to an embodied state. This stage was described as "integrating" through a process of "slowing down the breath" and creating a "different kind of state."

Once an embodied merging occurs, as observed in the previous stage, it appears that a felt embodied sense of attunement is achieved. This last stage was most notably described through analogous language such as "a focused presence" where there is an "opening to being sensitive, to being awake on an energetic and emotional level" where "senses are heightened" and there is a feeling of "connecting the inside to the outside and then connecting the outside with the group."

Refining these ten stages even further, associated words, statements, and/or characteristics can be extracted from the research experiences in order to facilitate a theoretical overview of achieving attunement through sound and rhythm improvisations. Below is a table outlining the ten stages and important characteristics, properties, and features.

Table 1

Stages of achieving attunement	Associative words, statements, and/or characteristics
1. warming up to space, sounds, and self	• enter into the space • stretch • find the right space to sit or stand
2. seeking safety through what is familiar	• play instruments and/or sounds that are familiar • play in a familiar key signature • play familiar melodies or familiar beats
3. initial risks with sounds and rhythms (cycling between moving toward and retreating)	• process of tuning in outside oneself • connecting/disconnecting
4. increased risk taking and vulnerability	• strengthens the ability and take risks • compared it to the vulnerability found in childhood
5.misattunement; connection/disconnection;	• not in sync

experimentation	• chaotic • sense of anxiety • meaningless • disrupted flow • sounds like noise • individual and not relational • can deepen the relational aspect if held and supported
6. relational connections/empathy	• conversational • attempting to find a common language • leaving space • ability to be with others • to resonate • getting out of the way
7. relaxing the mind/finding flow (allowing sounds and rhythms to guide)	• felt really effortless • felt like there was energy • universal flow of creativity • waves • fluid
8. merging or entrainment with the sounds and rhythms	• a tremendous amount of energy, but it's not me doing it • feeling taken by the sounds • tapping into some other consciousness • something else has taken over • • • •
9. embodied shift in consciousness	• not thinking • all thoughts and doubts tend to dissolve • something shifts in my mind • feel my mind settling • feel my body getting more restful • feel like I enter another zone • feel like it increases my sense of presence • become integrated in yourself
10. attunement	• sacred space • channel • universal presence • the living earth • in a blending state> • divine state • the cosmos • the one all pervasive reality • connecting the inside to the outside

	• and then connecting the outside with the group • an ecstatic blissful place to be • a focused presence • reconnecting with everything that's around me

Conclusions

From this review it can be suggested that free musical improvisation used by professional musicians and free improvisations used in clinical therapy practice reflect many similarities. As noted both employ a methodology that helps to create the experience of relational connectivity and attunement to self, other, group (community), and a sense of the transcendent, through experimentation, interpersonal collaboration, a need for deep listening, and learning how to stay with unpredictable states. Additional similarities may include learning and development that involves inter-relational cooperation and an environment for risk taking, embodied discovery, the necessity to tolerate unpredictability, flow, spontaneity, and an in-the-moment awareness.

Regarding the research cited there were several assumptions made beforehand. These assumptions emerged from previous personal experiences of engagement with free improvisations I had as a professional musician and as a practicing clinical therapist over the past 30 years. These assumptions included the idea that others involved in free improvisations would have similar transcendent experiences.

Perhaps the most surprising element that emerged from the research was the different reactions to perceived chaotic sounds between the professional musicians and the professional expressive arts therapists. This discrepancy included the musicians' responses that chaotic sounds were unpleasing or dissonant, and labeled as negative, while the clinical therapists' responses were more in line with a non-judgmental, relational interest. For example one musician said: "It sounds like noise and chatter" (p. 135) while a psychologist, said: "those moments can be the most fertile moments for the reckoning of the deepening of the relationship if they can be held non-defensively." (p.108) Therefore the concept of misattunement emerged in the end as equal to if not even more interesting then the concept of attunement itself. This was a new discovery that brought new thoughts.

The conceptual discrepancy of misattunement between musicians and therapists can be thought of as in the context of an educational vs. a therapeutic model. In my experience, in most institutional settings, musical aesthetics is based on right and wrong; either you play the notes right or you are asked to stop playing. Even in jazz or even free jazz education, there is a clear emphasis on playing "right" or "correct" sounds and rhythms based on agreed upon compositional frames and aesthetic qualities. In the first research session one of the professional musicians said to a clinician "stop playing" when he felt the music was not "right." It is my belief that this idea of right or wrong is taught in music education from a very early age and often stops creative musical process for many. I have heard many times from my own graduate students that they "can't" play music because a teacher somewhere along the line told them so. I have also seen this with my own children as they went through grammar school and high school and I have even seen and heard this from students majoring in music in college. How many adults that started singing or playing an instrument as a child still continue. Yes there may be time constraints, but how many feel just not good enough? While I realize this may be a generalization, I think the conceptual frame here holds. In my experience many adult clients show resistance when asked to participate in improvisational music.

On the other hand in clinical practice, concepts of right and wrong are subjects to be explored and as a clinician I often encourage individuals to work through an issue using creative process. Implied in these explorations is often the emphasis to stay with uncertainty, or mistakes, or chaotic unpredictable states as a way to tolerate the sense of not always being able to control what life has to offer. I often view engagement in this kind of free improvisational playing whether in clinical practice or as a professional musician as a metaphor or as a practice for engaging with, or coping with, the kinds of unpredictable states that occur in nature, as well as in human interaction. Free improvisation then can be seen as a "paradigm for the way humans reflect and create what happens and for how we respond to and give shape to our world" (Frost &Yarrow, 1990, p. 17) and mirrors the ongoing point/ counterpoint found in nature through experimentation that includes holding chaotic states of unpredictability and finding creative spontaneous solutions.

It can also be surmised from this research that playing with sounds and rhythms through free improvisation can help in the effort to be continually aware of and alert to the basic mechanical reactions that can cause us to feel numb, insensitive, or unable to respond to what life has to offer. The psychologist Robert Lifton (1998) has called this "psychic numbing," defined as "a diminished capacity or inclination to feel" (p. 58). Lifton's words can be thought of in terms of an arrhythmic state of being. Along these lines theologian Matthew Fox (2002) urges our educational systems to respond to what he calls an "imagination deficit disorder," where we willingly respond to children's unsettling behavior with medication and ignore the potential of creativity to lead us toward a healthier and perhaps more essential response. This is not to suggest in any way the efficacy of medication in certain situations, however is there a price paid for cutting the arts out of educational curriculums?

Furthermore, the findings from this study suggest that if individual attunement can be achieved, and can lead to a felt embodied sense of attunement with others, then as suggested in the 10 stages a merging or a kind of entrainment occurs that was called a "sacred place" or a "universal presence" by participants. As previously stated these felt shifts in somatic and cognitive states of consciousness experienced through the sound and rhythm improvisations have correlates to what transpersonal psychologists have called unitive states or peak experiences. As the transpersonal literature indicates, achievement of episodic peak experiences involves feeling in the flow of things, self-fulfilled, engaged in optimal functioning, and filled with a sense of connectivity to self and the world (Battista, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This felt sense of rhythmic attunement can also be thought of as a kind of shared intimacy where individuals feel a sense of interconnected unity with something greater than self. One therapist, in the follow-up interview used the word "intimacy" to describe her experience of attunement, which can be applied to the therapeutic relationship as well.

> Entering into a creative state that is both blended and differentiated may be the ultimate definition of intimacy. When we are in that state with another we are in the realm of the whole Self. I do not think opening into that space depends on knowing someone well (i.e., you have history that creates trust). I think it is a chemistry that you sense in another and you can open into that dynamic, collaborative, co-creative space on first meeting. It is a kind of attunement, as well. You are opening in a multidimensional way. You are attuning to creative substance with another and letting it move you both simultaneously. It is a type of trinity: you, another, and the creative universal substance (p. 177).

The experience of intimacy that emerged from this study in relation to achieving attunement through sound and rhythmic improvisations, including a sense of connectivity to self, other, and a universal quality, can also be viewed as a very important and necessary quality to hold as a stated goal in clinical practice.

The art of being with another person and listening to what is said and what is implied becomes an act of tuning in. In the therapeutic encounter it is the ability to stay centered, aligned, alert, and attuned to the moment that creates a therapeutic connection. It is in these connected moments that an alignment between therapist and client or a therapeutic attunement begins to emerge. It is my hope that by looking at the underlying principles of free jazz and chaos theory that clinicians will broaden their understanding of human relationships. It is also my hope that the conceptual associations to the phenomenon of attunement will also widen past the attachment/non-attachment theories and to a larger transpersonal perspective.

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To cite this page:
Kossak, Mitchell (2008). Attunement and Free Jazz. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy.* Retrieved from http://www.voices.no/mainissues/mi40008000271.php

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