

Poster Presentation:

“Oh, Pierre!” A Cue-Driven System for Improvised Democratic Engagement

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Poster Abstract:

Improvisation in school music ensembles, when practiced in a context that is safe and welcoming for all students, can empower creativity, encourage musical decision-making, develop critical listening skills, and cultivate individual and ensemble confidence.

Although more commonly practiced within jazz and contemporary music idioms, improvisation is often reserved for more experienced students and is less commonly seen within larger traditional ensembles (bands, choirs, orchestras). Additionally, the constraints of idiomatic frameworks often suggest stylistically appropriate “rules” or “practices” that should be sufficiently learned and adhered to in order allow for improvisation that generates the highest quality “end product”.

This poster will present a new framework for improvised musicking called “Oh, Pierre!” which is an example of a “CD-SIDE” (Cue-Driven System for Improvised Democratic Engagement). Influenced by the work of Walter Thompson (Soundpainting) and John Zorn (“Cobra”), “Oh, Pierre!” makes use of a system of hand cues that generate improvised musical gestures from involved performers and was developed to be quickly accessible to all musicians, regardless of instrument/voice or level of musical experience. The work was designed so that the process of music making remains non/pan-idiomatic

and democratic, allowing for all performers to have equal roles in giving cues, taking musical risks, shaping musical directions, and making musical choices.

This poster will outline the philosophical basis for and evolution of “Oh, Pierre!” and will chronicle the experiences of middle school, high school, and college students who have engaged with the process. The parameters of ‘Oh, Pierre!’ will be shared in their entirety so that music educators may feel empowered to share ‘Oh, Pierre!’ with other musicians, students, and educators.