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**Pedagogy Through Piano: Learning Through Improvisation in Matthew
Thibeault's The Power of Limits and the Pleasure of Game: Fun Piano Duo
Improvisation**

I appreciated Thibeault sharing this improvisational game that music educators can use as a way of refreshing their pedagogical practices in the classroom. What we have to remember is that this game is for pleasure, as Thibeault states in his article. It cannot be used to replace other musical teaching practices in the classroom but rather, to compliment exercises already implemented in the classroom. A problem that I have with Thibeault's article is when he makes the argument that there are "those hampered by too much of the wrong kind of music education" (1). Is Thibeault suggesting in his article that all other forms of music education are wrong and that the only "right" way to properly embrace and approach music education is through his proposed idea of improvisation? I believe that he may be hinting at the fact that his pedagogical strategy of improvisation makes all other methods of teaching subordinate. This should never be the case when introducing new musical teaching methods in the classroom. Pedagogical methods must compliment, not contradict each other.

While I enjoyed the proposal of the improvisation game, and I agree with Thibeault in the importance of improvisation in classrooms, I wish that he would have expanded more and explained how improvisation extends beyond a musical setting.

There are many transferable skills to be learned from such an activity as improvisation, but Thibeault only briefly touches on them in closing stating, “educators can promote creativity where the ideas come from social engagement and careful listening” (4). But what does this mean in relation to other learning and life scenarios? I think that improvisation promotes confidence in students as it allows them to openly explore creatively without judgment or critique. I also think that it encourages key listening strategies in students by forcing them to listen to understand, and not just listen to respond. Exercises like this partner improvisation also gives students the opportunity to work with others rather than independently and critically engage with other students rather than learning and thinking on their own. Thibeault also mentions the importance of partner work in the beginning of his article stating, “I believe the social possibilities of playing this game together have become for me the best part” (1).

Work Cited

Thibeault, M. D. (2012). The Power of Limits and the Pleasure of Games: An Easy and Fun Piano Duo Improvisation. *General Music Today*, 25(3), 50-53.
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