

Improvising on a Blues Form with Eugene Shapiro

Grades 6 - 8

Students are taught a fun and easy way to improvise on a Blues using a couple of Pentatonic Minor Scales, as well as devices such as call and response, repetition, use of space, and more.

Materials: Instrument of choice

The Lesson:

1. Explaining the blues form and the importance of blues in main styles of music, including jazz.
2. Jazz improvisation and a very easy, melodic, and fun way of improvising using two different Pentatonic Minor scales. Identifying the notes of each Pentatonic Minor scale so students know which notes they can play and how to practice them.
3. Demonstrate this approach by playing a Bb Blues on guitar with a backup track.
4. comp for the students watching the video, so they can play along with me using this new approach. Describe and demonstrate the techniques repetition, call and response, and use of space while improvising.
5. Review the blues form and this new approach.

Connection to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for the Fine Arts

- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic work and ideas.
- Performing: Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation.

MU:Cr1.1.EV Compose and improvise musical ideas for a variety of purposes and contexts.

MU:Cr2.1.EV Select and develop composed and improvised ideas into draft musical works organized for a variety of purposes and contexts.

MU:Pr4.3.EV Demonstrate how understanding the style, genre, and context of a varied repertoire of music informs prepared and improvised performances as well as performers' technical skill to connect with the audience.

MU:Pr5.1.EV Develop, apply, and refine appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music.

Connection to Literacy: active listening, comprehension, vocabulary, thinking, making connections

Resources: Band-in-a-Box software

About the Artist

Eugene Shapiro

Eugene Shapiro is a Jazz guitarist, bandleader, composer, arranger, and educator. He is a Nevada Arts Council teaching artist, as well as a The Smith Center teaching artist. He has released three albums with his Jazz Quartet the *Shapiro Project*, the latest album "Planet X" was released in 2019. Eugene has been an Adjunct Music Faculty member at College of Southern Nevada (CSN) since 2000.

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Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster

The Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster is an online resource for schools, organizations and communities seeking to engage teaching artists. Roster artists are experienced in collaborating with schools and communities to conduct arts learning and cultural experiences in, through and about the arts.

Explore the roster at <https://www.nvartscouncil.org/rosters/teaching-artists/>