

# Basic Improvisation for Beginners

## Some Basic Thoughts About Improvisation And The Trombone

1. Improvisation is not limited to jazz – list other genres that use this technique
  - a. B\_r o q u e
  - b. R\_c k
  - c. S k \_
  - d. F\_n k
  - e. P\_p
2. Since the trombone's inception in the late 15<sup>th</sup> early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was standard practice that all trombonists (musicians in general) improvised. Many of Bach's organ preludes were first improvised during church services and then later written down for pedagogical purposes.
3. Improvisation by "classical" musicians didn't decline until the 19<sup>th</sup> century
4. Jazz, one of the truly American genres, brought the practice to the forefront in the late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries
5. There is no one single approach to learning how to improvise. The tips given here are just a starting point.
6. Don't worry about playing a "wrong" note. Just remember your only a ½ step away from the "right" one! Sit on that "wrong" note long enough and you can make it sound "right"!

## Getting Started

1. **HAVE FUN** – this is the most important step!!! If you are not having fun you won't want to practice and improve.
2. Learn simple melodies by ear. Start off with tunes like "Mary Had A Little Lamb", "Three Blind Mice", "Happy Birthday", and for a challenge "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star". Many beginner band methods come with accompaniment CDs that you can use as a "backing track".
3. There are only two basic elements in improvisation
  - a. Rhythm
  - b. Pitch

4. Begin to improvise first by changing the rhythm of the melody. Create your own “variation” of the melody rhythmically (think of all the variations Mozart wrote for “Twinkle”!) If needed just improvise rhythms on a single pitch. You’d be surprised how much you can do with just one note!
5. Once you’re comfortable improvising variations on rhythm move on to the next step – pitch
6. Using the rhythm of the original melody play the notes of the melody in a different order. Don’t use notes outside of the melody at this point.
7. After improvising this new melody, move on to the next step – improvising the rhythm.

## YOU’RE NOW IMPROVISING!!!

### Suggestions For Continued Study

1. Check out the Jamey Aebersold improvisation series ([www.jazzbooks.com](http://www.jazzbooks.com))
2. Take a look at SmartMusic ([www.smartmusic.com](http://www.smartmusic.com)). It has several of the Aebersold Play-A-Longs included.
3. Listen Listen Listen!!! Suggested trombonists to listen to include J.J. Johnson, Kai Winding, Urbie Green, and Kid Ory. Also listen to other artists as well.
4. When your technique has improved, try to play along with your favorite artists. Learn their solos by ear, then write them out. There are a number of places to get transcriptions, but going through the process yourself is the recommended method.
5. The SmartMusic files created for this presentation will be available for download from [musictech.uncg.edu](http://musictech.uncg.edu) (no www in front). Look under the “Trombone” tab.

### NOTES:



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"THE NUMBER OF DESAFINADO, PLAYS"

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