

GRETA MATASSA

"A marvel of virtuosity" —Los Angeles Times

Award-winning vocalist, recording artist and teacher offering private instruction, workshops and clinics.



Greta has coached many winners of the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival and Kobe Sister City jazz competitions and helped start the careers of several of the area's current jazz headliners.

For teaching info, performances and cds:
206-937-1262 GRETAMATASSA.COM

Open to All - Free



Sunday, Dec 5, 6 pm Hot Club Sandwich

Three guitars, bass, violin, and mandolin, with a repertoire that ranges from big band standards to musettes, boleros, and traditional Gypsy folk tunes

Sunday, Jan 2, 6 pm The Randy Oxford Band

Randy Oxford, trombone; Jada Amy, lead vocals; Rafeal Tranquilino, guitar & vocals; Jho Blenis, guitar & vocals; Richard Sabol, drums; Farko Dosumov, bass

100 Minutes of professional jazz
Family friendly concert | Free parking

Seattle First Baptist Church

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Seattle, WA (206) 325-6051

www.SeattleJazzVespers.org/GO/SJV

PRACTICE THIS!

Active Listening

By David M. Marriott, Jr.

We've talked many times about the value of listening in past articles of Practice This!, but little has been mentioned in terms of how to listen, what to listen for, and how to learn from our listening efforts. There must be more to listening than just... listening, right? We need to be mindful, critical, and analytical as we listen in order to learn as much as we can. We need to practice active listening.

Relationships: Try to focus your listening on the relationship of two specific instruments -- piano and bass, drums and bass, or soloist and piano, for example. We can learn much about the mechanics of these musical relationships through this confined, isolated practice. I remember having difficulty in understanding how the music from John Coltrane's *Om* was created when I first heard it, but when I applied this active listening concept, and focused on just John Coltrane and Elvin Jones, or McCoy Tyner and Pharaoh Sanders, I was able to better understand the music-making relationships within the complex texture.

Drama and Development: Even a solo with perfect note choices and great lines will fall flat without some sense of contour. Whether you call it "drama", "tension and release", "solo development" or something else, the creation of contour in a solo -- or group performance, for that matter -- is essential. As you listen, ask yourself what devices are being used to create a sense of development or drama. Dynamics? Register? Note density? Sequences? Thematic development? Even

if that contour is a very pronounced lack of drama, the overall conceptual drive(s) of an improvisation should be particularly observed beyond the note choices.

Texture and Color: Another aspect of successful improvisation that we can only learn through active listening is the power and value of texture and color. Ask yourself about the texture of the ensemble as you listen. Do the cymbals fill the space, or help you hear the space? Do the piano chords feel empty and thin, thick and full, or somewhere in between? Also focus on the timbre or color of the instruments. Is the trumpet bright, dark, or something else? Is the attack percussive? Light? What instrument or technique is used to achieve the color you hear? Be mindful of all aspects of texture and color while you listen.

As you make your way through the process of active listening, I recommend keeping a journal of your observations, much as you keep a journal of your transcriptions. Make note of those techniques, relationships, contours, textures and colors that you like, and work on integrating them in your playing. And remember: active listening is more about hearing concept than hearing specific ideas.

Practice This! is an educational project organized by David M. Marriott, Jr. for Earshot Jazz with sponsorship from The Seattle Drum School. Each new lesson by a different local jazz artist is intended for students to learn from and for non-musician readers to gain insight into the craft of improvising.