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PROFESSOR: OK, so let's move into are our topic for the day. So we've got a couple of things. We're going to talk a little bit about *In a Silent Way*. And then I want to have us have a chance to present what you have created. And we'll see how this goes. So this is pretty much, at least in the second part, unknown. We don't know what's going to happen. So it should be interesting. But in terms of *In a Silent Way*, did everybody get to listen to that? And what do you make of that composition, called *In a Silent Way* by Miles Davis? What do you make of that? What did you hear happening?

AUDIENCE: It seemed modal, so it didn't have any definite chord changes, which I think gave it sort of like a, like, spacey ambiguous feel to it.

PROFESSOR: OK. Good. Modal, spacey, ambiguous. Anybody else?

AUDIENCE: A lot of the melody and things were also ambiguous. There were a few clear themes that would repeat, but there was a lot of just sounds. That was cool.

PROFESSOR: Sounds, OK.

AUDIENCE: The instrumentation was just very different from the other Miles Davis pieces we'd listened to, and the style and everything, like it being so like a slow, laid-back, almost free-flowing piece, with a more I guess like electronic feel to it. But that was interesting.

PROFESSOR: Right. And because, what were some of the accompanying instruments in this?

AUDIENCE: It sounded maybe like a synth, I want to say. Was that a synth?

PROFESSOR: Fender Rhodes. Actually, two Fender Rhodes piano, which is sort of old school. But you see these around a lot. In fact, we have one at MIT, which the current pianist

with the FJE likes to call it out and play it. So that's great. And somebody playing the organ, as well as that. What else? What else did you hear, instruments?

AUDIENCE: How prominent the instruments were to one another was more uniform than the recordings we've listened to.

PROFESSOR: Meaning?

AUDIENCE: Like, it's not like that obviously the trumpet had the lead the whole time.

PROFESSOR: Right. So a lot more diversity of who is sort of in the lead and that kind of thing. Was it only that sort of ambiguous free floating sound? Was it only that, are did it do something else?

AUDIENCE: Well, after a few minutes [INAUDIBLE]

PROFESSOR: OK, a regular beat. And what was the rhythmic feel there?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

PROFESSOR: But I mean, was it jazz, was it--

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]

PROFESSOR: Percussive. OK. Anybody else have a term that could characterize what it went into? We all heard the piece, right? And it was a fairly long piece, right, like about 20 minute piece? OK. I was sure you would catch this. It goes into essentially a rock kind of a feel. It's a more subtle rock feel than what you would have heard from a rock band in that period. But nonetheless, that's what it's going to.

This became sort of the signature piece that moved jazz into what was called jazz rock or fusion. In 1969 is when this came out. And in fact, this middle part is the longest part of the whole piece. It's where most of the soloing happens. And then it returns to this sort of quieter, more lyrical thing at the end. And I put these names of the board, because it turns out that this is actually a piece that was put together in the studio.

It's a studio realization, you could say. And the first part is called *In a Silent Way*. That's composed by Joe Zawinul, who was one of the three keyboard players. That shows up at the beginning and at the end. And in the middle is a piece that both Zawinul and Miles Davis co-composed, called *It's About That Time*, which is the more funky, rock type of piece. And so they decided to essentially blend these pieces.

And the further thing about this is this was an early attempt by people in the studio, one guy in particular, Teo Macero, who worked with Miles Davis a lot, to essentially sort of you could say cut and paste, because they used to have to splice tape to make cuts and paste them back together. It's before digital editing. And so there's some of that that's going on in the middle section.

And in fact, the last section is exactly what was played for the first four minutes. It's just a replica. It's a replication. It's the same exact music just pasted in at the end. So it sort of calls into a new perspective what is improvisation and what is jazz composition, really. And you're going to have a chance to talk with Neil Leonard when he comes in about another month about exactly that, electronic usage, computer usage, and improvisation stuff. But this is sort of an early attempt.

The other thing that I wanted us to listen to this for is that this basically is a jazz version of the format that we're going to hear on Sunday at the Indian concert. Because how many people have had the Music of India course? Anybody have that course? You've had that. Anybody else? And so you know that the way that the music in the Raga tradition works is there's a very slow presentation, as it's called, of the raga, the main melody. And then after that is allowed to be stated in a very lyrical, free floating way, then you get this rhythmic sense with a particular cycle or a tala that comes in.

And so it's hard to believe that Miles Davis was not influenced by John Coltrane, who had previously been part of Miles' band. But Coltrane, as many of you know, had explored the music of India. And so it's sort of like a cross influence coming back from what somebody had originally been a player in Miles' band coming back

to inform him. And this piece really has a very Indian at least pattern to it, if not Indian music. It's not a raga, but it is its own particular mode, as people have said. Anybody know what mode it was, or did you try to figure that out?

AUDIENCE: Was it, could it be in Dorian? Because it began with a flat [INAUDIBLE] 7th, I think.

PROFESSOR: OK. Anybody have a different take on it?

AUDIENCE: I figured out which notes were in the mode, but I don't know if I could remember them. I was playing along to it, but I didn't think about what the actual mode was.

PROFESSOR: OK, but you tried to play along with it. That's good.

AUDIENCE: Yeah. I feel like I figured out which notes that actually fit.

AUDIENCE: Anybody remember what was going on at the same time that the melody was being played? So obviously I'm going to suggest you go listen to it again, so we can hear more deeply inside of what's going on. Let me just come over to the piano for a second. I made a brief transcription of this melody.

And what's going on is-- if I can just get over there-- the first thing that we have with this is a drone. A drone is just a long note underneath the melody. And we've done that with some of our exercises, right, where we've just had a basic tonal center. I didn't call it that, but that's what it is. Same thing in Indian music.

There's a drone established by one of the instruments. And then the melody works off that. So in this case, it's an E. [PIANO PLAYING] So you're always hearing this E, and then it's actually, this is the melody. [PIANO PLAYING] It starts on the third. If you were in E and you had E major chord, it's actually the third of the E major chord. [PIANO PLAYING] But you never get that chord. You just get this.

[PIANO PLAYING]

PROFESSOR: And that's a big interval. That's a minor seventh jump. And here's where you get the tip off of what the mode is.

[PIANO PLAYING]

PROFESSOR: And what that is is E to D natural, which means that it's E essentially mixolydian, because if you had come on that same phrase and gone [PIANO PLAYING] it's totally different. [PIANO PLAYING] And it winds up on the fifth, which is the B, which is again an open sound. So except for occasionally getting a major third of what might have been the chord, it's really ambiguous, which a number of you said. Yeah, Jamie, you had a point.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, it's funny because the piece that I wrote, which I wrote after I listened to the song, was in E mixolydian. So obviously that transferred over.

PROFESSOR: Deeply influenced by this piece. And that's great.

AUDIENCE: So I knew as soon as you played that, that was E mixolydian.

PROFESSOR: That's OK. That's how we learn. And that's a great homage to this particular piece. So what we've got here, in other words, is a pretty simple mode. It's just one. And it almost sounds like it's major, except for that little trick note that I pointed out. But that's a very distinctive note. And so when you listen to this again, pay attention to that, because it really is the thing that sets this piece off apart from many others.

Now the interesting thing about this is according to people who have really studied this and interviewed people who were on the recording session, when Joe Zawinul, who wrote this tune, the one we just talked about, when he brought this into the recording session, he had chords with it. He had chord changes written for it. And Miles Davis saw this and said to the guitar player, John McLaughlin, why don't you just play the melody?

And it sort of took McLaughlin aback. It was like, well, what am I going to do with the chords? And the piano player said, what are we going to do with the chords? He said, don't play them. Just-- Dave Holland was the bass player-- just put a E pedal underneath all of this, play the melody and let that be the whole thing.

And so according to these people again at the session, they did this. And no one

was sure how it was going to turn out. And when they heard the playback, they were just astonished, because it made so much sense. And this is sort of the next level after *Kind of Blue*. In fact, it was 10 years after *Kind of Blue*. So it's sort of like moving from that, building on that direction, incorporating some Indian-ish type things with it, and coming out with what we have.

So I really do recommend you listen to this again. Try to hear some of these other things that are happening. And when you hear the middle section, this other tune, it's called *It's About That Time*, pay attention to this, because this now shifts the tonal center up a half step to F. Some people say it's mixolydian. I hear it as a pentatonic sound.

So see if you can maybe play along with that. That would be a good one to play around and just see what you can figure out on the bass-line. And that's all it is, is a bass-line, with a lot of textures. Remember, we've talked about textures from the other instruments. And this is particularly so with the three keyboards. So it's a great piece, and it bears listening to again.

OK, so the assignment for you guys was to come up with a piece that was similarly a long flowing melody of between 10 and 15 notes, and then figure out a way to present it. So who would like to present their piece?

AUDIENCE:

So the melody sort of goes like this. [BANJO PLAYING] That's just sort of the thing that we're going to play around on, is this. [BANJO PLAYING] And there's a second part that will come in occasionally. [BANJO PLAYING] Just like that, which is that second part. Alright. So why don't you, ah--

[BANJO PLAYING]

[SAXOPHONE JOINS BANJO]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR:

Very nice. Play those opening notes that you played when you told us what it was

made out of.

[BANJO PLAYING]

AUDIENCE: You mean, just like the--

PROFESSOR: The little melody notes that you would play it around.

[BANJO PLAYING]

PROFESSOR: Sarah, what does that sound like? What kind of music does that sound like?

AUDIENCE: It does kind of sound like Indian music.

PROFESSOR: It sounds like Indian music. Have you heard much Indian music?

AUDIENCE: Oh, yeah, before. That's what I thought of.

PROFESSOR: So it must be going into your consciousness.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, at one point I was like, oh, it sounds a little Indian.

PROFESSOR: So when you hear the concert on Sunday, what you're going to hear is something very similar to that. That'll be the presentation of the raga, that sort of idea that you just did. And in fact, when you got into that rhythmic thing, particularly your picking style, as well as piano, that would be very similar to what the tabla, the drummer would be doing, to give a percussive thing.

So this is great. This is like unconscious processing of where we're going. So brilliant. And very nice playing on the saxophone. Very nice. You're bringing out what would be called the characteristic feature of the mode or if it was a rag, there's certain particular things. And Phil Scarf when he comes a week from-- well, it'll be on next Monday-- he'll be talking about that very particular, specific thing. So very well done. Good job. Good job.

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Who would like to go next?

AUDIENCE: It goes from D dorian, G mixolydian, C major. So piano should be playing chords. And then the melody, I was thinking flute and oboe could maybe improvise on part of it, like when you get to the major? That's C major. Yeah. There's not really time to this. So I sort of suggested which notes might be shorter and which ones might be longer. But take whatever time you want. That's why I figured maybe it's not best time for lots of people playing at once.

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE] sort of loop around a couple times?

AUDIENCE: Yeah, I think once would not be enough. So maybe let's do two or three times. And I'm going to sit this out, because transposing and to keep it quiet. So I guess flute and piano, whenever you're ready.

[PIANO AND FLUTE PLAYING]

[OBOE ENTERS]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: So you were playing the actual melody. And you were improvising within the mode, or something, or around it. Very nice.

AUDIENCE: Liked the percussive improvisation at the very beginning.

AUDIENCE: Oh, yeah, sorry. I should have tested a couple of notes.

PROFESSOR: Very, very nice. Very nice. Cool.

AUDIENCE: I've got a simple melody which I'd like again to be played by the flute. Just sort of loop it around. I didn't explicitly say what notes were longer than others. But in the middle there I've got these three notes which I kind of wanted everyone to get in on, specifically.

AUDIENCE: Those notes specifically, like those exact notes?

AUDIENCE: Oh, yeah, specifically those notes. So everyone play like in unison, or as you get further along, yeah.

AUDIENCE: So we should all play the whole time, but those three notes, we play the notes in unison?

AUDIENCE: Everyone's playing the whole time. Maybe at the start, actually, the first time through, just the piano. And then when you loop around, then you guys come in. And for you guys, so it's E Phrygian. Stick with the E most of the time, but also at least at the start bring in the A and the B, specifically. And it's not [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Can we play the mode all the time, too? It's just one at a time? Do you know?

AUDIENCE: It's just all the white notes, from E to E.

[INSTRUMENTS WARMING UP]

[FLUTE AND PIANO PLAYING]

[TRUMPET AND BANJO ENTER]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Very nice. And so was this one mode or two modes?

AUDIENCE: No, that's just one mode, just the E Phrygian throughout.

PROFESSOR: Just one mode. Very nice. Very nice. And was your part prescribed, or were you improvising?

AUDIENCE: So there were three notes sort of in the middle of that. The do do do do do, do do do do do do do. I guess I'm not quite singing it in key But, yeah. So there were three notes where every time it was prescribed, other than that, improvising.

PROFESSOR: OK, good. And the same for you other folks? Very nice. Very nice. But you were playing the melody.

AUDIENCE: I had the melody, yeah.

PROFESSOR: Very nice. Good. Good, good.

[VIOLIN AND GUITAR PLAYING]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Very nice. So you actually had chords written down, chords symbolized, which is an interesting way to go. We haven't had that yet today, I don't think. We might have, did you have chords in yours?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

PROFESSOR: Because I was going to write that on top. I did want to mention some on that. So that's an interesting way to think about it. And we can explore this a little more. I don't want to take time now. But that's an interesting way to think about it. It's another facet. Just try this. Take those first five notes, and play them a little more like a rhythmical idea, like this. Bop, ba bo be bop.

[VIOLIN AND GUITAR PLAYING]

And then the next one. [VIOLIN AND GUITAR PLAYING] And then the next five, same way. Bop, ba doo be doo. [VIOLIN AND GUITAR PLAYING] And the next, bop, ba da be dop. [VIOLIN AND GUITAR PLAYING] Yeah, just do that do that over and over again. And Alex, play those same chords, but in time now. So I'm going to count this off. [CLAPPING] One, two, one, two, three, four.

[CLAPPING AND INSTRUMENTS PLAYING]

OK. I'm just showing that because this would be another way to make a variation of what you'd done. In other words, similar to *Silent Way*, you've got your lyrical thing

up front. And then you could turn it into a rhythmical gesture, let's say. And if you had yet a third instrument, you guys could be essentially the rhythm section, and somebody else, oboe, whatever, flute, could take a solo on top of that. It's just another thing to think about in terms of extension. Very nice. Very nice.

[FLUTE PLAYING]

[GUITAR ENTERS]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Now, did you have a written part?

AUDIENCE: No.

PROFESSOR: You were just making something up.

AUDIENCE: I was making that up.

PROFESSOR: You were improvising. In other words, you were playing this. So you had a rhythmical scheme, but you didn't put a meter with it. So it wasn't like 4 4 or 6. That was very nice. Very nice. I was figuring you'd keep going until one of you dropped, mainly you, because you have to keep breathing. But that was really nice. That was really nice.

We could've gotten everybody involved in that. That would have taken up about an hour. That would have been great. So just something to remember. If you get hired for a job sometime and you run out of material, you can always do something like this. You can fill up easily 5 minutes, 30 minutes, and you're golden. So if you run out of your set list, just a practical tip. Very nice. So if you want to put your name on that and let me have that. So I guess you guys have to run.

While they're leaving and the next person decides who wants to be, I just want to say a thing about chords. And I know, Jacob, this is your piece. So I don't want to say anything. But you had said D Dorian, you also put D minor, D minor chord, to

indicate you wanted a D minor chord. And that's fine. That's perfectly fine.

Sometimes-- and you see this on the lead sheet for *So What*, which we looked at, and we've studied it-- it'll say D Dorian D minor 7. It's a shorthand for saying that's a chord that works with the D Dorian scale.

But in fact, it's often not so good to use this. It's much better just to put the mode, because if you do that, then the piano player's immediately going to think, let me play that four note chord, which is triads. And triads, remember, is not the sound that we typically want with modal. We want a quartal, like a fourth base thing.

So when people do this and they put that down there, sometimes you're sort of snapped into that other way of thinking. It's not that it's wrong. It's just not quite into the idiom of what we're trying to do with modal stuff. So OK. Thank you all. So who would like to go next?

AUDIENCE:

I guess we can start with a saxophone melody. There's like a vague rhythm, but you can definitely change that, especially after the first run-through. Electric guitar, you'd start out just like emphasizing the D and any other notes basically you feel like, and then you can basically transition to the melody yourself whenever you feel like it. And feel free to change up the notes [INAUDIBLE].

[SAXOPHONE PLAYING]

[ELECTRIC GUITAR ENTERS]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR:

So that again, that was like, what, a single melody and that's all. Just some verbal instructions to-- Very good. Very nice. Very nicely played. OK let's keep moving along. And I want to urge us, if we could make the presentation just a little bit shorter, just to make sure everybody gets a chance to have their thing heard. So who would like to go next?

AUDIENCE: Alright. So this for a flute and a piano. So it's Dorian. And it's just a basic melody. So what I wanted was like the flute to just like start the melody and just keep looping back through it. And it has a rhythm. And then I wanted the piano to just, I guess, add their own improvisation to it.

[FLUTE PLAYING]

[PIANO ENTERS]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Very nice. Piano, what were you doing? Were you leading off what that was? Were you reading off that melody?

AUDIENCE: Yeah, so I was trying to sort of align the rhythms, playing mostly the fourths.

PROFESSOR: So you were making that up, the fourth idea, but you were following that.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, I didn't play any of melody. I was just sort of trying to match it.

PROFESSOR: Who did that sound like to you, or anybody else? What did that sound like, that piano and flute playing together?

AUDIENCE: *Rite of Spring.*

PROFESSOR: Little bit, little bit. Anybody else, classical, any other classical? Sounded very much like a Ravel to me. And in the *Kind of Blue* situation, I don't know if you've read the pages that were up there. I don't know if this was in those pages I put on Stellar. It talked about how both Bill Evans and Miles Davis adored Ravel. And that in fact, when they would listen to music in their own apartments, that's who they often would listen to.

Interesting for a jazz person. And that that was very definitely in Bill Evans' mind. So you're channeling this. So this is great. It was beautiful. Beautiful flute playing. Very, very nice idea. Really nice idea. Wonderful. And I'm getting a kick out of the fact that

most of you guys are not playing on your own piece. That's very interesting.
Because you want to hear what's going on. I understand that.

AUDIENCE: So basically I would like the guitar to start off playing the melody and kind of set up a cycle of some sort. And then I'd like Sarah to improvise over his melody, but starting with notes beginning from right to left, if that's OK. I hope it works. I'm not exactly sure yet. And then I would like you to play, I guess, whatever cycle he sets up if you could just play chords under it, but I guess I'd like half to be your own, yeah.

[GUITAR PLAYING]

[FLUTE AND PIANO ENTER]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Very nice. And again, you didn't sing on this. That's very interesting. I was sure you were going to.

AUDIENCE: Oh, no. That's fine.

PROFESSOR: That was very nice. And actually I think it's interesting how these are just emerging, just by the way people are volunteering. But this sort of could be a perfect complement to what your piece was. I mean it would make sense to me. And some of the rhythmical people, you were clearly on a similar wave.

AUDIENCE: So sax is going to play the melody, and the rest of us will just play like soft chords in D Dorian. I wrote out a pretty specific rhythm, but you can take whatever liberty you want.

AUDIENCE: What is this?

AUDIENCE: This is just the transposition of that.

AUDIENCE: That makes sense, OK.

AUDIENCE: So it should be D minor.

[INSTRUMENTS PLAYING]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Very nice, very nice. I feel we're in the realm of French impressionistic music, here. This is lovely. Very peaceful. Did that work like you thought it would, except for the transposition?

AUDIENCE: Pretty much, yeah. Just in a different key. There was one note that was, I don't know. This one. I don't know what happened to that, but.

AUDIENCE: Yeah. So where I was doing B Dorian on the sax, that should have been a G sharp, I think, so I just made that change. But yeah, it did sound kind of weird.

AUDIENCE: But the general was basically what I was going for.

PROFESSOR: Very nice. Very nice. OK, who wants to go next? Of our remaining contestants.

[PIANO PLAYING]

[FLUTE AND OBOE ENTER]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Really nice. So if I got from your instructions, sort of like intertwining or interlocking segments, is that the idea?

AUDIENCE: Yeah, that was kind of again that train wreck. I think I need to fix my reed up. But that's sounded really nice. And I expected it, and it was cool.

PROFESSOR: Yeah. Really, really nice. Very well done.

[PIANO PLAYING]

[TRUMPET ENTERS]

[SAXOPHONE ENTERS]

[APPLAUSE]

AUDIENCE: Very nice, very nice. Cool. Cool.

AUDIENCE: So I don't have anything written. I'm just going, I guess, for more of an open conception. But I was thinking just me and piano, if that's good. So I was thinking in D Dorian. So the only real, like, solid concept, I have, like, something of a melody.

[SAXOPHONE PLAYING]

AUDIENCE: So I guess I was thinking I would just kind of riff off of that. And I wanted it to have kind of like a minor sound, I guess. So I don't know, I guess you kind of do what you want with it.

AUDIENCE: Do you want like a beat, or just sort of chords?

AUDIENCE: I mean, I guess more of chords. Yeah. So I guess you can start it off.

[PIANO PLAYING]

[SAXOPHONE ENTERS]

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: Very nice, very nice. And I was waiting for someone to do this, not have anything written down.

AUDIENCE: Yeah. I can get something to you next week.

PROFESSOR: No, no no. But I was waiting for that, because that's often how our improvisational conceptions generate. I mean, I ask you to come up with something. But I don't

think I said write it down. I said come up with something. And writing it down is perfectly fine. And yours was almost all hand written with a couple notes. Other people had just the notes. Other people had some notes and chords. Any of these are fine.

But they just give us a generative point from which the work. So it was very cool. And obviously, what happened in each of these instances was way more than what you had on paper. That's the idea. In other words, these are wonderful. And if you didn't give me one of these, and you had it as a written out form, I need to see that.

But the point is what happened in the room is the music. That's the music. These were all starting points. These were all springboards. So you're all doing wonderfully. So give yourselves a round of applause, really. Really nice. Really nice.

[APPLAUSE]

PROFESSOR: So that's it.