

What Listening Techniques Are Used in Creative Music Making?

- * Relax (with a deep breath, body tension released, mind cleared).
A good exercise to prepare for listening is to stand with arms at the side. After taking a few unforced deep breaths, gradually relax the body, first by rolling the head gently, and then by rolling the shoulders. Next, concentrate on relaxing the muscles of the arm, wrist, hand, and fingers. Finally, relax the muscles in the torso, hips, legs, and feet. Breathe slowly and deeply for a short while.
- * Do not rush to judgment about what is heard (what the music is or what it means). Making judgments about what is heard (ie. good/bad, awful/great, etc.) is not helpful in good listening. In fact, rushing to judgment can inhibit one's ability to hear clearly and to pay attention to details.
- * Try to notice as much as possible about the sounds that are heard. Notice the various objective elements of the music (instrumentation, melody, pitch, volume, rhythm, harmony, timbre, form, etc.). Notice subjective qualities in the music such as mood, or emotion. In other words, notice the effect of the music upon the listener. Notice changes that occur in the music over time (in mood, instrumentation, tempo, etc.).

What Kinds of Questions Are Discussed in Creative Music Making?

- What did you hear? . . . what melodies, rhythms, voices?
- What were you thinking as you played?
- How did you know what to play?
- Did you try to play any music (melody, rhythm, pattern) that you already know?
- How did you relate to the other performer(s)?
- Who was leading/following? . . . Where?
- What else could you have done?
- If you could go back, what would you have changed?
- What did the music say to you? . . . What was its meaning, function, mood?
- What were you thinking as you listened?
- Did the playback sound different or the same to you as when you were performing? . . . in what way(s)?
- How did this music relate to other music that you know?
- Did you hear anything in the music that seemed familiar?
- How did the performers relate to each other?
- What were the risks faced by the performer(s)?
- Did you notice who introduced new musical ideas; what were the responses?
- What in the performance did you like/dislike? Did you like what you played?