

Personal
Process
Journal

Method 0

(Thoughts very much after the fact)
• I think this method is very good for training mentality. Because you need to produce every day, you can't have as many criteria for what you produce (in my experience). Instead of judging if I liked what I was writing or if it is my style etc. I just followed the idea through to have something produced. It helps to develop a "yes and" mentality with any ideas and as with any type of practice I did feel like I got into a routine with the method.

Method 1

211

• Overall thoughts:

- In a way the exercise feels very similar to the 10 minutes of writing a day from last semester

- Main differences

▷ directed certain amount of output

↳ 8 bars

▷ theme to compose on

↳ animals

• Thoughts on actually doing the exercise

- I found it to be difficult to get to 8 bars by the end of 10 minutes. Some days it was easier than others depending on the content of the 8 bars I was writing other days I needed more time to get that far

↳ pre-planning could have to do with this, on the first day, I had thought of the animal and a musical idea to represent it before I went to write. on this day I had the most time left over

- I found myself thinking of surprising animals My 8 bars based off of Macaws led me to a bit of research on the blue and

yellow Macaw population in Miami
which further inspired the piece.

• End of the two weeks thoughts:
I am pleasantly surprised with the composition I was able to create from this exercise. I know I would never have thought of this idea had I not had a specific topic to write about aka animals. I will say I only developed 1 day of doing the exercise into a full song. The other material that I wrote didn't really lead me anywhere. I tried expanding one of the other 8 bars I composed but I couldn't decide on what direction to go next. I found that after writing the original 8 bars of the Macaw song, doing a bit more research helped to inspire the rest of the piece.

• Initial thoughts.

- After completing this exercise for 2 days I am honestly surprised by how little material I like or ~~want~~ to think is viable to develop into a composition. I thought going into it that I would have trouble deciding from so many ideas what I like the best to develop further but it really is the opposite. To me, a lot of the ideas are sounding more improvisatory than compositional. The first day after listening back to my 5 minute long scratching session I found nothing that I liked. Today I found a concept that I would like to try to develop. I did sort of a cello suite type thing with my voice and I really liked the sound of it. I think the sound mostly came from singing a low kind of pedal note and then singing a phrase of melody after that so I will try to continue with that idea.

• After editing the piece more I am surprised by the amount of content that I am keeping. So far, I haven't been changing much. The biggest editing I have done is just removing some redundant phrases. Based on how it sounds in the recording, I think this might have been times when I was either working out a melodic idea or taking a musical pause of sorts to think of the next thing.

• One thing I notice is that because I chose to do my free improvisation a capella, I have been using significantly less harmonic changes in the context of the improvisation. I compared my improvisation to a recording of Ortrun Parfato singing a cello suite and noticed that the suite touches into more minor areas and secondary dominants (I think based on listening) than my improvisation did. I think I would adapt parts of mine now in the editing process to add a bit more changes in the harmony. I think this would add interest overall. So far,

I am happy with the melodic content that came out of this exercise.

• Another thought I had is that this could end up being similar to the week that I compose by not using my strengths. My idea for that week so far was no lyrics and no piano. However the major difference is that that week does not need to be improvised. Perhaps it would be smart of me to use some technology (recording looping etc.) to make these exercises more different and to try some different things.

• I could also try freely improvising with piano and voice or just on the piano. If I have time to circle back to this method, this might lead to some different interesting results.

Method 3

4/2

• To start off this week I made a list of my habits just based on tools that I tend to use regularly or things I use when I get stuck composing. I only came up with 5 things that I think are pretty consistent throughout my writing.

↳ It would also be a good idea to do an analysis of a few of my songs to see if there are any unnoticed habits that I have.

• I found it was hard to stick with only using my habits. Maybe this is because I only identified 5 to start but I felt like I was choosing 1 to focus on and then creating connecting material to another one. It was difficult and didn't really suit my tasks to do some of them at the same time or in close proximity.

• When I try more I would like to identify more habits beforehand. I didn't identify any rhythmic or that many melodic habits.

• I find it interesting that while trying to write a song based on my habits that I ended up coming up with a Broadway like showtune sounding like Cole Porter's compositions.

• Additionally, the first song I wrote really reminds me of "Infant Eyes" by Wayne Shorter.

↳ will reflect more on why I unconsciously and consciously went towards other sound models than my own when writing for this method



- After doing more analysis on my old songs I have found more habits/patterns that are recurring. These can be found in my staff paper journal.
- One thing aspect of this method that makes it a bit less accessible is the awareness of habits. If someone is new to writing, they may not even have habits yet. If somebody is an amateur writer, they may not have the tools to analyze their own writing for patterns. I think this is a negative for the goal of including it in a workshop / having other people test the method. I will still continue trying for the remainder of the 2 weeks.

4/29

- After bringing the habit song into rehearsal it has become a song even further removed from my habits than when I started writing. He suggested making it a mirror composition. I also added a sax/voice solo which I haven't done before in a song. Even still I am very happy with it and happy that it is something new. Unconsciously maybe it has become a song about my habits of thinking (shown through the lyrics) rather than my compositional habits.

4/10

I found this method to be effective for starting songs / getting ideas but it was a bit harder to follow through on creating a whole song than some of the previous methods. This could also be from coming back to trying the methods after about a month long break. It's hard to pinpoint the exact cause. I am happy with what I came up with in these weeks though. I will continue to try to develop them more fully while beginning the next method.

Method 4

4/11

- After trying this method for 2 days I have some thoughts.
 - I think this method has potential to create unusual phrasings / phrase lengths because of the structure of the haiku.
 - It might be difficult or at least one potential challenge of this method is composing a piece within a longer form. The first haiku that I wrote already has a beginning middle and end within the 3 lines so it might be hard to expand this into longer lyrics or another theme.
 - my first one I picked a traditional theme for (seasons: spring/summer

4/14

- Maybe I have some sort of unconscious sound association or I am just really fixated on qtrs and strs / pentatonics right now. I keep using that as the melodic material for the haikus. I'm wondering if it might be a connection I have between "East" music and pentatonics. I'm not sure but I hope to break out of that soon.

• Something about the haiku method that makes it especially challenging is if you need multiple verses to fit the same rhythmic structure. Just because there is a standardized rule for the number of syllables doesn't mean that the rests / places that are held will make sense. I tried inserting another haiku as a "second verse" of sorts and the emphasis was very unnatural. Thus, I needed to write another haiku that followed the rules AND the same structure as the previous to fit within the song.

• An unexpected outcome of this method so far is that I think it doesn't sound like a haiku. The listener may not even notice the structure without it being pointed out. Because rhythm can change how the words sound so much, I think it ~~just~~ obscures the pattern. I think this is interesting. Perhaps, I will try a version where I attempt to emphasize the rhythm of the haiku somehow.

4/18

• I tried not taking the haiku theme literally for the lyrics at the start and instead took the rhythm of a haiku and made that the basis of the song. I made a measure of 8 followed by 7 followed by 5. To simplify this and make it easier to rotate, I made it into one measure of 12. I just recorded a bit of a drone playing a grouping of 3 and 2s throughout
3 2 3 2 2 3 2 on a G. on top
— . — . . — .

of this, I improvised a melody to go on top of it. After finding some ideas that I liked, I made these into the melody and went from there. I found it to be a bit much in the whole time so I made another section in 5 with lyrics that follow haiku form. I think there could potentially even be another section / mood change for a solo section. This really reminds me of an Arisai when style of composition.

Redo of Method 3

8/28

• I've been thinking a lot about my original attempt at the habit method and I think there could be some adjustment + improvements before trying again.

- I think my habits listed were somehow too broad and too specific. I need to elaborate more on when the certain habits happen. For example, when are the big interval jumps in the melodic line? when are the major chords? when are the chromatic movements?

- Clarity on this could lead to better instructions for the task.

• Additionally, I was comparing songs with a large group orchestration vs quartet songs. To control this variable of instrumentation a bit I made each song into lead sheet style format reduced for vocals + trio.

• Lastly I was looking at songs I had written since starting my research which I ~~think~~ doesn't make sense. I want to know my tendencies not when I'm writing in a specific way. For my next review of songs I will only use songs I wrote before starting my masters and consequently my master's research

Reflections so far on Redo of Method 3:

- So far it seems to be more successful, with less restrictions but more specificity on the restrictions. I have found myself having more ideas and things to work off of.

- For my first attempt I created a song based on my habit of parallel major chords. In order to make this feature stand out, I made it so there are no other major chords in the song besides the parallel major chords. This makes them stand out even more and be more recognizable.

- For my second song start I analyzed the lyrics of my songs and found that I often use anaphoras when writing lyrics. Typically at the beginning of a phrase like "In my songs 'In the Garden' and 'The Idea of Love' I used a repetitive lyrical motif throughout the song. In this song start, I created a simple start of a phrase and made it part of an interlude that repeats throughout the song. This will really feature the repetition

and pattern of the phrase.

- ° just had a realization that this is the only method that really dictates musical devices to use
 - ↳ Is this why I felt stifled??
 - ↳ the others are more process oriented

Method S

9/25

- Started by looking up academic papers / beginning to analyze Joni Mitchell + Wayne Shorter then I thought that it might be best to try this method in 2 parts 1 part just mimicking an artist that I already know well based on just the love of their catalog and then the second part could be more academically studying an artist / analyzing.

- PART 1 -

- Started by thinking of the artist Gregory Porter, listened to my favorite compositions of his
↳ identified some things out by listening
 - ▷ groove
 - ▷ pentatonics
 - ▷ lyrical content = painful or uplifting love
- Wrote 4 bars then felt pretty stuck - could be because it was hard to find the right groove?
↳ didn't sound like Gregory Porter to me and I didn't like it.
- I put this 4 bars away and switched to writing like John Mayer

this session was much more fruitful

- helped to think about imitating guitar

- thought about POV, Some of his earlier songs are 3rd person about other people

- Will continue this idea to see if it can develop into a whole song