

## **Research Proposal of Irimi Konstantinidi – Jazz Zang – 3102912**

### **Title of the research project:**

Phrasing and interplay from the vocal point of view.

Phrasing as the vocalist's tool to stimulate interplay within a jazz combo.

### **Research Question:**

How can phrasing become the tool of the jazz vocalist that wants to stimulate interplay and respond creatively in the band's musical conversation, while singing the theme or improvising?

### **Brief description:**

Phrasing is one of the elements of music that jazz musicians use in order to create different ways of interpreting a theme and of improvising on the form of a piece. Phrasing can be rhythmic, meaning that the performer can phrase the musical text, ranging from the use of legato (maybe also stretching the feeling of time), all the way to the use of syncopation, focusing on the upbeats of the eighth notes, either on a swinging or on a straight feel groove. Phrasing can also be melodic, meaning that the performer can alter the melody of the theme and as a result, correspond to the tune's harmonic progression from a different perspective.

The jazz vocalist also uses phrasing in order to be creative when singing the theme of a song and while improvising at the form of the piece. On the other hand, as jazz music is constantly evolving, I have been noticing that interplay, in other words the instant elaboration of musical ideas that are being exchanged on the spot among the members of a band, is constantly increasing, to the point that it has evolved into a form of musical conversation between the instruments. I see that instrumentalists tend to get very adventurous, "messing up" with the rhythmic values or stretching the harmonic boundaries of a piece, responding to the ideas that are exchanged on the spot. As I desire to be part of such a creative interplay, being able to offer new musical suggestions and at the same time be capable of perceiving and elaborating the ones that are being offered by the other musicians of the jazz combo, I want to investigate in what way can the element of phrasing become the means towards this goal of mine. To what extent can the use of phrasing, be the tool that will lead me to become an adventurous player in the musical game of interplay, in which I will not feel threatened to take risks and get more creative?

**Issues:** What are the elements of phrasing that the vocalist needs to develop, in order to become an adventurous performer, being able to participate in the process of risk taking that the interplay often requires, without the fear of losing the sense of the form of the piece?

### **Relevance for the artistic development of the student – wider context:**

Apart from being a vehicle for my own development as a musician and performer, this research may become the stepping stone for my entrepreneurship as a jazz voice educator, since I strongly believe that it will enrich my teaching methodology and encourage my aspiration to publish specialized articles on the subject, that could possibly be beneficial for the jazz educational community. It could consequently be relevant for any other singer or instrumentalist, who wish to deepen into the "interplay" aspects within a band, exploring and experimenting on his/her own perception and taste over the matter and acquire the tools of jazz phrasing, as a means of creatively developing the musical conversation.

**Planning:**

I plan to:

- Search for and analyze live recordings of the masters (jazz singers and jazz bands of the past and of today) to see the amount of interplay they create, in relation to the type of phrasing they use in their performance.
- Analyze my own recordings of past years to find out whether my phrasing was creative enough, to stimulate the interplay of the band in each different occasion.
- Form more than one ensemble (for example a duet, a trio, a quartet) and investigate to what extent each formation provokes or requires different type of phrasing, which consequently will influence the amount of interplay, in each context.
- Make recordings of myself playing with the new ensembles and keep track of the development of my phrasing and how it will influence my contribution to the band's interplay.

**Research methods:**

Through analyzing several recordings of live performances of jazz singers of the past (Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Carmen McRae, Betty Carter, Anita O' Day) and of today (Dianne Reeves, Karin Alysso, Sheila Jordan, Dee Dee Bridgewater) I'll investigate the amount of interplay they are creating with their phrasing, when singing or improvising. I will also analyze recordings of jazz bands of the past like the Miles Davis Quintet (the 2<sup>nd</sup> one with Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams) and of today like Wayne Shorter Quartet (with Danilo Perez, John Patitucci, Brian Blade) and observe the differences and similarities in the way they were/are using phrasing, to increase the amount of interplay among them.

I intend to form several ensembles myself, playing with different musicians (in a duet, trio and quartet) and make recordings of our sessions, in order to find out, to what extent each one of these formations encourages a more adventurous phrasing or not (in the theme and the vocal solo) thus stimulating interplay and influencing the musical conversation.

**Research process:**

During the research process as described above in the methods I intend to follow, I will consequently develop and empower my musical skills. By enriching my harmonic/rhythmic language, in order to become flexible within the form of the piece, I expect to gain awareness, freedom, independency and insight in any "instant decision making" situation, that is required for the creation of interplay.

Apart from the musical skills and aspects of phrasing (such as rhythmic/melodic variations, tension and release, etc.), that will be strengthened, more elements like being more receptive, listening closely, showing trust among the fellow musicians, instant decision making and cultivating imagination are some very important features that could be approached and would be crucial for stimulating interplay, therefore extremely beneficial for the outcome of my artistic development.

**Form of documentation and presentation of the artistic outcome:**

I believe that through a "Research paper" containing musical analysis, examples from recordings and musical material of my personal experience while blending with other musicians (such as sounds or videos from my performing-practicing activities with various ensembles), my research process and outcomes will be documented appropriately and communicated most effectively.