



*IRALEESIWACK AND SAM MINEVICH PRESENT:*

# **Freestyle rap, participatory music, and improvised musicking - Skill building for digital artists, creatives, and the curious.**

**A step by step, interactive workshop learning experience,  
filled with history, terminology, skill building activities,  
digital literacy and algorithm literacy, live  
freestyle/musicking examples, and a final celebration  
showcase!**

*AGES 8 - 65*

*BILINGUAL, AND INFORMED BY EQUITY  
CENTRED DESIGN FRAMEWORKS*

*WRITTEN AT AS BASIC A READING LEVEL  
AS APPROPRIATE TO THE MATERIAL*

*FEATURING DIGITAL LITERACY AND  
DECOLONIZATION PEDAGOGY SPECIFIC TO  
UNDERPRIVILEGED/COMMUNITIES*

**Documentation for this project is part of the consultation  
process for the Participatory Creative Music Hub funded by  
the Canadian New Music Network.**



IRA LEE IS A BIPOC/ MINORITY/ LGBTQ2SAA SERVICING, TRANS - DISCIPLINARY DIGITAL ARTIST AND INNOVATOR, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST AND MASTERCLASS WORKSHOP FACILITATOR. IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SEVERAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS, GOVERNMENT ARTS AND DIGITAL INNOVATION PROGRAMS, PRIVATE, AND INTERNATIONAL MUSIC, MEDIA, EDUCATIONAL, URBAN, RURAL, REMOTE AND UNORTHODOX USES OF PUBLIC SPACE, AND A PLETHORA OF NEW INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY /EXPERIMENTAL PERFORMANCE WORKSHOPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS.

WHO THE F\*CK IS IRA LEE?

FOR MORE IRA LEE

THE  
REALPLAINS.COM

# **t r u t h s**

**HAVE FUN. THERE IS NO BETTER ADVICE, MUSIC, IS FUN.**

**YOU CANNOT PICK YOUR AUDIENCE, THEY PICK YOU. SO WORK WITH THE BEST ARTISTS YOU CAN, CHOOSE TO GROW AND AND PAY ATTENTION TO WHO CARES, WHEN, AND WHY. DATA IS YOUR BEST FRIEND.**

**DON'T F\*CK UP. ALWAYS BE WRITING AND IMPROV- 00V - ING. LIVE READY, CAUSE LIFE HAPPENS. ART IS A THING.**

**THE MORE YOU LOVE YOU ART, THE MORE YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE. AND THE GREATER YOU, ARE YOU.**

**SHARE YOUR SKILLS WITH OTHERS. BUILD FRIENDSHIPS, RIVALRY'S COMMUNITY. PARTICIPATE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER.**

WHAT IS 'PARTICIPATORY  
MUSIC?'

PARTICIPATORY MUSIC MEANS  
- EVERYONE PRESENT IS  
ACTIVELY DOING SOMETHING:  
PLAYING AN INSTRUMENT,  
SINGING, DANCING OR  
CHANTING - FOR EXAMPLE: A  
BLUEGRASS JAM, CAMPFIRE  
SINGING, A HIP-HOP CYPHER.

WHAT IS MUSICKING? 

TO MUSIC IS TO TAKE PART, IN ANY CAPACITY, IN A MUSICAL PERFORMANCE, WHETHER BY PERFORMING, BY LISTENING, BY REHEARSING OR PRACTICING, BY PROVIDING MATERIAL FOR PERFORMANCE (WHAT IS CALLED COMPOSING), OR BY DANCING. WE MIGHT AT TIMES EVEN EXTEND ITS MEANING TO WHAT THE PERSON IS DOING WHO TAKES THE TICKETS AT THE DOOR OR THE HEFTY MEN WHO SHIFT THE PIANO AND THE DRUMS OR THE ROADIES WHO SET UP THE INSTRUMENTS AND CARRY OUT THE SOUND CHECKS OR THE CLEANERS WHO CLEAN UP AFTER EVERYONE ELSE HAS GONE. THEY, TOO, ARE ALL CONTRIBUTING TO THE NATURE OF THE EVENT THAT IS A MUSICAL PERFORMANCE.

WHAT IS 'FREESTYLE'

FREESTYLE IS A SKILL COINED  
BY RAP MUSIC IN THE 1980'S  
- NOW USED THROUGHOUT  
ALL MEDIUMS OF ART. MUSIC,  
DANCE, SPORT, POETRY,  
LITERATURE, AND ACTING. THE  
ABILITY TO IMPROVISE  
CREATIVITY, AND ARGUABLY  
THE SINGLE MOST ESSENTIAL  
TOOL AN ARTIST OF ANY  
GENRE CAN MASTER.  
SPECIFICALLY FOR POETS,  
WRITERS, AND RAPPERS. AS A  
GENERIC TERM 'FREESTYLE'  
IS COMBINING NEW AND OR  
IMPROVISED ELEMENTS IN  
REAL-TIME, TO CREATE A  
SPONTANEOUS OUTPUT.

**Facilitator Name:** Ira Lee (Iraleeiswack)

**Featured guests:**

Sam Minevich and Ira Lee: Guitar, Keys, Vocals, Non verbal communication, Freestyle improvisations

**CNMN Member Profile:**

[https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/?post\\_type=projects&p=17177](https://www.newmusicnetwork.ca/?post_type=projects&p=17177)

**Instrumentation / Tech / tools needed for all activities**

- Recording and audio playback device (pc, cell phone, etc - **optional**)
- Groups/ breakout rooms
- Instruments of all/ any kind, or instrumentals (**optional**)

**Mission:** To provide a bilingual training, experience that builds participatory creative arts skills, across mediums

**Mandate:** to spark a flame that feeds the lifelong journeys artistic journeys \ of BIPOC/ SI2+LGBTQ creatives, STEAM artists, entrepreneurs and circular economies through intergenerational, intersectional, interactive knowledge sharing and digital literacy

**Age:** 8 to 21 years of age, Adults, Seniors

**Duration:**

1 hour workshop/including exercises, training, group/solo work  
Appropriate for 'live', asynchronous/ hybrid/ or virtual facilitation



**01 All you need to freestyle, is a voice.**

At the end of this learning experience, you will have the skills, knowledge and confidence to

- teach others how to freestyle/ improvise, and engage in jam's/ collaborations
- involve freestyling and improvisation in all of your creative processes
- feel more comfortable when improvising and confident in public speaking

**02 03** You will have access to free examples, free resources, and an evolving knowledge base that will supercharge your ability to make more art, develop networks, and collaborate with artists from any medium and genre.

**Note to Educators:**

All activities can be done in group, or solo. The goal is to maximize participation for all, in a safe, inclusive space, with measurable impact. To best serve the needs of your diverse group, considering soliciting input via a survey, or questionnaire - to best align and understand the interest, needs, and goals of your learners and learning objectives

# Do yourself

IRALEEISWACK AND SAM MINEVICH

**TIME FOR US TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER. BEFORE YOU LEARN AND SHARE YOU ART, WATCH SAM AND IRA'S - 'DO YOURSELF'. (FREESTYLE STORYTELLING VS. IMPROVISED INSTRUMENTATION) THIS WILL GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE SAM AND I TEACH TOGETHER, HOW PRACTICE IMPROVISING AND AND WHAT THE FINAL PRODUCT OF ALL THIS PRACTICE MEANS.**



# A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF MUSICKING - TOP 3

*THERE ARE NO RULES - WORK HARDER - MISTAKES ARE LEGENDARY.*

Here's the basics, for curious/ or first time musickers and improvisors, wanting to improvise a song, rap, poem, dance, play, or free:

**4/4 time**, which means that, when listening to 99% of music, you can count each beat as one, two, three, four.

**Cheat code for beginning improvisations and that 'first line'** - simply come up with words./ sounds/ vocals that rhyme/ or with similar syllables - and say them on the fourth beat (a.k.a. the second snare ie: kick - snare - kick - **funny**, kick - snare - kick - **money**, etc.

**Flow - At first**, Listen to your favourite rappers, poets, musicians , writers, and artists and mimic their flows, patterns. and phrasing. Perhaps even practice "skatting" where you say/ sing rhythmic gibberish to a beat - to find what you like or would want to do. Imagine singing what the words sound like, in the shower. Find your preferences, and delivery, and strengths- this will build goals. Once you know what you want to do, your flow is born from practicing. Imagine you can taste every word, and practice, practice, practice. And when we all die someday, wake up - time to practice.

## CHEAT GUIDE



## MAPPING THE FUGUE STATE

If we look at the neuroanatomy of improvised art, we are - 'mapping the fugue state' - a technique that allows rappers to freestyle, jazz musicians to improvise, and artists turn off their self-edit. Stream of consciousness poetry, songwriting, rap and musicking - refers to our conscious and how it is not static. Rather, our consciousness is dynamic and always moving and flowing like a stream. "Flow": by academic definition is "a subject's complete immersion in creative activity, typified by focused self-motivation, positive emotional valence, and loss of self-consciousness.

BASED ON 'THE NEUROANATOMY OF FREESTYLE RAP' BY LINDSAY ABRAMS

## THE 'FLOW STATE

To turn on one's creative "Flow state", artists have to learn to switch off their inner critic. Research says - improvisational artists are actually occupying an altered state of mind. A closer look at their brain activity reveals that an entire, unique network emerges during the process, one in which motivation, language, emotion, motor function, sensory processing and the representation of the artists' subject experience all interact in unusual ways to create the "Flow" state.

TIP: Practice, practice, practice. Stretch your freestyle and improvising skills in new ways, every day. The harder you work, the more prepared you are to seize any and every moment to share your art, in full form. Practice everyday.

BASED ON THE WORKS OF LINDSAY ABRAMS,  
CHRISTOPHER SMALL, AND ANDREI  
TARKOVSKY



LEVEL  
UP

**DON'T SUCK, OR ELSE.  
TEST ME.**

**I WISH MY  
FAVORITE  
ARTISTS  
WERENT RACIST  
+ SEXIST -  
HOMOPHOBEES.**

PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU DO, WHAT YOU SAY, AND WHAT YOU HEAR. BE CONSCIOUS, THAT WORDS ARE REAL. EVEN IF NO ONE CARES WHAT YOU ARE SAYING. MAKE SURE YOU ARE ALWAYS OWNING YOUR POWER AND TRUH.



**THE BIPOC ARTISTS  
PERSPECTIVE**



# **DIGITAL LITERACY VS COMPUTER SCIENCE**

**WATCH**





For three minutes, try to rap. rhyme. sing, or improvise as long as possible. If you make a mistake keep going, for 3 whole minutes. Try your best, and practice making interesting mistakes. **(with or without a rhythm)**



For three minutes, try to rap. rhyme. sing, or improvise as long as possible, in groups of two. Try your best, make mistakes, and have fun. Sharing is hard at first, and then, it becomes the whole point. **(with a rhythm, instrumental)**



For one minute, try to rap. rhyme. sing, or improvise as long as possible, in groups of two. Try your best, make mistakes, and have fun. If possible, record this jam/ ciphers, or collaborative improvisation. Listen to it together, and talk about how it sounds, and how you feel. **(Accapella, Advanced artists - with a rhythm, instrumental)**

## LEARN TO LET GO

### WARM UP ACTIVITY

Three key freestyle musicking and improvisational skill building exercises for group settings



# ACTIVITY 2: NO BS CHALLENGE

**GROUP ACTIVITY 2**  
REQUIRES A PC/ CELL  
PHONE OR RECORDING  
DEVICE. TO CAPTURE  
AUDIO, AND REPLAY IT.

- **Freestyle - for 30 seconds**, acappella without swearing, using sexist or defamatory language, and about a single subject. (It's good to make mistakes, make a hundred million mistakes, but keep going, for 1 entire minute. This is the only goal.
- **Now** - do the same activity again, but record yourself on your pc, or using an app in your phone this time. Once you are done, listen and write down what you like, and do not like. Try to remember which parts of rapping for a minute were easiest, hardest, and how you felt while rapping, before rapping, and directly after.
- **Finally** - Split into groups of two/three discuss tips, and tricks, and feelings about this activity.

CLICK  FOR A VIDEO  
SAMPLE OF IRA AND  
FRIENDS  
DEMONSTRATING

# NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE

- Watch Sam and Ira - 'I had a pretty, weird week.' (Non verbal communication vs. Freestyle)
- Break into **groups of two**, and practice storytelling, with no rhyme required.
- **The goal** - practice telling a story together. Trade back and forth, make sound effects, dance, do anything you can to build an improvised idea, as a team.
- Reflection - Talk to the larger group, about learnings, painpoints, and feelings about the activity.

WE ALL LEARN,  
FEEL AND  
COMMUNICATE  
DIFFERENTLY

*Ollee*

