

# The Golden Age of Non-Idiomatic Improvisation

FYS 129

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## Various Quotes

These slides contain a collection of some of the quotes largely from the musicians that are studied during the course.

The idea is to present “musicians in their own words”.

# Magda Mayas



**German pianist & composer (b. 1979 - )**

## Mayas on Improvisation & Composition

**15Q:** What do improvisation and composition mean to you and what, to you, are their respective merits?

**Mayas:** The time frame is different. When you improvise, you compose as well, you are working with all the elements a composition requires. But when I compose a piece, say with a recording, I can decide on the transitions, structure etc and it gives me more possibilities.

Magda Mayas, Fifteen Questions, ca. 2013, URL:

<https://www.15questions.net/interview/fifteen-questions-interview-magda-mayas/page-1/>

## Mayas on Technique

**15Q:** How important are practising and instrumental technique for achieving your musical goals?

**Mayas:** There is a lot of technique involved in my playing. I spend a lot of time with the techniques and the material I use and develop, to create the sounds I want. For example, getting familiar with the objects I use inside the piano and it needs a lot of practice and trying and failing, so they actually become part of my language, and not just a gimmick.

Magda Mayas, Fifteen Questions, ca. 2013, URL:

<https://www.15questions.net/interview/fifteen-questions-interview-magda-mayas/page-1/>

## Mayas on Other Forms of Art

**15Q:** In the 20th century, the relationship between music and other forms of art - painting, video art and cinema most importantly - has become increasingly important. How do you see this relationship yourself and in how far, do you feel, does music relate to other senses than hearing alone?

**Mayas:** Playing piano is a very physical experience for me. I often enjoy the movement that creates the sounds as much as the sound itself, it's not separable. As for other forms of art, I draw a lot of inspiration from painters, artists, photography, poetry - on a different level than from music, but it's as strong.

Magda Mayas, Fifteen Questions, ca. 2013, URL:

<https://www.15questions.net/interview/fifteen-questions-interview-magda-mayas/page-2/>



## Mayas on the Role of the Audience

**15Q:** Usually, it is considered that it is the job of the artist to win over an audience. But listening is also an active, rather than just a passive process. How do you see the role of the listener in the musical communication process?

**Mayas:** Yes, I agree. The audience plays an active role, they transform the sounds by listening to them. It's a strong relationship, between audience and musicians, even if you can't explain it or put your finger on what it is that's happening between the two, it matters. Having said that, I don't play music to please an audience or provoke it, it happens on a different, more subtle or, if you like, more mystical level.

Magda Mayas, Fifteen Questions, ca. 2013, URL:

<https://www.15questions.net/interview/fifteen-questions-interview-magda-mayas/page-2/>

## Mayas on the Main Feature of her Music

**OF:** According to your view, what's the main feature of your music?

**Mayas:** I guess / hope its colorful and richness.

Magda Mayas, interview by Olindo Fortino, "Deep Inside", Sound Contest, 2012, URL:  
<https://www.soundcontest.com/deep-inside-magda-mayas-interview/>



## Mayas on the Message of her Music

**OF:** What kind of message do you wish to deliver or communicate by your music?

**Mayas:** I think in performances, concerts, it's always about creating something together with the audience in a particular space and room and moment of our lives. It's not only me or the group producing the music, it's everything and everyone around us to a certain extent. That might sound very esoteric or abstract, but I do often experience it like that, as a process of giving and sharing and creating.

Magda Mayas, interview by Olindo Fortino, "Deep Inside", Sound Contest, 2012, URL: <https://www.soundcontest.com/deep-inside-magda-mayas-interview/>

## Mayas on an Alternative Occupation

**DIB:** If there was no music in the world, what would you do instead?

**Mayas:** I'd probably be a chef.

Magda Mayas, Digital in Berlin, 2014, URL: <https://www.digitalinberlin.de/magda-mayas/>

## Mayas on Motivations to Improvise

**15Q:** Focusing on improvisation can be an incisive transition. Aside from musical considerations, there can also be personal motivations for looking for alternatives. Was this the case for you, and if so, in which way?

**Mayas:** Initially, I wanted to be able to make my own music and I chose improvisation as a method to do so quite organically – I was playing the piano already and wanted to perform live with it and with other people... I am definitely influenced by Jazz and Free jazz as well as western classical music from my upbringing. I also feel that the improvised music tradition in Europe from the 60s, 70s onwards is something that has had a big impact on my sense of aesthetics. I think initially a lot of my ideas around improvisation developed through my instrumental approach, through and with the piano and other keyboard instruments. In the last 5-10 years, I feel that ideas around improvisation are equally influenced by other artistic experiences in general.

Magda Mayas, Fifteen Questions, ca. 2022,

URL: <https://www.15questions.net/interview/spill-about-improvisation/page-1/>