

STUDYING JAZZ AND IMPROVISATION

The Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music and Performance is a thriving hub of diverse musical practices in performance, composition, research, teaching and industry engagement. We are home to an exciting community of undergraduate, postgraduate and professional musicians, performers, and researchers working across classical, electronic, experimental, jazz, interdisciplinary and popular music.

Collaboration, creativity, excellence, inclusivity, diversity and community are at the heart of what we do. Our students are innovative, forward-looking and internationally informed, and celebrate Australian performing arts and its place in the world.

JAZZ AND IMPROVISATION AT MONASH

The Jazz and Improvisation specialisation is based on the African American jazz idiom as a language for learning.

While the focus remains on music in Australia, it also embraces a wide selection of musical styles including jazz, world music, Brazilian, Indian, free, electronic, Latin and blues to name but a few styles.

We attract the highest calibre of teaching staff and offer a variety of performance, composition and research opportunities.

The philosophy of the course is to offer a strong technical and musical foundation that allows the student to develop a personal 'voice' which is a result of their broad musical education and an awareness of their social and cultural being.

Academically, there is a focus on learning research skills in performance (practice-based / artistic research) which can lead to further study in the graduate research area.



JAZZ AND IMPROVISATION CLASSES

Students can partake in classes in jazz arranging/composition, small ensemble performance, ear training, improvisation materials, Indian rhythms, Brazilian music, performance workshops, big bands, world music ensembles, and small ensembles. There are also unique opportunities for students to perform, learn and be mentored from seminal musicians such as Carla Bley, Joe Lovano, Terri Lyne Carrington, Charles Lloyd, Linda Oh, Branford Marsalis, Kris Davis, Dave Douglas, Kristin Berardi and Paul Grabowsky.

JAZZ AND IMPROVISATION TEACHERS

Paul Williamson, Monique DiMattina, Robert Burke, Michelle Nicolle, Yunion Terry, Kyrie Anderson, Alastair McGrath- Kerr, Flora Carbo, Carl Mackey, Amelia Evans, Danny Fischer, Vashti Sivell, David Beck, Frank DiSario, Grant Windsor, Fran Swinn, James Sherlock, Louisa Rankin, Michael Kellett, Miranda Park, Craig Fermanis, Simon Starr, Callum Mintzis and Mirko Guerrini.

**Monash is a QS World University Ranking
Top 50 university (#36 in 2026).**



MEET OUR JAZZ AND IMPROVISATION TEACHING STAFF



DR PAUL WILLIAMSON JAZZ AND IMPROVISATION CONVENOR

Dr Paul Williamson is the convenor of Jazz and Improvisation and a senior lecturer at the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music and Performance, Monash University. Williamson has established a distinguished reputation as a trumpeter composer producing distinctive recordings of outstanding ensemble performances.

As a leader, he's released sixteen recordings, and has performed extensively internationally and nationally with jazz greats including Carla Bley, Charlie Haden, Eddie Palmieri, Linda Oh, Bill Carothers, Dave Liebman, Paul Wertico, Tomasz Stańko, Kenny Werner, John Abercrombie, Hermeto Pascoal, Aaron Goldberg, Django Bates, Vijay Iyer, Mike Nock, Tony Gould, Nasheet Waits and Mark Helias.
<https://paulwilliamson.bandcamp.com/>



PROFESSOR ROBERT BURKE

Professor Robert Burke is an Australian improvising musician and composer.

Rob has produced 17 recordings under his own name and composed/performed on over 300 CDs with leading international artists such as Hermeto Pascoal (Brazil), George Lewis (USA), Kris Davis (USA), Ben Monder (USA), Enrico Rava (Italy), Kenny Werner (USA), Paul Grabowsky (Aus) amongst others.

Rob has published extensively on jazz and improvisational processes investigating the phenomenology of musical interaction, experimentation, identity, agency and gender studies.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Dr Paul Williamson
Jazz and Improvisation Convenor
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monash.edu/arts/music-performance/home

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