

Fil - Tapis - Motif

Complementary patterns in vocal improvisation

FIL

Short silences
Short notes
More on-beats than off-beats, simple and easy rhythm patterns
Mostly closed vowels
Darker sound
No effects (vibrato, glissendo, etc)

TAPIS

Very long notes
Short silences

MOTIF

Long silences
Mostly opened vowels
Brighter sound
Effects welcome (vibrato, glissendo, etc)

RHYTHMIC

Body percussion or unvoiced sounds

General notes

- Parts can be added in any order, but fils and rhythmic are better for the very beginning of a song/improvisation. Avoid starting with a tapis or motif if you want to clarify rhythm informations.
- Fils, tapis and motifs can all be harmonized, especially tapis.
- There can be more than one of each part, like there could be 2 complementary fils (without counting harmonizations).
- All parts are not necessarily present in one song/improvisation. There could be beautiful songs without tapis, without motif, etc.

How to practice

- Practice all four archetypal parts in your circlesongs, co-improvisation, on your looper, etc.
- Listen to other people vocal patterns and try to identify how do they fit to the model (or not)!
- Remember those are just pedagogical archetypes. Practice them strictly when you want to learn. But when you want to really make music, twist them, blend them, forget them!

Why to practice

- It can help you when you feel that something is missing to the music and you struggle finding what it is.
- It can help you develop more consciousness of musical and vocal parameters such as note durations, silence durations, open and closed vowels, effects, etc.
- It can help you identify your habits and enrich your vocabulary as a vocal improviser.