

Laura Blackburn – The Score Project

Dear all of you wonderful dancers/teachers/performers here at Ecite,

I decided to stick to the "letter" style of most of our communications about the Score Project because we do all of our organizing by email. This way you get a sense of the personal aspect we try to maintain while organizing this world event.

A little history: In January 2000 at Nancy Stark Smith's intensive workshop in western Massachusetts, Claire Filmon began to develop with clearer focus an idea that had been with her for years. She spoke to several individuals, and together we decided on a specific proposal: to create a global practice of a score that Nancy had presented in our workshop, one that she has been working with for many years. (It doesn't have a name yet, so we just call it "the score.")

With the aim of running a more extensive project in the summer of 2001, we chose June 2000 as the date for the pilot project, Score 2000 (we are also in search of a name). A weekend near the Solstice (summer or winter depending on your hemisphere), a time of transition between long and short days, seemed like a good moment to practice this form together.

We designated to each site a specific, simultaneous, four-hour period of dancing, local times ranging from Saturday morning thru Sunday afternoon. We linked up through an internet chatroom to "circle up" around the planet and say "hello" and "goodbye" all together. Score 2000 taught us a lot about our intentions for the project and about the internet, so we launched a clearer, broader Score 2001 this year, adding video and sound to our chatroom.

The practice itself:

Nancy's score is a complex yet simple series of about 21 phases or states that guide us through an "arriving" process, solo warmup, duet contact improvisation, and open group improvisation, and continues to a final group resolution, through a personal "reflection/harvest" time, and a sharing of observations from the experience. For the project, we place the original score in the context of simultaneous dancing practice around the world and slightly adapt it for that purpose.

Beginning with a short "preambulation" walk through the space, we continue with Steve Paxton's Small Dance, an experience of the subtle movements involved in standing. For this, each group faced the next adjacent site, thus opening an energy circle of people around the globe. After hours of dancing, we ended the event with a Small Dance facing the opposite direction, connecting now to the group "behind" us. Thus, we turned the circle, closing it, with the energy running in the opposite direction.

Notes on participation: At its base, the score project is an encounter of dancers and contact improvisers, wanting to practice or research principles of contact and other forms of improvisation at play in Nancy's score. It is not as much a fixed "event" as it is a moment shared along a continual practice.

This year, after much reflection, we decided on three forms of participation and asked each individual organizer in an area to see which form best fit their group. In this way, we hoped to both respect the roots of the idea (a practice of Nancy's score) and to welcome groups who may not have much experience with

her score. The three forms are listed below.

A. FULL SCORE PRACTICE. You are a community of dancers in which every dancer present is a part of a serious exploration of the ideas/perceptions/principles operating in Nancy's score (and behind that, in her work (and your own work) with Contact Improvisation). This probably means that several of you have studied and/or practiced the score with Nancy directly. Since the event, for you, is about practicing the score, even 1 or 2 dancers who are not familiar with her work will change the quality of the practice. Please feel free to set limits based on experience, and to contact us with any questions...

B. MODIFIED SCORE/JAM. You are a community of dancers who have various levels of experience with Contact Improvisation and with Nancy's work. You may have one person who has studied with Nancy, but in general your experience as a group is in "jamming" and exploring improvisation. You might feel more resonance with a more open participation. For example, you might open and close with email and the small dance, and in the dancing section, you warm-up individually, circulate a bit, find a first partner for a contact improvisation dance, and then move into an OPEN JAM format. You might even end together at the final resolution time, take some time for personal reflection, rest, or warm-down, and then have a circle of sharing at the end. The circle might not necessarily be a "harvest" in terms of the perceptions of Nancy's score, but would be a rich way of sharing your experience.

C. SATELLITE. You want to participate but are unable to for many reasons : you are alone, you have an obligation, etc. You might join us for the opening and/or closing Small Dance (both would be great!) to sort of "click-in" to sense the dancing, and to give your support. You know enough about the small dance to be able to explore it deeply for that brief shared time.

If you are working with the score, or interested in the score project, you might like to visit the Score Exchange eGroup, a space initiated by Malcolm Manning on the Net for Contact Improvisors who are working with Nancy Stark Smith's Score to exchange information. It can be found at:
www.egroups.com/group/ci_score_exchange.

Please feel free to contact me with anything at all (especially if you have ideas for a name for the project!): Laura Porter Blackburn, 47 Rue du Chemin Vert, Paris 75011, France; tel. (33) 1-4806-5581; email: lpb5@hotmail.com.

And are you interested in joining next year's score project (Score 2002)?
Please contact: Claire Filmon at monfilclair@yahoo.com or myself.

Have a great full time at ECITE.
Sending my love and my energy for the body in dance,
Laura