

Jo Blowers and Mary Prestidge – CI and Performance

SOME NOTES TAKEN FROM RECENT DISCUSSION ON THE CONTEXTS,
THE PHILOSOPHY, OUR TEACHING INTERESTS AND THE PRACTICE OF IMPROVISATION, INCLUDING
CONTACT IMPROVISATION, IN AND AS PERFORMANCE

We tried to encapsulate our free flowing discussion which contained all of the above. There is no particular order of the notes and questions below. They are quite dense and some of our points overlap and maybe repeat. We hope that they will stimulate both practice and discussion at ECITE...we're looking forward!

Given the nature of the context in which CI is often performed where the 'listening' may be pressurised, are there strategies for supporting the integrity and the potential performative quality of the material?

Are aspects of contact and the associated 'states' illusive in relation to presenting material ; in performance or in a teaching context?

Can we avoid making people (audience) feel voyeuristic when more intimate contact occurs in performance?
Are there strategies for illuminating 'invitation' and 'protection'?

Questions about the different contexts of 'performance' that occurs in jams and at CI events in relation to performances in theatres etc.

What is the relationship between informal and more formal elements such as lighting and costume etc?

The impromptu make up of performing groups, made up for example of dancers who know the work but not necessarily each other.

The rarity of having rehearsal time equivalent to making a 'choreographed' piece.

In what ways does CI become compositional? And is this an integral part of performative material?

Is the sense of time, quality of listening, opening to sensation, release, tone etc. about being drawn into more insular material or is it a resource for highly communicative and diverse performance material?

Relationship between 'in' and 'out'. Exploration of scores which address this area.

Relationship between audience and performers. Is it about proximity to the audience?

Issues around providing audiences with access to the work.

How far can softness project (through space)?

In large group improvisations, are people able to engage in sustained contact? Is there a tendency for it to be avoided in performance? Why?

I thought I'd add these brief summaries from a short panel discussion at LIFDI (Liverpool International Festival of Dance Improvisation) last December.

PROVOCATIVE THOUGHTS – flip-charts notes from the LIFDI discussion 3.12.00

- * Do we want to let people know that a performance is improvised (perceptions of improv work)
- * Responsibility of performer? Audiences? Venue?
- * Language(s) [of the performer] for diversities of work?
- * Is improv an excuse for performing?
- * Is it spontaneous choreography or is it something else?
- * Are improvisations too long?
- * How to get it 'hot' quick?
- * Do we value it?
- * How can we learn about improvising in performance (when there are few opportunities)?
- * Is performance a place for learning?