



Department of Contemporary Dance, Concordia University

Interdisciplinary Improvisation Scores

Monday, November 27, 2023 7:00 pm

with students of Music, Theatre, and
Contemporary Dance Departments

Performers: Nataliia Fylypchuk, Mia Pereira, Lucie Beylard, Emine Adilak, Liam Gover, Vailea Parris, Ambre Vigier

Photo: Kristina Hillard



Concordia University
Contemporary Dance
Faculty of Fine Arts

Social Media: @cu.dance

Website: <https://www.concordia.ca/finearts/dance.html>

Interdisciplinary Improvisation Scores

The five performances you are about to attend are the outcome of Choreography I – Interdisciplinary Improvisation course. The class hosted students from the Departments of Music, Theatre, and Contemporary Dance to foster collaboration between the Performing Arts. Students addressed interdisciplinary improvisation as a collective choreographic practice through the developing of scores for improvisation. They approached ethics of collaboration and co-creation, and different disciplinary modes of doing by using chance procedures, tarot cards and tasks to form collective scores.

Improvisation opens space for collective decision-making, integration of diverse skills and styles, curiosity and exchange with all people present. It facilitates connections with other aesthetics and encourages processes that would not have emerged otherwise. Improvisation as a compositional form fosters attention, inclusion, and equity between all players involved and it engages the audience in the artistic process.



Performers: Baird Duncan, Solen Rios
Photo: Kristina Hillard

Performances

The Moon 10'

O moon, from what you are, give me 6 attributes, knowledge, politeness, godliness, faith, safety and health

The moon is an interdisciplinary performance about the cycles of emotions where we are exploring the thin line between absurdity and rationality, chaos and order, conflict, and harmony. This improvisatory performance is presenting characters from different backgrounds and cultures, who each speak in their own languages and seem to find a way to communicate with each other— either with words, with movements or with musicality.

Despite their differences, they all orbit around the same moon. In most cultures, the moon has a very powerful value as it dictates the gravitation of the earth and the cycles of the ocean tides. In Persian culture, the moon or Mah symbolizes knowledge, politeness, godliness, faith, safety, and health.

As much as we contemplate the moon to look for balance, hope and inner peace, her different cycles can sometimes influx on our moods in such ways as insomnia, stress, anxiety, and depression. In this piece, we create an improvisatory loop where cycles of anger, joy, inner peace, contemplation, caring, and playfulness are repeated endlessly, in the most absurd “chic- ballroom in space” atmosphere. We embrace the notion that despite the twists and turns happening in the world, the moon is gracefully orbiting around us and brings a sometimes comforting and sometimes chaotic presence in our lives.

Score:

- “Fly Me to the Moon” = Parand sings in Persian
- The word “Moon” in different languages is a prompt for mirroring the movement of the person who says it and each person has their own specific intention that the rest of the group follows.
- During the movement portion, a person’s hand can touch another person’s head and they go to the floor.
- Any prompt can be broken by the phrase “I don't want to do this anymore”, and a reset happens.
- Use different languages in this performance

By and with: Parand Bolbolabadi, David Zhen-Xiong Feng, Malika Bouchard-Medawar, Rae-Michelle Comodero

Credits:

Music: Fly me to the moon - Count Basie and Frank Sinatra; L'amour est bleu - Richard Clayderman; Je Te Laisserai Des Mots - Patrick Watson

Lights: Trinity McQuillan

In French, Persian, Spanish and Cantonese

The Fool and the Chariot 15'

Exploring themes of conflict, domination, the breaking down of established systems and the promise of regeneration, “The Fool and the Chariot” presents an exhilarating fusion of tarot-inspired thematic symbolism with improvisation for tap-dance, saxophone and electroacoustic sound diffusion.

The form, mood and themes expressed would be left up to the interpretation of the tarot cards which we worked with from the very beginning.

Score:

Initial Drawing - How to use the cards.

We drew three tarot cards to get a sense of how we might best proceed with interpreting and putting to use the themes which they revealed. The cards we drew, and their symbolism were:

- Queen of Cups - poetry, beauty, nourishment
- King of Pentacles - tradition, paternalism, taking over
- 5 of Pentacles - despair, contemplation, self-pity

Second Drawing - Overall theme

To get an inspiration for an overall theme, we drew one tarot card:
- The Tower - Destruction of established patterns, hierarchical systems are broken down, devastation that is followed by regeneration and creativity.

Third Drawing - Development of narrative form

To get an inspiration for the way that the performance would unfold, we drew several tarot cards and used these to define the themes and motivations of the performers.

By and with:

Liam Gover – Movement, Pat McMaster - Electroacoustic sound and diffusion, Vailea Parris – Movement, Ambre Vigier – Saxophone

Credits:

Video: Pat McMaster

Lights: Trinity McQuillan

Vortex 9'

Vortex explores the idea of grief as a mechanism that collapses, alters, and otherwise stretches one's perception of time and being hood. With reference to the Rider-Waite Tarot's V of Cups, the piece asks what happens in the experience of decentering. What happens when one is no longer in control? Ideas around decentering are explored through swells of improvisation calls made by the Venusian goddess figure that the performers orbit around and are implicated by. With reference to the Hindu goddess Kali, that literally translates to Time, she is both radiant and maniacal, unscathed by her otherworldly whims. She bites into her pomegranate of a thousand little hearts as the players are implicated, folded into wormholes, and time warps, exercising material to reveal the intricate interplay between surrender and agency in the face of temporal unraveling.

Score:

Five of Cups-Decentering-Timewarp-Grief

Each member of the group has their own role through which they explore elements of the theme and are signaled by each call. The improv is based on sound cues coming from the improviser in the middle. The central figure (Nataliia) cues through sounding calls: Rest/ change material: singing/stopping singing Biting/chewing: zoom in Miming: mime your material

By and with:

Michelle Shuman, Mia Pereira, Valentina Plata, Nataliia Fylypchuk
Lights: Trinity McQuillan

Pyjama Party 15'

Pyjama Party is an immersive performance about collective storytelling. While arranging the space to make it as cozy and familiar as possible, the performers will offer different games, books, songs, blankets, and stories to the audience. In times of division, Pyjama party opens up reflections on how we speak and listen to each other, how much space we take and how much we give, what could be done in order to have collective care over the stories we tell.

Score: One person must be the designated host of the pyjama party.

This person will welcome everyone in while providing them an exclusive invitation to this event. Once everybody is set up, one of the performers will start a game of broken telephone that will end with the host, who will then say the sentence out loud and start the game. This score is constructed for 5 people. Two of them must be playing games while the other three arrange/frame the space. The score unfolds with prompts linked to the games, the winners, the losers, the walkers, the space, and the resolution.

Keywords: Pyjamas, cozy, storytelling, home, collective, care, hospitality, awareness, listening.

Materials: Mats, blankets, pillows, lamps, books, CD's, CD player, speakers, invitations, pyjamas.

Space: All of the materials will be spread out in the space. The room should feel like you are at home, in a cozy environment. The audience can sit wherever they please.

By and with: Emine Adilak, Lucie E. Beylard, Nicki White, Santiago Lopez Alzate and Zachary Lagha

Credits:

Lights: Trinity McQuillan

In Us 15'

A glimpse into an old friend group's coping with their current situation, "In Us" is a piece that continuously relies on tension and release from individual and collective explorations. Set in a forest during the late-night to early-morning hours, the group of friends navigate their way in and out of the bubble they have created for themselves. This bubble is a confined space that serves as both a comfort in the midst of being lost and alone, but also as a suffocating barrier bringing forth various pressures within their friendships and their isolated mental states.

Through their respective backgrounds in theatre, dance, and music, performers Baird Duncan, Jackson Thompson, Solen Rios, and Emily Ryall are left, along with bystanders, to grapple with unlimited unknowns of the scene:

How long have they been there? Is their friendship falling apart? Do they want to escape the forest? Will they help each other find a way out? The audience is invited to witness the physical and psychological journey of "In Us," which unfolds a compelling investigation into human connection and personal motivations.

Upon initially joining as a team, we discussed our preferred building blocks of improvisation to serve as overarching intentions behind our ventures. Components such as "sustain" and "points of contact" came up, which began to form the foundation of our individual and collective explorations. To this day, we continue to improvise building on the enduring groundwork laid by these two essential ingredients.

In the culmination of our creative journey, the unique fusion of our diverse fields of study coupled with complete chance instances and repetition have given rise to what we now call "In Us."

By and with: Baird Duncan, Jackson Thompson, Solen Rios, and Emily Ryall

Score: See next page

Score

IN US

IMPROVISATIONAL SCORE

Start of the score

Begin in small dance until you feel like moving.

Rules of the game

(Duos 2 by 2)

- . Speaking at the same time (connecting with someone else and guessing as you speak what they are about to say)
- . Mirror each other's movement (similar to the rule above but with movement)
- . Resetting the small dance (when someone touches your shoulder you restart the score by coming back to your small dance)

The Ambiance

- . Improvisation is done within a small circle
- . Two different soundscapes during the improv:
 - White noise (speakers of the studio)
 - Forest noises (smaller speaker on the side of the circle)

Rules of the game

(Everyone)

- . "Points of contact" and "sustain" (Concept to explore throughout the improv)
- . Zooming in: stomp on two feet (everyone else huddles up around you - spotlight moment)
- . Falling: When someone falls everyone follows (at their own speed)
- . Humming while exploring different itches
- . Choosing a phrase from random scraps of paper (ex: script from a play or newspaper) and saying it out loud.
- . Answering to others' phrases
 - . Escaping the circle (Improvising outside of the circle while the rest try to bring you back in it by using another rule of the score)

Example of our Personal Phrases

- Who are you?
- It's just us
- I'll stay older than you
- Why does the river flow?

Full-time faculty

Jens Richard Giersdorf, Ph.D., Professor and Chair
Angélique Willkie, MA, Associate Professor
Lilia Mestre, Assistant Professor

Artist in Residence

Helen Simard

Part-time faculty

Alanna Kraaijeveld, Erin Flynn, Florence Figols, Isabelle Poirier, Kama La Mackerel, Marie Claire Forte, Nicolas Patry, Paul Chambers, Philip Szporer, Pierre-Marc Ouellette, Sara Lucie Hanley, Susanna Hood, Warwick Long

Office staff

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Katherine Scribner, Department Assistant
Karl Lebel Viens, Department Assistant
Samantha Treglia, Office Assistant

Musicians Technique Classes

Maude Bastien, Robert Lépine, Daniel Gélinas

Production

Choreography

Instructor, Dramaturgy

Lilia Mestre

Production Coordination

Gerald Ssemaganda

Lighting design and Technical Direction

Trinity McQuillan

Sound technician

Ariane Lavoie

Social Media, Documentation and Photographer

Kristina Hilliard

Graphic Design

Samantha Treglia

The Department of Contemporary Dance offers a BFA Major in Contemporary Dance.

Dance students at Concordia discover and define their own aesthetic, method, and process, in a learning environment that embraces an inclusive artistic relationship between mentor and student. To support our unique focus on creative process and choreography in a social context, the program's technical training draws from contemporary practices in dance and related performance fields. This synthesized approach to training is carefully designed to meet the needs of choreographic research and versatility in performance.

Our students stage their own choreographies, collaborate across disciplines, and perform in original works created by their peers. They are taught by a renowned faculty made up of performers, choreographers, composers, filmmakers, scholars, and multidisciplinary artists, who actively contribute to the teaching and outreach of the performing arts both here in Montreal and internationally. When students graduate, they are prepared to be independent artists, ready to contribute to the dance community in meaningful ways.

Land acknowledgement

I/We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

J'aimerais/Nous aimerions commencer par reconnaître que l'Université Concordia est située en territoire autochtone, lequel n'a jamais été cédé. Je reconnais/Nous reconnaissons la nation Kanien'kehá: ka comme gardienne des terres et des eaux sur lesquelles nous nous réunissons aujourd'hui. Tiohtià:ke / Montréal est historiquement connu comme un lieu de rassemblement pour de nombreuses Premières Nations, et aujourd'hui, une population autochtone diversifiée, ainsi que d'autres peuples, y résident. C'est dans le respect des liens avec le passé, le présent et l'avenir que nous reconnaissons les relations continues entre les Peuples Autochtones et autres personnes de la communauté montréalaise.

Many thanks to: Jens Giersdorf, Lilia Mestre, Valerie Sabbah, Gabriela Petrov, Eldad Tsabary, Hanako Hoshimi-Caines, Trinity McQuillan, Kevin Moon, Katherine Scribner, Samantha Treglia, and all of the performing arts students involved.