



**Unravelling the frontiers of artistic collaboration:
an exploration of the space of
indeterminacy in composition**

Volume II

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PhD Arts Practice

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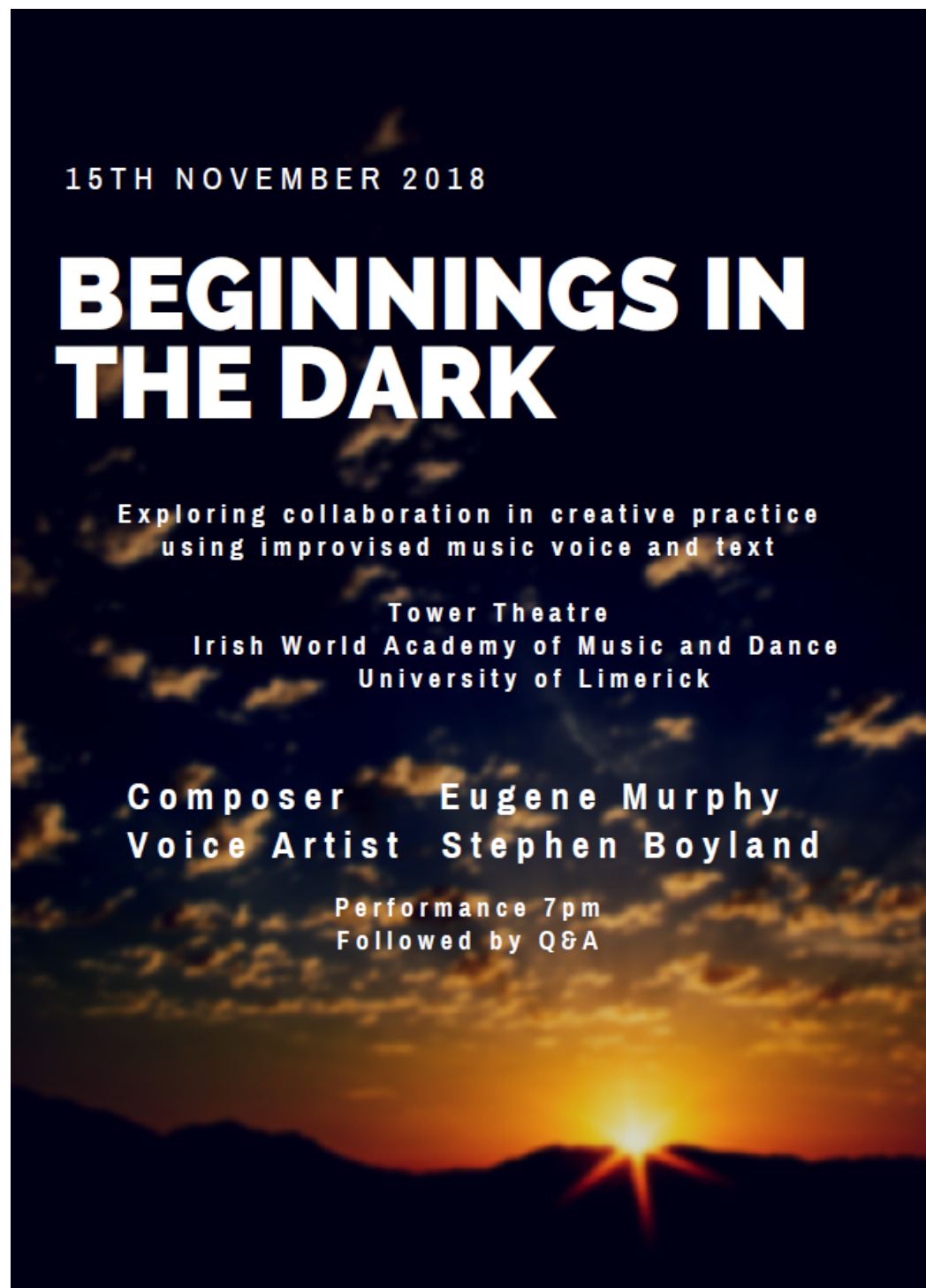
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Appendix 1: Flyer Beginnings in the Dark November 15th 2018



Appendix 2: Flyer Flux: Five Iterations of Becoming May 31st 2019

FLUX

5 ITERATIONS OF BECOMING

STEVE BOYLAND
EUGENE MURPHY
MARY WYCHERLEY

THEATRE ONE
IRISH WORLD
ACADEMY
UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK

FRIDAY 31ST MAY
RECEPTION 6.30PM
PERFORMANCE 7PM
FOLLOWED BY Q&A

Appendix 3: My Creative Journey' December 2016

MY CREATIVE JOURNEY

(BLACK – CHRONOLOGY RED- VOICE OVER)

The only way I can capture moments and actually remember is to mark it out in years.

1967 – Coming from a rural background I remember in our two-roomed school the local catholic curate visiting our school after the weekend of the Eurovision song contest. I was endeared by the music as a young child and picked up the melodies quite quickly. The parish priest had apparently used the song contest to decry those in his congregation who ‘spent more time watching the Eurovision than saying their prayers’. He asked if anyone in the room knew the song Puppet on a String. I volunteered, stood up and sung it much to the bemusement of my mother when I recounted the story. This was my first platform and I enjoyed it even if I wasn’t much of a singer and I’m sure I made up some of the words.

I always want to communicate something through performance. This seems always part of who I am and I am quite sure that whether it was standing up to recite tables or spellings it was an opportunity to perform.

1969 – My mother decided that she wanted my brother and I to learn the piano. We refused and on the Saturday morning when we were meant to go we climbed up an apple tree and said we weren’t going. However, my mother was insistent and packed us off successfully. I think that I was immediately taken by the experience. At first I just wanted to succeed with the mechanics and technique of score from hand to keyboard. I worked ferociously to get it right. Then came the second wave which really allowed me to fall in love with the piano, with music and what it expressed. Interpreting music and taking on new challenges at the keyboard would become part of who I am today and lasted for more than 20 years. Thankfully, my mother got us to the music school on that fateful date for me.

I remember that it wasn’t what I played but how I played it that seemed important to me. Even last Saturday December 2nd 2016 I played an original piece in The Unitarian Church at a concert. I noticed how ‘you could hear a pin drop’ that I had the capacity to draw the listener in and to take them with me on my creative journey. I think this is the most profound, most soulful thing I can articulate as a human being. No words but such palpable feelings. I think that my desire is to touch the soul of others if that is possible...

1970 – I decided at the tender age of 10 to write poetry and was a finalist in an RTE Young Poet of the Year competition. I remember now that I loved reading and writing poetry. This is the poem.

My Day Dream

A boat sails up the calm deep river
Slowly, steadily, on its way
With a gentle breeze so calm and wild
Awakes the sleeping, dreaming child

The smell of the sweet grass
And the foal running up and down the field
Makes my heart so happy and gay
As I near the end of my dreaming day

As I kneel and pray
I feel the ghost boat misting out of the bay
So I hop into bed
And begin to sail down the calm deep river
On this very fine day

I think that if he wasn't a composer I would have written more as I need to express myself. I was always fond of literature and love Beckett's philosophical musing which underpin so much of his work. I remember reading the Trilogy and thinking that the novels are about human suffering and out of suffering great art is born. I have often thought that this was Patrick Kavanagh's experience.

1972 I went to secondary school where there was a strong music tradition. All in one year I was learning the violin, church organ, piano, taking singing lessons and enjoying a world of the arts that was so new to me as a country boy. My piano technique was improving a lot and by May 1973 I was sitting on a stage playing a Hadyn sonata at the Feis Ceoil. Improving my technique seemed important to me at the time and that idea has remained with me throughout my life. I started to write and score short piano pieces and even though I never thought that I was creative I was very fulfilled being ME.

I think you always need someone to believe in you and for me my mother had a strong conviction that I was talented and that she would support it all the way. We were from the country and I remember going to Dublin on the bus to play at The Feis Ceoil. When we got to Bus Aras we were a little late and I remember feeling ill after the journey. We had to run to find Middle Abbey Street and the venue. It was never easy and sometimes overwhelming but it was a self-sacrifice and a selfless love that carried me to meet my dreams. For that I have always been grateful.

1975 I joined a rock band and school and started to rebel a little. This played havoc with my development as a pianist but it was to give a wider view of what I could play and my horizons changed.

I suppose that I regret this period and I don't. At least it was the year that Bohemian Rhapsody was number one and I can remember thinking it was a credible piece of music and happy that my friends at school liked it. That reminds that we used to have recitals at school and it was a scheme funded by the Department of Education which allowed young people to be exposed to classical music. They often asked a student to turn the pages and at school as I was 'Mr. Music' I was the one who was volunteered by the other boys. I was glad to have this identity. Somehow I felt it empowered me even if some of the boys thought it weird to study music.

1977 I entered Young Musician of the Year. I enjoyed the audition but the funny thing was that I played two of my own compositions at the audition. One which I still play was called Celtic Minuet which I wrote when I was 15. It is a pleasant melodic piece. I got lots of encouragement about my music and they played it on one of the programmes that went out featuring young musicians. This was my first broadcast piece. I was in UCD, in first year, at the time and Seoirse Bodley was very encouraging about this experience of writing music.

I never set out to compose but it just happened and this was the first time I realised that while it was nice to play other composers' music it was much more satisfying to create and play your own music. I made that decision early on.

1978 I went to the College of Music to study piano performance. Some of the music I learnt was technically at a very high level and this improved my playing and technique a lot. Competitions and performance opportunities offered some great challenges.

I loved The College of Music. I remember I was rehearsing a Beethoven Sonata and Veronica Dunne (singer) came in looking for free room to rehearse. Talking and mingling with these type of people gave me a sense of the democracy of music – making

that we were all in it together. I am not sure I was a candidate to be a concert performed. I didn't have the stamina for the never - ending practice required. But I loved Beethoven and wasn't that fond of Mozart ☺

1980 At 19, almost 20 years of age I already had a degree in English and had a decision to make about my career. I decided to do the HDip and become a teacher. It was my second choice as I wanted to become a barrister but my friend encouraged me to do teaching and I was easily led. It turned out to be a great choice as over the next 15 years I would be able to use my talent to help students and assist them to enjoy music and the world which I was passionate about.

I loved teaching, I loved my students and I loved making them feel positive about themselves. I always thought and said that I was a better communicator than teacher and that I could motivate them with ideas and concepts. But I was poor at correcting copies and recording marks and grades in journals. I endured it, however, for almost 15 years in three different schools. And then I left !

1981 I was already in my first teaching position in a secondary school in Swords Co. Dublin. I was young and very enthusiastic. I immediately set up a group of students to teach basic guitar. I also set up the school choir, a folk group that started singing at mass and a musical which was put on in the school that Christmas. All my creative energy was alive in me for the students that I faced each day and I loved it.

1982 I was playing in a band at the time and I wrote a song with two others called Yes to You. It is a song that has travelled far and wide over many years. It is a spiritual song but also secular and it is still sung in far flung places to this day:

Yes to You

So many times that I've said maybe
So many times that I've said no
So many moments that I have had to choose
But not I give my yes to you.
So many times I've hesitated
So many times I've looked for you
So many simple words that I let slip away
But now I give my yes to you

Although I am not a great song writer I have enjoyed occasional moments of inspiration...and this was one. The song is about commitment and making our yes – it

could be to our partner, to our child, to God. It resonated at the time and has stood the test of time. We even managed to play it a concert in the Paleur Stadium in Rome. It was magic playing in front of a big crowd

1984 I became friends with Robert Connor and Loretta Yurick. They were young choreographers from the US living in Ireland. I was fascinated by their passion and work ethic and I was eager to find out more. I told them that I would love the opportunity to work with them. Soon after the first great gift arrived. It was a piece based on the concept of Newgrange. It was composed by Noel Eccles (ex Moving Hearts and National Symphony Orchestra) and myself. He did a lot of exotic percussion from which I based much of the melodic lines and soundscape. It was an amazing opportunity and ran for a week at The Peacock Theatre in Dublin.

What a sharp learning curve. Noel Eccles with whom I teamed for this piece was already a seasoned performer and composer. I was a novice. But I gathered what was required to compose for choreography fairly quickly. I remember 2 things. First, everything was analogue so if the sound engineer forgot to push up a sound in the score during the mix then it would have to be done again from the beginning as there was no way of correcting it. It was nail biting stuff! Then I remember we stayed in the studio for 26 hours in one session. When I came out I remember everything appeared blue through my eyes. I was exhausted needless to add.

1985 The New Music – New Dance festivals were inaugurated at The Project Theatre in Dublin. This was my first opportunity to work with Conor and Yurick again as choreographers. What was fascinating was this was live music with live dance. I enjoyed creating the music for the dance which was called REMNANTS. It is a piece I come back to you which has a haunting melodic line and is particularly poignant as it relates to someone who had passed away. It was also enriching to be other dancers and choreographers and composers and to share all our enthusiasm and perspectives on our creations.

I know that Gaye Tanham was behind much of the support support for choreography and artists in general. This was probably the best thing that happened at the time in Ireland because it opened up a whole new world to minor artists like myself who would never have had an opportunity to get inside a theatre and experiment and create.

Thanks to all those who made it happen and realised how important it was. I became friendly with Donal Hurley who was similar to myself in terms of background and he

also relished the opportunity. There was also Michael Seaver and Jules Maxwell who was a new, young composer like myself. The synergy and meeting like-minded people was seminal. It was the platform, the space and ultimately the fulfilment of a dream.

1990 – I am almost certain of the date for this event. The Arts Council under the direction of Gaye Tanham organised a week long workshop for composers and choreographers. For me it was a coming together of all those young people who were interested in creating new work. It was a very important landmark for me. There I worked with a protégé of John Cage (whom I knew little about) but it opened up my whole world to experimenting with music. I created a piece using conversation voices and hitting the strings of a grand piano with coins. It was such a break away from my ‘baroque’ vista that I was on fire. I worked on this piece with Paul Johnson with whom I developed a strong collaboration for more than 10 years. I remember after that Gaye invited me to be the accompanist for the rehearsals at for the Cleveland ballet who were in town that summer and Rudolph Nureyev was a solo dancer. It wasn’t my greatest hour but I had a great time watching the dancers prepare for the ballet as I played a couple of Chopin Polonaises on the piano...and not very well !

This was New Music- New Dance on steroids. I was 30 years old. I was married with two children and had no money. What was I doing here ? It fit perfectly and it didn’t. It seems I had made another choice. I didn’t want to speak it out loud in case I heard it but I had ! What I began to think at the time was that I couldn’t lead the carefree life of an artist and at the same time support my family unless I had a lucky break. I could live off chance or possibility so even at this stage I began to see it was probably going to be more like a hobby. This is the first time I have articulated and clarified this fully but it was a moment of resignation. I came back full of the joy of creating and full of the foreboding of not creating. And that was the start of this new space. Even though I would work on composition for the next 10 years it was only going to fit around my other life – spouse, teacher, parent, provider. That was it.

1991 – I was once again involved in New Music New Dance with the newly formed Dance Theatre of Ireland. I composed a piece for three dancers called FULL MOON. I remember the music received very strong reviews and Diana Theodore who was a dance critic with The Irish Times hailed this as one of the best pieces which had encountered for new dance at the time. It gave me great confidence because up to that point there was no endorsement objectively speaking.

I have to say I love this piece of music. It works so well with the dance. I would love to see it live again. It was strong and the fast section was something new in a style which was new to me.

1992 – I started my collaboration with Paul Johnson who came from the Laban study of movement worked in a very different way to the previous choreographers. The first piece we embarked on was called ‘A Curious Misunderstanding’ for two dancers. Paul was very open about that I would create and gave me a lot of freedom to experiment. I remember using a cello and repeating motifs, inverting them, breaking them up, adding reverb. The result was very interesting and experimental and most of all it worked well with the dance. There was another piece I created but I can’t remember what it was called. It was a piece for solo dance. It involved a solo dancer crawling towards a light over a 7 or 8 minute period of time. I decided to create a melody underneath a very strong electronic buzzing noise that required the listener to really listen carefully to hear the melody. It was uncomfortable for the audience but it wasn’t meant to be ‘easy listening’. It was all part of the experiment.

The great thing about Paul is that he respects the integrity of the composer. He was capable of saying what he liked or didn’t like but the boundaries were very wide. When we worked together I came laden with offerings of motifs which he mostly accepted and worked with. This was a real gift for me.

One day this year I decided I would like to try painting. I don’t know where it came from but I was amazed at how strong the impulse was. The first painting was quite large (all were water colour) and it was called Solas Bán. I was very fulfilled with painting so I decided to continue until 1997.

When I think about being creative I imagine that it comes from something define...you do not know the time nor the hour when inspiration descends on you and that rush of excitement envelops you as you reach for another coffee or a glass of wine ‘ to calm the excitement’. I don’t know how I came to paint but I did. And it was a very therapeutic experience. My paintings all have very positive bright colours. I hope that’s how I imagine the world.

1994 A piece SWEAT was a controversial work which Johnson worked on around HIV. I remember that the performance was passionate as was the topic and Johnson put his heart and soul into it. I remember he was nervous because his family came to the performance and he didn’t know if they would be uncomfortable with this type of topic. Sweat found its way to other venues including Edinburgh Fringe Festival of all places.

I remember this being intensely personal for Paul Johnson. As a gay man he was watching the devastation of this disease all around him. He had to say something but didn't want it to be literal. It was a much more complex expression through his choreography. I was allowed in this private moment with my composition. It was a privilege but I was also ambivalent not knowing where this work was travelling. But it did travel to a place that was strong but difficult to voice and it worked.

1997 Fiach McConghaill became director of The Project Arts Theatre. This was providential for Paul Johnson as Fiach made Paul artist in residence this meant that I could work on new ideas with Paul. The project lasted three years and one of the very nice works which came out of this project was Beautiful Tomorrow. In fact, this was the last piece in the old Project theatre. It was a very fruitful experience and by 2000 my collaboration with dance had ceased.

This year my mother was killed in a car crash. I never painted again...I tried but I couldn't. Almost 20 years have passed since then so I might try again soon.

What a cocktail of events that year. It was also a period when I was writing a dissertation for an Masters in Education. I closed the door and wrote up my research. It seemed to take everything. But in this desert I had my wife and partner and through her compassion and love I moved forward to a new place that did not include the person who had shaped that young, artistic self that she seemed to value so much. I was not alone.

2000 – I have not written professionally since 2000. It is a long period of absence.

However, I have written pieces for piano some of which I like. I don't often like the music which I have completed as I always think it could be better.

I sit at the piano often. I being to play. I don't know what will come out. In a flash I like something and play it over and over again until I hate. I am sure there is a name for this syndrome. I feel Like Beckett that I will keep doing this as a way of acknowledging my existence like a someone who has to repeat a ritual to feel safe, to confirm the reality that I am still a composer because I can't even whisper to myself that if I don't write the music I'm not a composer. That would be a living hell so I don't go there and I keep trying – From Beckett's trilogy 'I must go on, I can't go on. I'll go on.'

I also have played music in a band which is not strictly creative but improvising on piano during songs is often very creative for me.

I would have been dead in the water without this band. Tinkling the ivories and working on songs has kept me from needing to be resuscitated as a creator and I am grateful for it.

Appendix 4: Extract from a Diary November 2016

From: Eugene Murphy

Sent: 18 November 2016 17:51

To: Eugene Murphy <eugene@lli.ie>

Subject: FW: DIARY

Dear Diary,

I am sorry to say that I haven't thought much about my creative self recently. So many things to do but this should be a priority. I like the idea of evocative ethnography which I have been reading about. It is difficult to think that music does not stir the emotions. I think that is the spiritual part in me. I like getting in touch with what I have always perceived as the mystery behind the music, that divine part that we can't quite explain. It seems that in the exchange of artistic and creative ideas that I step inside that mystery and hope that I can create melody and sound that float deep inside the unconscious mind of the listener. Maybe this is the blue note of O Riada that I spoke about earlier. But is my blue note.

It is the plaintiff idiom of Irish music, the haunting notes that are often sparse and melancholic. Maybe, I hanker after these motifs because I like the solitariness that they evoke. Maybe this is the solitariness of all humankind. This may be my **unum solum** moment. In fact even at this early stage I envisage a piece by this name which would inspire my creative lines and notes. It is a cold and lonely phrase but there something that I considered beautiful in the image of being solitary. For me it is delicate and perfect, dignified and reflective. I am not afraid of this type of aloneness because its essence I believe that it underpins my creativity.

Solitary, Alone....I suppose that is what a diary is as I unpack my destiny on the plate of an email. It is utterly chilling to dig deep into the recesses of your mind. I wonder does a child have this feeling or if that fact that there is little history and experience in the mind of a child that it is never alone and never solitary.

Writing this diary feels like writing poetry. I suppose like Patrick Kavanagh he felt profoundly on his own outside Billy Brennan's barn from a type of self-imposed alienation which I recognise too where you are 'different' and the moment that you not only identify it but admit it to yourself then you are truly an artist. For me it means a kind of over sensitivity, and emotion filled state that doesn't do anyone any good but it is what shapes the notes and sounds you make, the images you dream up and the way you want the world to be.

I am of this world but not in this world sometimes. My notes steer me inwards, not outwards, to a realm that sometimes is an echo of what I feel in that moment or it is something mute - sounds and music that never seems to reach where I am. Total frustration as I meander from one musical idea to the next rejecting one after the other until it is a futile exercise that I leave behind in favour of doing something mundane. The act of doing something ordinary is almost like a punishment for not creating 'well' for not finding the ineffable mood, or sound, or chord or groups of notes, sounds and chords. Maybe it is feng shui.

My piano is not facing the right way; someone is listening to my feeble attempts at creating. I'm bored, I'm annoyed. I will try again.

It is the trying again that I recognise as the artist in me. It is a compulsion to make my mark....find something eloquent that I will be satisfied with as reaching the level of a creative work that I can stand over. I'm going to stop now....because I've never found it. But I will come back and repeat the process all over again being unum and solum.

Appendix 5 DISCOURSE March 20th 2019

Steve Mary Eugene: Preparation for the second performance

EE: Eugene, interviewer
SE: Steve
MY: Mary
LY: Lucy

EE: One of the ways is that, you know, that these could be interludes between pieces which are silent, but which, you know, give the audience the opportunity to deepen and focus and then it goes onto the next piece and then maybe there's another piece of dance video.

SE: Yes. Yes.

EE: And then there might be a piece of dance video that we're actually improvising to, you know, that's our response to as well, you know. Just to try and see it, to examine different ways of treating the video in the space.

SE: Yes. Yes. I mean it could, as you say, the footage could play in silence between, kind of relatively kind of projected episodes of sound and all of a sudden, you know, the audience is able to just kind of repose in that gentle movement and the flow of that, that movement, and in the visual rather than the sonic. So it's almost as if it kind of cleanses the aural palate, if you like. So certainly -

EE: That's one.

SE: - it could function in that way, but I know for myself, as I watched the movement, the footage that Lucy had started to layer like that, I was thinking about dimensions of sound.

MY: Yes.

SE: Grades of sound, if you like. But also thinking because of the movement itself and because I kind of I know the processes, like I feel as if I'm familiar with the processes that create the movement, it's an analogue to my own process and so you know, I'm already kind of moving with it.

MY: Yes.

SE: Vocally, sonically.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: I can hear how that might work.

EE: Should we try something? Just to...

SE: We could do. Now, I'm not warmed up.

EE: Oh, of course.

SE: Because I wasn't really expecting to do much sounding, so I'll have to take account of that.

EE: Yes, yes.

SE: But yes, why not? Why not? I'm happy to.

MY: Oh, it's just a matter of I guess how to use the time so.

EE: Yes, yes, exactly.

SE: Yes. No. Definitely, we might as well be as productive as we need to be.

MY: Yes. Aim to be or else, you know, a different plan maybe. I'll work a little bit with Lucy and see if we can kind of pull something out of this, so by the end of today -

SE: Yes, yes.

MY: - before you guys leave that we sort of know -

EE: Yes.

MY: - if we have something or if we haven't.

EE: Yes.

MY: I mean the other thing that's coming to my mind, Eugene, as well, and Steve, is just in terms of, you know, thinking about the space in there and, you know, the potential of, you know, maybe it's this, you know.

EE: Block.

MY: Block.

SE: Yes.

MY: Is somewhere in the space and, you know, that it's empty, white block for a long time or, you know, then you have to deal with these objects in the space that maybe have nothing on them.

EE: Yes.

MY: And then something comes on them or, you know. So it's... And I'm kind of saying that because it's kind of directly from an experience also of having the idea of something on the screen in a space, but there's nothing on it and then there's maybe, you know -

SE: Yes.

MY: - let's say for example, the sound, but then the image comes and then it goes and what that feels like. And I just remember a context where we recognise that actually it's really difficult not to have something on that object.

SE: On, absolutely.

MY: Otherwise -

SE: What does it become when there's nothing projected on it?

MY: Yes.

SE: It becomes something different, doesn't it?

MY: It becomes something different. Exactly.

SE: It's an -

MY: It's an object then.

SE: Absolutely. Yes.

MY: And that and the projector light which has to be on -

SE: Absolutely. Yes, yes.

MY: - because -

EE: Yes. It has to be ready.

MY: - you can't just turn it on -

SE: Yes, absolutely.

MY: - two minutes before the show. Or you can't just pull the piece of cardboard from the front of the projector.

SE: Ah yes.

MY: You know, all these kind of -

SE: Yes.

MY: - things -

SE: Well.

MY: - that become -

EE: Yes.

MY: - things -

EE: Yes, no.

MY: - in the space.

SE: Well, funny enough, I was just starting to turn my attention to those very issues.

MY: Yes.

SE: What I was thinking -

MY: Yes.

SE: - and it relates to this -

MY: Yes.

SE: - so we're talking about various kinds of presences within the space.

MY: Yes.

SE: - objects, people, you know.

MY: Yes, yes.

SE: And I was just starting to think about the relationship there.

MY: Yes.

SE: But you've actually pointed to something else, which is, you know, which moves us forward still further.

MY: Yes.

SE: At least gets us to question -

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: - some interesting things. I now am starting to get a sense if we are wanting to create a performance environment which is installational.

MY: Yes.

SE: Install.

MY: Yes.

SE: I think that our physical presence in the space -

MY: Yes.

SE: - starts to become in a sense less important. So by that, I mean that the issue of our visibility within the space is something that we can play with here. So I'm thinking that whereas, you see, in a concert setting, of course, you know, spots on the two performers, you know. Well, that makes absolute sense. That makes absolute sense. We want the audience to focus on the performers and therefore on the performance. But here we're creating something very, very different. We are creating an effect, an immersive wash of sound and the image and light and I think therefore that we should be kind of partially in shadow, kind of almost enigmatic, peripheral, but slightly mysterious figures within the space. And you could make a case therefore for saying that the important presence in the space all the way through the piece is image. So it could be that, you know, that the screen, that the footage just loops right through the piece and that we find various ways of relating to it. Now, the text, as you can, you know, as you might have gathered, clearly kind of connects with what's happening there.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes, it does, yes.

SE: And as we were saying, our own process in sound will also do that. So it's almost like... Focus in terms of presence should never be kind of too sharp. The audience is really free to experience all of the elements, the lighting, these images which are, you know, which are now we're making them less and less distinct and therefore we can, I think that we should then make sure that we don't then confuse the space or the audience's experience by then suggesting actually well, it's a concert performance with, you know, with a bit of film of it. So I think that we could take a more, if you like, enigmatic role visually ourselves by not being kind of quite fully revealed. So we're therefore saying to the audience, well, yes, we're here and we're creating this sound, but our physicality is not the issue here. The physicality is here. Everything that we want to suggest physically is here. It's in the image and in that respect, it also then, although they won't know that it's you necessarily, that will be revealed at a certain point. So in a sense, it's your enigmatic presence and movement in film within the space at all times. So we are a trio all the way through. So I mean that's just something that, you know, that started to occur to me in response to a couple of questions that were coming up. I mean what do you think?

EE: Well, I like the idea of the trio and the presence.

MY: Yes.

EE: That's interesting. That's very interesting.

MY: Yes.

EE: And also because it gives a certain, evokes a certain mood of softness or -

SE: Yes.

EE: - no sharp definitions, that it's all, you know, to be experienced, isn't it?

SE: And I think that we through the sound can in a sense give context to this. The audience I think will interpret what they're seeing in different ways according to how we are sounding.

EE: It doesn't strictly have to be 45 minutes, but just longer than 30, longer than the last one.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: There's no sort of... So.

MY: I mean that's one thing that would come to my mind in response to that, Steve, would just what the experience of unchanging material because we won't have the 45 minutes. You know, I mean certainly it would be kind of something that cycles around, which would probably be at a certain point recognisable as a cycle around.

SE: Yes.

MY: Which is ok as repetition, but how does that, can that really sustain itself over something like 45, let's say 40, 30 or whatever minutes? If we have, randomly, seven to eight, I don't know how many minutes we have and we'll say that loops around, is it too constant? Is it over-constant in its texture?

SE: Well.

MY: If it, you know, it could become the kind of the bang in people's, you know, experience, the thing that you know, doesn't go away.

SE: Well, I think if you had a more distinct presence. So if there was some kind of narrative. It's not like there's a narrative so people will go oh my god, they've started that again. We're back to the beginning.

MY: Yes.

SE: This is just looping and I don't think that, gosh, how do we know these things?

MY: I know.

SE: But I'm just thinking about how I might react to that.

MY: Yes.

SE: And I think actually if I got a sense of repetition or if I was just, if I just felt that it was somehow continuous in another way -

MY: Yes.

SE: - I think I would find that kind of quite mesmerising.

MY: Yes.

SE: Now, remember, that seems to be unchanging, but as I was saying, I think it becomes re-contextualised by the sound. We will move through a series of phases in the sound -

MY: Yes.

SE: - which I think takes some of the responsibility away from this in that set.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, it carries its own meaning, but then it, as I say, it will be re-contextualised.

MY: Yes. Yes. I mean totally. I totally hear. Like it's something. It's -

EE: Hard to.

MY: It's hard to know until you actually sit there with it and say because sometimes you know that wonderful way in which, you know, something... You recognise what something is doing by virtue of the fact that something else comes into it.

SE: Yes, yes.

MY: So I'm just even visually, so if that keeps going as a continuous unchanging cycle, right? Or a presence in the space that does that thing, it does no more than staying with that cycle of image, right? That's a very particular kind of rhythm that yes, contextualises the sound in a particular way and the sound intersects with it.

EE: Yes, absolutely. Yes.

MY: That's the job. But I'm just wondering, you know, what happens after 20 minutes of that if that becomes something else in an image? Then that's kind of also a huge potential in terms of the arc of something. So they're kind of just choices really, aren't they? And it's hard to know what the impact of -

SE: Yes, absolutely.

MY: - either. I mean if it was, for me, I guess because it's just hard to know. It could be perfect or else it could also feel like in the context of people being asked to sit for a duration of time, they don't have the... They're not in a position to

choose how long they're going to stay with something or the seating position either, if the seating positions are kind of multiple.

SE: That is true. Yes.

MY: And so if their engagement is quite, you know, you know, there are certain restrictions. Like we're asking people to sit there for 45 minutes with it. You know, it's not like it's an installation where they can walk in like you go in and you say ok, I can stay for an hour and 15 minutes. Somebody else will have thought I really, I'm with it for 15 -

SE: Yes.

MY: - and I'm done.

SE: Yes.

EE: Yes.

MY: So I mean...

SE: But the sound will be changing.

MY: Yes.

SE: Over that span of time.

MY: Yes. And that's the question. Is that enough? We don't know.

SE: Well, we just don't know and we never do.

MY: Yes.

SE: Do we?

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: You know, and that's one of the things about performance, isn't it?

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, we make these pieces and we have a certain tension -

MY: Yes.

SE: - in our thinking.

MY: Yes.

SE: But we never quite know. Well, maybe that would only be revealed say at Q&A.

MY: Yes. Exactly. Yes, yes, yes.

EE: But some of the visuals could be stills. It doesn't always have to be moving and moving, you know.

MY: Yes.

EE: It could certainly be a still.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: You know?

MY: Yes. Yes. Because I think the question of stillness.

EE: And that gives the eye a rest -

MY: Silence.

EE: - from the movement.

MY: Yes.

EE: A still.

SE: I mean what do you think, Lucy?

LY: Yes.

MY: Just sorry, we didn't -

LY: Oh no, you're fine. Oh yes. Sorry, so they know. Yes. No. My instinct is not even have movement playing continuously, just to have moments where it kind of... You might literally come in and just see a moment of a thing, the same way that you'd have a moment of a sound.

SE: Yes.

LY: Have a moment of a bit of visuals. It might literally be, you know, a movement of the head or something and then it breathes out again.

SE: Yes.

LY: So I mean like in a big kind of building in like bit by bit. That would be nice and maybe just kind of, maybe a little bit of the looks, you know. Like we can have at the beginning, you know.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes.

LY: Just kind of looking and talking and then it goes away, you know, so you kind of hint at the fact that this element is going to be present, but it's not completely there -

MY: Yes.

LY: - from the very beginning.

MY: Yes.

LY: And I wouldn't even use the layers from the start. I'd have moments.

MY: Yes.

LY: And then add the layers.

MY: Yes.

LY: But that's my...

MY: Yes.

SE: That's very interesting. That's very interesting. So then going back to having to talk about the issue that you raised about -

MY: Ok.

SE: - what is the screen? And you know, we're talking about experience and the audience experiences. How are they going to experience the blank screen or does that not become a problem for them? Does that just represent the absence of something in those moments? And that in itself, if you like, is a thing.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, that's a concept, isn't it?

MY: Yes.

SE: To, you know.

MY: Yes.

SE: And there might be an emotion attached to that.

MY: Yes.

SE: Or a memory attached to that for individuals.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: It's so hard to judge, isn't it?

MY: Yes. Because sometimes we just notice that they're there and then we just move on.

EE: Move on.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know, and then something comes on it and our attention goes to it and then something goes off it and you know. So it has the potential to just resolve itself for sure, but it's good to think about it.

SE: Yes, it is.

MY: For sure because, you know, or what the object is.

SE: Yes.

MY: Or is it on the floor? Is it projected on the floor?

SE: Yes.

MY: You know?

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Or is it, you know, some sort of a screen that kind of moves as well or blows? Is it a curtain? You know, I mean -

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: - when you go to thinking about what it is -

EE: Yes.

MY: - as an object -

SE: Yes.

MY: - it kind of opens another series of potentials.

SE: It does.

MY: You know?

SE: Yes, yes.

MY: But then it's also like how to figure those things out so that they just don't look a bit ad hoc.

EE: Yes.

SE: But how would we then? How would we set about trying to judge that? Could it only be when everything is set up and then we... some of us sit out and...?

MY: And experiment. Yes. And make decisions.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: So -

MY: Yes.

SE: - would that be a strategy?

MY: Ideally -

LY: Yes.

MY: - you'd kind of feel -

LY: You have a few predictors.

SE: Yes.

MY: Ideally, test things out a little bit in that sense because it's a big element. When you bring in the screen or the object.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know, and then you have... How does a big white screen sit in relationship to piano and all those kind of choices?

SE: Yes.

MY: Are kind of really exciting.

SE: Exactly.

MY: But kind of need the time to figure them out.

EE: Yes. Yes.

SE: Yes. Yes. Yes.

EE: Well, would it be possible then to have a number of options, you know, where you have, as you say, Lucy, little segments of movement that then eventually become dimensional?

LY: Yes.

EE: Where you have all this, you know, crossover -

LY: Yes.

EE: - of visuals?

LY: And then you have early repetition as well.

EE: And repetition, yes.

SE: Yes.

LY: Look for where they happen in another way.

SE: Yes, yes. Ah yes, yes.

EE: And then we could see how we can do that.

SE: So obviously then we cannot do that now. We know that we can't do that now.

LY: Give me 10 minutes.

SE: Oh.

LY: I will go see.

SE: Wow.

MY: I want to go see some elements of, you know, layering we're working on.

SE: Yes, yes.

MY: And maybe either, if you don't feel warmed up, Steve, then maybe, but even hearing some sounds.

SE: Yes.

MY: See what happens.

SE: Yes. I was just going to say to Eugene, I mean -

MY: Yes.

SE: - you know, I mean I'm already starting to engage with that.

MY: Yes.

SE: And to make some sounds.

MY: Yes.

SE: And I'm sure you are.

EE: Why don't we do it this way?

MY: Yes.

EE: You need about 10, 15 minutes with Mary maybe just to judge -

LY: Yes.

EE: - it a little bit.

LY: Yes.

EE: You need to warm up.

SE: Yes.

LY: Yes.

EE: So we do it that way.

MY: Yes.

EE: You know, so you can.

SE: Ok.

MY: Yes. And then a little play.

LY: Just to experiment a little.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes. Well, that's, yes, absolutely. Why not?

MY: I mean -

SE: Why not?

MY: - because what I was kind of saying, and in some ways, you know, like this is also, I'm having all these conversations not to make the thing wider, but also for the experience, Eugene, in terms of being -

EE: Exploring.

MY: - in the process.

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: No, it's fantastic.

MY: If we were in this, in the context of more time and it being a project, you know, these are the questions that we'd have to dig so far into.

EE: Yes.

MY: So we would kill everybody about.

EE: And kill each other.

MY: And kill each other about. But we'd have to go there.

EE: Yes. Yes. Yes.

MY: But it's great to just say ok, we're lightly touching on them because they're relevant. We know we won't be able to resolve -

SE: Yes.

MY: - everything that we want to resolve, but I think it's really kind of important that we're touching on them and we're not taking for granted that any of these things can just arrive and work or you know.

SE: No, absolutely.

MY: And I think it's also -

SE: It's not as if we're just kind of stitching stuff together without thinking about the process.

MY: Exactly, exactly.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Exactly.

SE: Yes.

MY: But I just wanted to because what's coming to my mind as well of course is Cinter. Do you see Cinter, Katala?

LY: What was the...?

MY: With the video pieces.

LY: Oh yes, yes, yes, yes. I've got it.

MY: You filmed it. Of course you filmed it, yes. Exactly, yes. Of course you filmed it.

Appendix 6 DiSCOURSE April 10th 2018

Preparation for The First Performance

EE: Eugene
SE: Steve
OR: Oscar

SE: - be successful somewhere.

OR: Yes.

SE: We then share a performance that comes out of the progression, but quite often, in that point in the performance, we then abandon some of the principles that we started with. So we know that the collaboration is in that moment that a sum total, not the sum total, yes, but a sum total of what, say, both parties, the duo.

EE: Yes.

SE: But what they bring is based on their own experience.

OR: Yes.

SE: So what about the experience of the separate but shared experience of the performance?

OR: Yes.

SE: So you will experience our performance in a different way to me. You will know well, we are creating a piece together. You know, then it starts to bring us to the interesting question of where we reside where our own individual elements which we share in that collaboration, where we reside within that.

EE: Yes.

SE: Which then gives us our own experience.

OR: Yes. Which is just related to that question that Eugene is asking about -

EE: Yes, what is... I mean the core question is, you know, how I articulate what's actually happening during the collaboration and then in the performance as well.

SE: Yes.

EE: How we articulate, give sense to that.

SE: Yes.

EE: That makes sense.

SE: Yes.

EE: Yes.

OR: And I said to him that one response in terms of our practice research is that it's part of that question will be answered by the performance itself, not what comes before, not what follows, but the performance itself. So it will be articulated by itself, by, you know, by the performance.

SE: Yes.

OR: And also then you will have to re-articulate in words what happens in the performance, so it will be very important to capture your -

SE: My experience, yes, yes.

OR: - experience of it.

SE: No, absolutely, and that's exactly what I was saying.

OR: So I was going to suggest that even I know that after, it's going to be difficult, but in what way can you capture the deed after? You know, you know ourselves, I don't like doing anything after. I don't like it, but we do, you know, but I don't like necessarily debriefing because it takes away. But even if it happens the next day or something, where there is this... Where you engage with experience deeply so that then that can be shared in the thesis too and that will be very important and central to answering that question.

SE: I'd just like to say that I actually do enjoy the kind of the immediate Q&A experience because I'm still in the zone of making.

EE: Yes.

SE: And so what I find is the reflections that I might make a day or so after will be slightly different. I actually find that the poetry of the experience, of making the experience, and for me at least finds its most immediate expression in those moments afterwards because I am still in a sense I'm still in that somatic place and I'm still... I'm then still feeling the immediate kind of -

OR: Yes.

SE: - resonances or reverberations of the piece and of the piece as experienced. So it's not separate at that point. In a sense, it's still live. I think the following day, I'm treating what I experience as an object.

OR: Yes. Yes. Yes.

EE: Yes.

OR: Well, you said something quite important because it's important to capture what happens in the performance from the point of view of, not of you, but of everything else.

SE: Absolutely.

OR: And so some people do focus groups. Some of them do kind of ask the audience as they go out to give a kind of a verbal impression of it or to interact in some way or a combination of both, focus groups and the... But a Q&A could be quite interesting too, like with people there and then recording that in some way. Yes. Because that would be your... You might not need the questionnaire after or you can combine it with people now leaving and expressing what they felt. So Q&A is not necessarily that. The Q&A is more about finding out, people finding out more about the process and that, rather than necessarily than them expressing their opinion.

SE: Well, what I try to do now, bearing that in mind absolutely, so the idea of Q&A of kind of a process that starts with questions.

OR: Yes.

SE: I actually prefer to have the responses first of all. So I will ask for responses.

OR: Ok. Ok.

SE: And so -

EE: The questions grow out of that then.

SE: Absolutely. Absolutely.

OR: I'm just concerned that, and that's very valid and I think that would be a way, not necessarily that you have to follow it, but that would be a way to capture all that responses and Q&As. But I know audiences here sometimes are very...

EE: Yes.

OR: They don't want to share.

SE: Yes.

EE: Yes.

OR: So maybe it could be a combination of that and then at the exit of the whole thing.

EE: Or maybe they could write their impression.

OR: They could.

EE: Which is -

OR: But a lot of people won't engage in that, you know.

SE: Yes.

OR: But you could also present that as an option.

EE: Yes.

OR: And then the other is, which I saw in Diane Davis performance, is that there's someone at the outside, at the door of the theatre with the Zoom recorder.

EE: Yes.

OR: So any words you have for Eugene, for example.

SE: Yes. Yes.

OR: And so they'll be able to say something and it's more immediate rather than sitting and writing.

EE: Yes, I know what you mean, yes.

SE: Would it be worthwhile then to actually, to announce prior to the performance, to announce that kind of process -

OR: Yes.

SE: - is, you know, is -

OR: Oh, defendant, yes.

SE: - involved?

OR: Yes.

SE: And is part of the event?

OR: Yes. It will have to be announced so people -

SE: Yes.

OR: - know, especially in terms of time, that they will be there an hour, we'll say.

SE: Yes. Yes.

OR: You know, because performance and -

SE: Yes.

OR: - Q&A and so for example, I can chair the Q&A, you know, just because I'm the supervisor. I can chair the Q&A and then so we keep it to, let's say, 20 minutes.

SE: Yes.

OR: And then the next 10 minutes, people can either write or record. I mean Diane added something interesting. I don't know how it will go, but she kind of had like pieces of paper and crayons and -

SE: Oh yes.

OR: - so she asked audience to respond -

SE: Yes.

OR: - in any way they wanted -

SE: Yes.

OR: - with writing or paint -

SE: Yes. Yes.

OR: - or drawings.

SE: Yes.

OR: It could be the case, you know. I just feel that, I don't know, I feel that perhaps it's obviously I'm open to all form of expression, you know.

SE: Yes.

OR: It'll be for you to decide.

EE: Yes.

OR: These are options, you know. But certainly a Q&A where we start with responses from the audience and then questions. You have already spoken. Now the audience, it's their time to ask, you know, and I'm sure if Mel is there, you know, for sure, he'll probably. Although examiners don't necessarily -

EE: Engage.

OR: - engage.

SE: Oh, that's right.

OR: But yes, so I need to find out, you know, because they like keeping, actually, I find this very artificial, but they like keeping here the contact between external examiners or internal examiners very separate, you know, or minimum. Ridiculous, you know, I think there's no bias. I do remember that when I was at

one of the performances, I did not speak with him. Just nor was I asked. I just went and left.

SE: Are there issues of protocol involved and how do you refer?

OR: I think so. We can find out more.

SE: Speaking with them.

OR: Yes, but yes, because it's about probably what the examiner will, how they could influence certain aspects of it.

SE: Ah yes.

EE: Yes.

SE: Of course.

OR: I actually, given an opinion, you're already influencing the process.

SE: Yes, you are. Absolutely. I see.

OR: And so the idea is to remain as objective as possible and not to say anything until the whole thing is finished.

SE: Yes. Yes. Absolutely, makes sense.

OR: It doesn't mean they won't take notes or they might not take notes, but not necessarily interact. But yes, so think about it.

EE: Yes. Yes.

OR: You know, and you know, if there's anything in particular that you're used to as well do or that might enrich -

EE: Yes.

OR: - that process, then by all means, share it. But I think it will be beneficial, you know, to have a Q&A at the end because I was telling Steve as well that, you know, we will have to do some advertising for this and then people sometimes do posters. I don't know how you feel about that, you know. It's up to yourself.

EE: Yes. Yes.

OR: But you know, to put around and invite other PhD candidates and invite, you know, send an email. I mean the PR here generally sends an email normally to the campus community, but if you have something more...

EE: Visual, yes.

OR: Visual.

EE: Yes.

OR: That can be sent. It will need to be done pretty quickly though to be able to send it at least -

EE: Electronically?

OR: - two weeks. Electronically, yes. Two weeks in advance and then the week, that week.

EE: Yes. Yes.

OR: You know, and maybe also send, I would think it would be beneficial to send personal invitations to certain faculty members that you would like to have there. Invitees like that.

EE: Yes.

OR: It could be beneficial, you know. I'm just trying to think key people here. I mean by all means invite Mary Noonan.

EE: Of course, yes.

OR: And invite Paul Johnson.

EE: Yes, yes.

OR: Whether they'd come or not, that's a different thing, you know, yes. Invite Robert. Even if it's not a big dance, it's not the point.

EE: Yes, yes.

OR: You know, because their insights could be very powerful, like if they decide to give feedback.

EE: Yes. Yes.

OR: It could be quite... Since they are kind of examples of case studies. Invite Monica Spencer, regardless of -

EE: Yes. Yes.

OR: - how things went, you know. Yes, I think it wouldn't be a bad idea, you know, to invite key people.

EE: That, yes, yes.

OR: Even invite as well Gerry from the ICO.

EE: Oh yes, yes.

- OR: You don't know him, but I mean you can still send him an email and explain, just in the email you would explain that this is what you're going to do, that you're doing it between, maybe that would just... Rather than me inviting because it doesn't...
- EE: Oh yes.
- OR: But yes, so anyway, I don't want to kind of, but these are important things to consider too, you know.
- EE: Yes, yes, yes. We need a constituent group of people.
- OR: We are very close to it. We are very close to it. Yes. And then this issue we were just talking about because I know that we're conscious of time. We have very few minutes only, but they say yes, you're learning, you were saying something, that you started talking about it.
- SE: Yes. Well, actually, I was just telling Oscar, as he's just said, we were talking about, you know, this process of untraining, unlearning and able to kind of relearn, to learn fresh, if you like, within this methodology, within this practice. And so I think I mentioned to you yesterday, Eugene, that the work that I've been doing with improvising choirs has been really instructive here and I think I was talking to you about -
- EE: That's right.
- SE: - how we developed a kind of an improvised language, a language of sound with people who had no musical training whatsoever. None whatsoever. People who actually could not sing conventionally really benefitted and had not done so. The miracle was that you somehow, having advertised the choir, that we somehow drew those people. I still don't know how. But we somehow drew kind of grannies from, you know, from Scotland Road in the north end of Liverpool and a great-grandma as well, kind of guys who had been dockers and, you know, kind of sung a couple of songs in a pub on the Dock Road kind of 40 years ago, you know. They came along somehow. It was so interesting the way it evolved. But we started actually from, as I think I mentioned, we started just from the will to utter, simply to utter. Now, I thought to myself ok, kind of working class Scousers are as opinionated as you'll get, you know. I mean Scousers talk. They exchange. And you know, Liverpool people are often kind of pretty noisy. And so that was my starting point really.

So I started to, in effect, kind of construct "scores" out of speech really, out of the impulse to speak out. So we started with, we started sessions, some sessions, some of the early sessions as this approach started to evolve for me, we started simply with people reporting what was in their lives, what they... So it was an open forum in which people were able to give utterance to what concerned them. And then that grew into something. We then started to make ourselves as a group aware of that as sound and then our rule initially was that only one person spoke at a time and then we explored the possibility of having two people talking at the same time, but not in dialogue. They were talking in parallel.

EE: Yes.

SE: And we started to get into very, very interesting places. All of a sudden, a certain sensitivity started to grow within the group, a sensitivity to sound, the patterns of speech as sound, a kind of rhythm.

EE: Yes, fabulous.

SE: And it was that really that ultimately informed the performance that we made within the installation, you know.

OR: It's a fabulous practice though, you know.

SE: No, absolutely, no, it was so rich and instructive. So people who had felt that they actually not only could not sing, they couldn't be artists, but that they actually didn't have anything to say. We addressed that issue. We went straight to that issue. I said look, there are people in here, let's be honest, some of us are struggling here to make ends meet. How do we feel about that? This was an open forum right now. Talk about it, you know, or hold your peace and listen to others. And then, you know, we just started to develop a methodology, if you like, which -

EE: Yes.

SE: - then was a form of scoring and it became not just kind of very effective as sound, if you like, but it also became sort of deeply engaging.

EE: Yes.

SE: People would actually, people would end up in tears. And there was one particular occasion when a woman, she was probably in her fifties and she later revealed to the group that she'd been in a very abusive relationship, domestic relationship for years and she said there was this moment when one of the men in the group started to speak alongside of her and what he started to do was to in a sense echo what she was saying, so they moved from being in parallel, so not being in conversation, into a particular type of dialogue. And she stopped and she was in tears and she said when I hear his voice, so she's referring to her abuser, her husband -

EE: Yes.

SE: - it's not kind like that. He's not interested in what I've got to say. He just wants to put me in my place. That's the first time a man has spoken to me for years without wanting to destroy me.

OR: Jesus.

SE: So the levels of engagement from that moment onwards, the levels of engagement with the project and what it could bring were immense from that point on.

OR: And that's the point of, because the question I asked Steve was as we came in, we come from a very framed training, a very, very established training and then we discover this other practice and we started to kind of explore it and expand it. But we teach this practice to a lot of people, like in that case -

EE: Yes.

OR: - who do not come from any sort of training background and then in the case of here, for example, that we train artists.

SE: Yes.

OR: And in terms of your thinking and doing and then for them, it causes, which is not the case in this other perhaps as strong.

SE: There was no un-training.

OR: Yes. Yes. There's no un-training. In this case, it's fighting against -

SE: Yes.

OR: - this other training.

SE: Absolutely.

OR: And it raises so many questions in them, you know. What am I going to do with this thing that you are teaching me? You're asking me to, without asking them, but you are asking me to forget or not consider.

SE: But quite naturally, you know, we talked about the emotion involved in that, in that particular episode, but there's also emotion involved in investment in your training.

OR: Yes.

SE: And in what you know.

OR: Yes.

SE: And what in a sense provides you with security -

OR: Yes.

SE: - in what you do. And so sometimes I don't think we pay enough attention to that.

OR: Yes.

SE: Sometimes, you know, we know we're talking about collaboration, getting, you know, a teaching relationship, but it's a relationship nonetheless. And so relationship has to be built.

OR: Yes. Yes.

SE: And sometimes I think we perhaps rush into this, into... We take people too quickly into that space of un-learning.

OR: Yes.

SE: Without the consideration that that means to them.

OR: Yes.

SE: And...

OR: And then just to connect it with what's going on here, it's this idea of what is it that we are presenting, you know, as well in terms of what is it that you are presenting there?

SE: Yes.

OR: And how does it relate to your own background? You know, how you're going to connect this with where you're coming from and then the kind of the new-ish practice of improvising and improvising in collaboration, which is probably new to you, I don't know, or maybe relatively new, at least in terms of this kind of -

EE: Yes. Yes.

OR: - work. I am sure you have done it in organisations and so those are very important questions that the performance in both, meaning the performance itself and the journey towards it and after it, will answer.

EE: Yes.

OR: And I think that the more you are analytical about that, the more that will become theory as we know.

EE: Yes, yes.

OR: Or knowledge because it should not end the observations. The observations will be crucial.

SE: Yes.

OR: But even more important is what you make of those, you know, what you make of those observations, you know. How you connect the bits and pieces. That's analysis, you know. And so and then that goes within training and the kind of the learning of this other, and kind of fighting, not fighting, but kind of going against perhaps even the instinct that you have.

EE: Yes, that's a big clash with that. Yes.

OR: For you, it's the chance and I think that will be central as well.

EE: Yes. The un-learning part.

OR: Yes. Yes.

EE: That when you sit down, you can't be a blank canvas in your head as to what shapes that you're going to do creatively.

OR: Yes. Yes.

EE: What you set out to delimit, you know, your training and -

OR: Yes.

EE: - you engage in a new way. So even the, what would I say, the tendency and propensity towards newness -

SE: Yes.

EE: - is the heart of the improvisational engagement.

SE: Yes.

OR: And challenge.

SE: Yes.

EE: And challenge, of course, yes.

SE: Yes. You see, I think when we talk about training, I think we need to contextualise that, so these are not just techniques that we learn. This is part of a kind of a paradigm and right at the heart of that paradigm is -

EE: It is, yes.

SE: - an aesthetic.

EE: Yes.

SE: And sound and its various qualities are right at the centre of that. So how do we judge success in terms of our ability to kind of replicate or focus our training?

OR: Yes.

SE: Well, one of the ways that we learned to judge it is in terms of how other people react to it. So we share, if you like, a vocabulary, an understand of what good

and bad sound is, desirable sound, undesirable sound, and we share, most of us share those ideas.

EE: But the challenge is that it's, sorry, go ahead.

SE: But what we do when we move into an area of, you know, of improvised sound is that we confront that aesthetic and that's deeply rooted. Again, we are invested. There's that issue of investment again. We become not just technically invested, but emotionally invested in that.

OR: Yes.

SE: And it's how we learn. That is how we have learned to judge whether or not we are being successful.

EE: Yes.

EE: All of a sudden, we move into a world in which well, my goodness me, you know, these are not beautiful sounds that I'm making. And I know that. I know that because they're not the kinds of sounds that I've been using. This is a different kind of vocabulary. This is a different sound. How do I judge whether I'm being successful in this? What is success?

OR: Yes. Yes, exactly.

SE: What is success and how can I judge it?

EE: Yes.

OR: It requires its own context again.

SE: It does.

OR: You have to recycle.

SE: A new context.

OR: New context.

SE: Absolutely. Absolutely.

OR: Now, sorry, but you need to go.

SE: Yes.

Appendix 7 DISCOURSE March 20th 2019

Preparation for the second performance

EE: Eugene
SE: Steve
MY: Mary

SE: And I suppose being in a space like this will add to it. We all know as performers that before we perform, we've already in a sense started a process of what you might call consecration, so we've appointed a time and a place and we agree to be there together. And then we arrive in the space and then we take account of the space and we've already in a sense started to make.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: And so I kind of feel the anticipation of that. I can feel it right now, which is not unlike what I feel just before a performance. And I always find that very exciting. So there's no fear in that. You know, I just feel the anticipation, you know.

EE: Definitely.

SE: Other performers sometimes feel different things, but I know from myself, I just feel this kind of great sense of privilege. Wow, you know.

MY: It reminds me of at the moment, I have, you know, part of something that I'm integrating in my own practice is the conversation around how I'm warming up in the studio.

SE: Ok.

MY: And you know, warm-up in some ways with dance, of course, it has a function in that you prepare the body, so your kind of muscles are a little bit limber so you don't injure yourself and all those things. But it's so, on so many levels, so much more than that of course. And so I have this kind of, I've had this over the last while with some of the people that I'm working with where in fact, the warm-up is the preparation for the performing. So it is part of the whole process of the work, whether it's the performing or the preparing to perform or the making. And it really shifts where... It shifts this question of what's important or where does, you know, something that might feel, you know, that we might put value on as important or the significant part of a process, it shifts that thinking entirely because, you know, the preparation and the finding in a warm-up, which is really, like you say, Steve, you arrive into a space. You're kind of taking the space in. There's kind of a listening and a finding that -

SE: Yes.

MY: - has to happen.

SE: Yes.

MY: An organisation every day because it's different every day ultimately. And that finding that gets, when I allow that kind of really openness to say, you know, ok, what am I really finding in the warm-up or what feels really necessary? Then that follows, that folds into whatever process I'm going into that day, whether it's rehearsing for a piece or whether it's a creative process. So that folding in from the very beginning -

SE: Yes.

MY: - of stepping into the space of something going to happen is just really important. And sometimes in dance, it's separate.

SE: Yes.

MY: We warm up.

SE: Yes.

MY: Because it's functional. We need to make sure that your bodies are flexible and prepared -

SE: Yes.

MY: - but it's just been really joyous in the last number of years, just really kind of, you know, getting clearer and clearer about what's necessary, you know. What's really necessary when you enter -

SE: Yes.

MY: - a room that's ready for something to happen, whether it's a rehearsal to happen or a performance to happen or a creative process to happen? I think I'm resonating, Steve, I think, with what you're recognising in this very moment as well of kind of stepping in here.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Saying ok.

SE: I'm so fascinated by what you've just said about preparation, if you like. I started to feel, as a trained singer, of course, your preparation and of course, you know, there'll be an analogue with dance too.

MY: Yes.

SE: The process that you go through.

MY: Yes.

SE: It in no way is designed to prepare you to enter into performance. So the space that is performance, it is simply there to warm the instrument up. As you say, to limber the instrument up. Well, ok, that's one thing. I've long since abandoned those sort of mechanical preparations for performance. For me, actually sometimes, I will deliberately not warm up in that way and then just see what can be made, where that leaves me. So there's... Sometimes I'm interested in working with the felt difficulty of that, so with the knowledge that actually I'm going to have to "warm the voice up" as I perform, but there's something very human about that anyway and there's something kind of situational about that too. So I'm really kind of very, very interested in kind of the metaphysics of performance, but also the metaphysics of being, of simply being. And here we are, you know, as performers, we place ourselves in a laboratory of that in a very, very public sense, you know.

MY: Yes. Yes. We do.

SE: So why should we always go into the space prepared in effect to do the same thing? And that's what that more mechanical form of kind of detached, almost kind of abstract preparation fails to do.

MY: Yes. Yes. Yes. And there's something also in terms of, of course, improvisation. There's, well, I think we'd call it the risk of becoming attached to what was prepared.

SE: Yes.

MY: Or you know -

SE: Exactly.

MY: - and so then, you know, because, you know, things, you know, nicely fix a little bit in some way, very loose fixing, but things reoccur or you know, and then, you know, how we kind of manage those things coming to the foreground, you know, in the, let's say, the performance, you know. So there is the over-preparation -

SE: Yes.

MY: - in terms of that, you know, how materials become over-prepared and we lose, I mean what is performance, you know? It's not what is performance, but you know, well, if we deal with too much of what's known, then we lose the sense of risk in the moment of performing.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And for me, when that risk is gone, then the space sort of closes in.

SE: Yes.

MY: And the kind of potential -

SE: Yes.

MY: - for the audience to kind of be with a finding.

SE: Yes.

MY: A place of finding, which is where I'm really interested in in a performance, when people are constantly finding. They never know and I think that's when I'm completely transfixed with my own experience in a piece.

SE: Yes. Absolutely.

MY: And like you know, I can view that.

SE: Yes.

MY: When it's known and it's fixed, I've no way in because there's no opportunity -

EE: Yes.

MY: - to bring my experience to the piece.

EE: Yes.

MY: But as an audience, I think that's what we have to do. Otherwise we're being told stuff.

EE: Yes.

MY: And you know, that's kind of too... That's, to me, you know, the challenge, that art isn't entirely about telling us anything.

EE: Yes.

MY: It's about giving us the potential of finding -

SE: Yes.

MY: - out something -

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: - new about ourselves or the world or -

SE: It's an enquiry.

MY: - this enquiry.

SE: It's a shared enquiry.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know.

SE: And that includes -

MY: Yes. We go into the gallery to see a painting -

SE: Yes.

MY: - so it can tell us something about, you know, a fact. We go somewhere else to find those things.

SE: Yes.

EE: Absolutely. Indeed.

MY: And sometimes when things are very fixed in performance, they feel like they're facts that are being delivered, you know. So then that's kind of, you know, the experience of like being in the presence of art, you know. I have to really kind of just figure that out when I'm in, you know, seeing work. So I think it's... But it goes back to, sorry, it's kind of gone off, but -

EE: No, no.

MY: - I mean I think it also goes back to the question of the preparation, how that gets built in and carried through when you go through the creative process and then you go through the moment where you're there.

SE: Yes.

MY: It's always then.

EE: It was interesting in the preparation for the first performance because I don't obviously have too many improvisation moments to call upon.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: But we had decided that, you know, Steve would be in situ and he would start.

MY: Yes.

EE: And he wouldn't start it, but he was there for a good five and a half minutes on his own.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: And the people who knew him would say but where's he due? Where's he due, you know?

MY: Yes.

EE: So there was what's going on? Like you know.

MY: Yes.

EE: So there was already the risk -

SE: Immediately, yes.

EE: - for them -

MY: Yes.

EE: - in this process, that they had to wait and the oh, what's going on? So their antennae were up because it wasn't what they expected.

MY: Yes.

EE: They expected me to come out.

MY: Yes.

EE: Sit at a piano and off it went.

MY: Absolutely.

EE: And it didn't happen like this.

SE: To be a pianist.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: So that didn't happen.

MY: Yes.

EE: So I think then they were more sensitised to travelling with what was going on in the performance in a more alert way because -

SE: Yes.

EE: - it hadn't just been a fixed I'm coming out to play here.

SE: Yes, yes.

- EE: So that's interesting in the space as well, you know, how you can engage the audience. Now, this was interesting because the audience was specific and a lot of them would have known me, but it does send a trigger, doesn't it, to how you can engage the audience as well in how you set up the space and the timing in the space as well?
- SE: Certainly, as far as the development of this project, as performance, as discourse, but also as performances is concerned, I think that we certainly have been wanting to include within that discourse the possibility of the questioning of conventional relationships with audience. So I mean one of the things that we talked a little about yesterday, we were brainstorming obviously, but one of the things we talked about was, you know, was the idea of dispensing with the seating system here and then ok, well, you do that, well, you make a big decision because all of a sudden then, that traditional configuration between, you know, the performer and the performed to is changed. And here we are, we're talking about space again. We're talking about configuring spaces -
- MY: Yes.
- SE: - in particular ways and establishing certain kind of relationships, some of which are visual. They might be visual and dramatic/theatrical. It would also open up the possibility of our creating some kind of performance installation even with audiences kind of more active, even kind of sculptural presences within that new space. So I think that's certainly a question that we'll be wanting to find out as to and that we must, you know, there will need to be some fixed elements.
- MY: Yes.
- SE: As we know.
- MY: Of course.
- EE: Yes.
- MY: Always, yes.
- SE: And of course, you know, that's an important one. You know, we start with the space, you know. What is it we're wanting to convey and how should we do it?
- MY: Yes. Absolutely. I mean that really, I mean because in a way, those fixed elements, those choices, whether it's, you know, that you don't arrive in for the first five minutes.
- SE: Yes.
- MY: You know, or that people are asked to really reconfigure, you know, their expectation of where they might sit. Like all those choices, you know, and those elements that get, you know, reasonably fixed are, you know, give supports then. They're containers, you know. They hold the freedoms -

SE: Yes.

MY: - that you need to find as a performer.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know.

EE: Yes.

MY: And if they're not there in a very clear way, then you know, it's problematic and it makes me ask the question, you know, also for Eugene because I think it's just a wonderfully exciting place to kind of be well, how far can I push the questions that I'm asking actually, you know? And if you're really asking a question about space, you know, and you're really asking, you know, about interrupting the expectation of what the performers or what the audience, you know, see as, you know, you and your experience as a pianist or something, that always gets me really excited about how far anyone, myself included, can push that, not for the sake of pushing it, but for, you know, but for really kind of seeing ok, well, what are the values of completing interrupting that question around space? And sometimes there's the right time to do that and sometimes, you know, there's not for various reasons. But also in the context of which you're doing it in terms of research would feel like the ideal context to kind of try and push it as far as you can.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: You know.

SE: Yes.

MY: Because in certain ways, you know, there's not expectations around, from any other kind of -

EE: Yes.

MY: - you know.

EE: External.

MY: External, yes. And so that's, you know, the conversation around that you've obviously been having around space or audience. You know, really feels like it opens a door into even the questions around moving or sculpture or other disciplines, you know, and what that brings. Anyway, I'm not even fully, I don't know exactly, but I'm just kind of saying oh yes, that makes a lot of sense.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: You know, in terms of even the conversation around interdisciplinarity or, you know, yes, what happens when you bring the word 'sculpture' into the room?

SE: Yes.

MY: Because you know, time of course is so different with sculpture. I've just, you know, the piece that I just worked on, Eugene with a sculptor, you know. Of course, you know, sculptures unfold over time, but not in the moment of the performance, you know. And so those kind of relationships are so fascinating once they come in and of course it's also like [Snore noise] and then things kind of come in, but it's lovely to feel that it can go there.

EE: Yes.

MY: And then of course things kind of come in obviously because -

SE: Yes.

MY: - they have to.

SE: Let's vote for that kind of expansion for this.

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes, yes, exactly.

SE: We know we can distil it.

MY: Totally.

SE: And there's a thing about sculpting, you know, using -

MY: Yes.

SE: - you know, an analogy, you know. They keep kind of chipping away.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, and eventually they, you know, they have the image.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: You know, somehow it's completing itself.

MY: Yes.

SE: Suggesting what it needs to suggest.

MY: Yes.

SE: Capable of generating particular kinds of experience.

MY: Yes.

SE: For anybody who interacts with it and you know, for myself, performance, making performance is the most difficult thing that needs to be determined I think is the issue of what kind of experience I want to create.

MY: Yes.

SE: So you know, a space is an environment and, you know, we can configure that space in particular ways and in so doing, we are able to condition or recondition our own response to it. Our own responses as performance. But I think what we are able to do that audience can't do generally, although wow, let's talk about this as a possibility -

MY: Yes.

SE: - audience generally doesn't get to configure the space.

MY: Yes.

SE: Although I see no reason why that couldn't happen in certain circumstances. There's a whole bunch of other questions there.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: But as practitioners and with an awareness of those sorts of questions and of our own role within the making process, you know, we are free to make those choices, but I think we need to know as early as we can, although maybe not too early -

MY: Yes.

SE: - what it is we're wanting to offer here.

MY: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

EE: It's funny because like what springs to mind is this is like a pre-disciplinary conversation.

MY: Yes.

EE: Where each other's artistic expression is not really on the table, you know, in your individual. It's pre-that. It's like, and that's how an interdisciplinary, what would I say? Manifestation comes into being because we're talking about elements that could be from a scientific point of view like space and time.

SE: Yes.

EE: They're not exclusive to our performance.

SE: Issues of formation, for example.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: So the dialogue is like, it's almost like a pre-dialogue that you're bringing it towards something so that you can -

MY: Yes.

EE: - exchange, interact, cross over all those other elements, you know.

MY: Yes.

EE: So that's an interesting -

MY: Yes.

EE: - thought, isn't it?

MY: It is, yes.

EE: On this type of process.

MY: Yes.

EE: The dialogue that may be in pure collaboration or more a pure collaboration is when it's pre-disciplinary.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: It's prior to that, of course.

MY: Yes. Yes. Yes.

SE: You're right. You're absolutely right.

EE: So you don't come as a choreographer.

MY: Yes.

EE: Or an improviser, dancer or whatever -

MY: Yes.

EE: - term you want to use.

MY: Exactly.

EE: Or you don't come as a voice artist or a singer or as a pianist or composers and choreographers. We come before that with, I suppose, a sense of wanting to express something together.

SE: But you know Eugene, I can't help feeling that it's in that space that the artist resides. So the artist beyond even prior to those disciplines that reach.

MY: Yes.

SE: That we operate within, that we choose to operate within, you know.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: I mean ultimately the question has to be what is it that I'm engaged in? Why am I an artist? What do I hope to say about myself? What do I hope to say? Can I say something more universal than that? Well, you know.

EE: Well, you were saying something like that the last time. Why would I go on dancing if I couldn't break out of a choreographic style, that I couldn't make my own expression of this?

MY: Yes.

EE: My own way, you know.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: So it's interesting.

SE: Well, there's the will to authenticity.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. But it is about, it's questioning outside of the discipline, I think.

EE: Yes.

MY: You know, you're right, Eugene. It's about, you know, being able to kind of say ok, my questioning is not about referencing the discipline, you know. In some ways, it's really a much broader kind of questioning around, it's philosophical in a way as well, you know.

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes, it is philosophically. Yes.

MY: And there's something about what's underpinning the fact that the three of us are sitting in the room.

SE: Yes.

EE: Yes.

MY: Outside of anything to do with, you know, what we do or, you know, what we're experts in. But what's kind of underpinning it and those sort of foundations or scaffolding to me are kind of essential in any collaboration. So to me, I often

find really challenged in collaborations when I come into the room and the conversations are more about the discipline initially or the discipline or the concept even, you know, the ideas around, you know, whatever the ideas, whatever concept people arrive at, that they're dealing with in their work. And it always has to, if it starts there, it has to be pared itself away from that before it can come back into it, particularly if you're dealing with people who have different expertise because that expertise can also get in the way -

EE: Yes.

MY: - of kind of finding something much more kind of simple. But baseline or foundational.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: In people's drive to be in the room together. And I think finding that is kind of actually kind of where the fertile ground is.

SE: Absolutely.

MY: And then you can put any idea or concept maybe.

SE: Absolutely. Yes.

MY: And build that. And that's why sometimes, but maybe we talked about this, Eugene, or maybe it's a different kind of parallel conversation that I'm having with other people around time and creative practice. And this is a little thing that I have at the moment, particularly about dance because we've sort of got into a model of making dance, which is very focused around the production of work. So everybody's getting really skilled at producing work.

SE: Yes.

MY: And kind of going from the Arts Council application to the production. The Arts Council application to the production.

SE: Yes.

MY: And within that, there's rehearsal time.

SE: Yes.

MY: There's idea, there's rehearsal time and then there's delivery, but all the focus on the delivery and so in my kind of, you know, conversations with my fellow artists and peers that I have these conversations with that are, you know, incredibly sustained because we have to have them, you know, I say is creative practice in dance dead? You know, because what are the broader questions that we're asking outside of the question or the concept and the production, you know? I have an idea to make a work about this and then it's produced. That's all fine. That needs to happen, but if it happens repetitiously without creative

practice being really dug into, then we're losing ground in terms of what dance is saying.

SE: Yes.

MY: Or its potential for what it can say to the world.

SE: Yes.

MY: And so I think that's also going back to your, you know, did you call it pre-disciplinary almost?

EE: Disciplinary, yes, yes.

MY: In a way.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And that for me somehow ties in with the conversations around creative process. Like what is creative process, you know, in how we work and interdisciplinary?

EE: This is a little aside, but like you know, your impulse to create has manifested itself through dance.

MY: Yes.

EE: But in another lifetime, it might have been as a composer or a painter or a sculptor.

MY: Yes.

EE: It just happens to be this in whatever happened on your journey.

MY: Yes.

EE: Because I think your impulse is to create, come through a particular medium of expression artistically, but they might come through another one because you'll often find somebody who dances, maybe they write poetry or they do different things. So it's the expression that lies behind the actual medium that you now have developed a technical expertise in, but it's then, isn't it, what's behind that, you know, that you're communicating is in common often, you know?

MY: Which takes me to when we talked as well last time around this question, I think, Eugene, when I was explaining, Steve, that at a certain period in my kind of career and practice, I stopped dancing. I stopped performing because I had completely lost all, realised that I hadn't ever found the reason why I was performing.

SE: Yes.

MY: I just had recognised that I had no kind of grounded understanding of what I was doing and why. I was moving around the stage.

SE: Yes.

MY: Doing things that I was learning off and you know, trying to find some way of kind of doing this, you know, and I just, like I can't do this anymore. I just can't do it. But I knew that I had to continue to pursue the questions that I needed to ask in my work, which is why I went to film and I worked in film because I knew I had to find another way to ask the questions that I was asking. I just couldn't find that performance was giving it to me and so I worked in film because I thought, you know, there was something about that other discipline that maybe I could get a little closer to finding. You know, I had never worked with film, but I knew it was something about maybe detail that I was really interested in and I'm still really interested in and that perhaps the camera and the lens could support me to kind of pursue that question, not on the stage, but in a different way.

And so after years, probably, you know, 10 years also of kind of running, you know, my work through the lens and film and also keeping the body practice going, but not performing, you know, a number of years ago, four years ago, I found I think I'm ready to re-investigate what it is to perform. And then through the residency in Dance Limerick, I sort of, you know, went back into really enquiring into, you know, performance. But all the film work I would say directly emerges from my kind of, you know, expertise and questioning and, you know, just passion about what the body and movement is. But it was only through letting it just kind of, the desire or the kind of performing, you know, letting that kind of just fall away and letting something else be, you know, my resource for asking questions, that I could actually come back in and say oh, I know again, I've found the reason. I know why I perform. I know its value and I know how I want to do that. So it's kind of fascinating how I guess... How we need to find the way to do the things that we do or as you say, the expression in whatever way that that's... How that's driving and then we find the ways to let it come to, you know, the surface.

SE: It's interesting, isn't it, the way you had to step away from those disciplines -

MY: Yes.

SE: - and those structures that hardly anybody ever questions.

MY: Yes.

SE: And to do so is kind of subversive and if you choose to remain within that idiom asking those questions, it's actually kind of largely counterproductive. But what I think that some of us realise in a situation in which we find ourselves increasingly frustrated by those strictures, I think what we're recognising is the loss of agency, of artistic agency. And I went through a similar process myself, you know, having been trained to perform repertoire and you know, that's another kind of a straitjacket.

MY: Yes.

SE: And then and certainly dance has similar traditional values. Then there are questions within that, within the repertoire of how the repertoire should be performed and then there are notions of beauty, of acceptability.

MY: Yes. Yes. Yes.

SE: And of beauty, of very fixed ideas of beauty. Well, actually, that's a big question, isn't it? What the hell is beauty? Shall we ask that question? And as soon as we start to ask that question, then everything starts to unravel, doesn't it?

MY: Absolutely. Yes. Yes.

SE: And so rather like yourself, I stepped away from all of that, found myself asking those questions and, you know, here we are, we're talking about authenticity, agency again, you know. What can we be and what can we say? What do I feel moved to say, you know? It's also, isn't it, that performance, at least, it's about making relationships as well? So even as a solo artist, you're still making relationships.

MY: Yes.

SE: With audience, clearly, and you're driven to do so. So sometimes audience terrifies us, you know, and that engenders a certain type of relationship in itself, doesn't it? But we still feel the need for that relationship.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: You know, so we move from rehearsal, from process into relationship.

MY: Yes.

SE: But I think the issue of agency, when we strip everything away, it's, you know, I think it's important for us to know why we are driven to do what we do and therefore what do I want to say? What do I think it's possible for me to say? You know, what are the resources I'm supplied with? For myself, and so I'm like a dancer in this respect, you know, I'm acutely aware of the presence of the body. In my case, the presence of the body as sound. Presence as sound. I love the kind of the purity of making the relationship with the space through sound, as I'm sure, you know, you would experience yourself through -

MY: Absolutely.

SE: - movement. But I absolutely get, you know, your point, Eugene, about, you know, that pre-disciplinary space, you know, that we need to occupy. And then that takes us back, doesn't it, to something that we talked a little earlier this morning which is about what kind of experiences we want to cultivate and share?

- EE: And the big question for me is, you know, we all have our own journey of how we develop or create and mature artistically, but my obsession at the moment, and I don't have the answer to this, you know, is the incredible mystery of working together.
- MY: Yes.
- EE: Even the dialogue here is so beautiful and eliciting so much. What's happening then when you are in the purest sense improvising, creating spontaneously together with others and when it's working really beautifully? Well, beautifully is the wrong word, but where you're all feeling good about the experience as it's happening in that shared moment and it is a shared moment. Like what is the creative dynamic that's different to when you set out to create something yourself? Or you paint a painting or, you know, you sculpt. When you share something, something different is happening, but it's still equally valid. It may be even more valid because it's among different artists, you know. So that's where the collaborative question begins like for me. What is actually happening in that dynamic because it's different? And probably in improvising, you're saying oh, I didn't know it was going that direction or oh, it's going this way and you know, things can happen and that happened to us in the last session where we had maybe played a couple of times and one then came back the next morning and we played something and we were both absolutely astonished at what came out the following morning. It was so elevated and so...
- SE: Wow.
- EE: It was quite extraordinary, you know. And we were trying to analyse where did that come from. Now, maybe you don't have to analyse it. I suppose I have to write something.
- MY: Exactly, yes.
- EE: You know, and Oscar was saying maybe because you can't explain it because sometimes you have to say well, it's in the performance. The evidence is in the performance, which is fair enough, you know. But maybe the link between the prosaic writing is poetry that maybe you can express it through poetry, you know, somehow, some way that lies between the performance and, you know, the sentence, so to speak, you know. But that's the interesting question is what comes out when you're beyond the individual conversation with the group conversation?
- SE: What's come to mind for me there, when I'm doing solo performance, I'm kind of very aware of creating trajectories of one sort or another. So trajectories in sound. Sometimes I will actually see them, you know, coming and moving around the space, so then you have kind of certain rhythms and textures. But what you were saying, Eugene, has brought to mind, I use the connection with trajectory, you know, you look at a Jackson Pollock and so much of the early work started, maybe not so much the black paintings at the end there, but they're full of these kind of what seem like incredibly vibrant dynamic individual trajectories which make their way with their own kind of particular twists and turns, you know, shifts in gravity and line and colour across the space of the

canvas. So I'm really, really interested in them and sometimes I'll look at a Jackson Pollock and I'll find myself trying to trace the path that one of them is taking and I can feel it in my body. You know, I can feel its movement, but I can hear it in a sound as well, you know. So it kind of tunnel shifts as well.

But what also interests me are those moments of interception where something happens. Something else happens at that point. There's more than one voice there. There's more than one trajectory. There's a shared trajectory of some sort. And when I'm improvising with other people, I can feel myself almost kind of leaning into the possibility of intersection and then when it happens, whatever it is that takes place, there's a sharing of some sort of at that point. It becomes sort of something other than just two trajectories that happen to meet. For me it's what's suggested by that. Something for us as kind of improvising creative artists. So with the senses acutely developed as receptors, as interpreters, as interpreters of what might come next, then that's a transitional moment which will carry with it its own suggestions about what the rest of the journey might consist of. So that's process, but I think it's also for me kind of motivation. So I ask myself why I want to collaborate with other people. Well, you know, they bring something that I don't have. They see things in ways that I don't see. They might sound in a way that I don't sound, you know.

But the enquiry of that, I think there are two levels in which we might feel engaged by that. There's kind of there's the issue of enquiry, the richness of enquiry, the excitement of enquiry, of sharing enquiry. But then there's the moment as an artist, so you know, in a sense, that's the little bit about what's academic and maybe even philosophical, methodological. But then there's that artistic moment when something happens and it sparks something else, that moment of suggestion, of kind of intense suggestion, you know. And that's not something I can do myself, you know. I can make all kinds of individual trajectories and, you know, they might be of interest to me and they might hopefully be of interest to whoever witnessing it.

MY: Yes.

SE: But in collaboration, something that can't be legislated for. We touched on this -

MY: Yes.

SE: - very, very early on, didn't we?

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: We can't legislate for that. We don't know what that can be.

MY: Yes.

SE: We don't know what its possibilities might be.

MY: Yes.

SE: And we don't know how we might react to that. And therefore what might happen as a result of that, you know.

MY: Exactly. Yes.

SE: So there is that, you know, kind of the seductiveness of unknowability, if you like, you know. Wow. And I think in order for this to work, I think in order for us as artists to make a decision to occupy improvisational spaces, we have to be intrigued by those possibilities and look for them.

MY: That's lovely, I mean just it's so lean and the kind of intersections, you know, these points of intersection, but you know, how... I mean these things, this part is so kind of slippery, isn't it, in terms of naming?

SE: Yes. Finding language for it, yes.

MY: Yes. It's so, you know, because of course, you know, it's unique to each collaboration in terms of who's in the room and what disciplines, but there is something about, you know, how... It's not even materials, but I'll just say materials for now, you know, how they kind of, they do intersect or qualities or something.

SE: Yes.

MY: How they intersect and it's not the intersection of them that is the thing that emerges in fact, but it's the potential of the colliding of these things because yes, if something intersects, then it becomes that thing that we kind of identify, but it's because in collaboration, there's all this kind of potential. So ever before it meets that, there's a potential for this to happen.

SE: Yes.

MY: By the choice of the collaborator. So just in improvisations –

SE: Yes.

MY: - particularly because we can see this intersection coming as between two disciplines, you know, and we can let it dock or, you know, we see it and, you know, we can do that and then something else entirely different kind of happens. So I mean it's really, these things kind of, it's really fascinating always to try and put words on these things.

EE: Words on it, yes, yes.

MY: You know, and it's really good to do that, you know, and at times, things get really clear.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know, and it's kind of like oh, maybe that's it and of course, you know, so good luck.

EE: I think I'll be in here taping for 10 years, recording for 10 years.

MY: Yes. And sometimes, yes, it's kind of, you know, I mean there's poetics in it and that's the funny thing with words, isn't it? I mean they're so wonderful how words can really help sometimes to clarify things and, you know, writing notes and all that. You know, it's really everything kind of, words can be so helpful, but then they can also just kind of be sometimes, you know, I have this battle with kind of as I'm kind of writing to kind of clear something that's really kind of just slippery.

SE: Yes.

MY: Then it just falls away.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: In terms of my sense of it experientially.

SE: Yes.

MY: Kind of just dissolves because the words have kind of turned it into something -

SE: Yes.

MY: - that I have, you know, it's this relationship with kind of, you know, writing and words around these kind of processes is kind of really fascinating. But anyway, it's all part of saying.

EE: Well, it is. It's also like indicative of the ephemeral nature of improvising anyway.

MY: Yes.

EE: That you grasp something in that intersection and you love it, whatever is going on in that moment. Then it's gone.

MY: Yes.

EE: And that's an interesting thing, you know.

MY: Yes.

EE: And as you were saying, like you don't want it so fixed that the next time you come to it, you're approaching it with the same set of elements because you want it back.

MY: Yes.

EE: And there's a sense of not being able to have it back, you know.

MY: Yes.

EE: Isn't there?

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: You know, like obviously you can create qualities maybe, which is a great word, for, you know, qualities within the experience that might be re-invoked in a way or re-evoked. But not the thing itself.

MY: Yes. And I think there's something really interesting in this question about ephemerality, I think. And I think, I mean it certainly comes up in practice and doing, but it's good now. Ok, I'm not physically practising, but I think I'll try articulate something about, because ultimately, the ephemeral is kind of an illusion also because yes, it arrives into the space. Like I'm talking as a performer, right? So it arrives, you know, it arrives into the space and, you know, dealing with it and it sits there and you know, and then of course it disappears in that it's not in the space. But as a performer, it never feels like it's ephemeral because it's kind of in a way for me, and this is as a performer, it's kind of gone into a store.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know.

EE: That's interesting.

SE: It's embodied, isn't it?

MY: It's embodied.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And it's there, but part of the information that's kind of available -

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes.

EE: And new information.

MY: - in the piece -

EE: Yes, yes.

MY: - whatever the piece is.

SE: Yes.

MY: Whatever is being communicated, whatever the vision is for the experience. Because that's for me so essential to hold in the process of improvising through a piece because, yes, the vision has to be there and I'm responsible. It's a huge burden, like in a way, because I'm responsible for the experience in some ways.

SE: Yes.

MY: Like I have to make sure that I've constructed the situation, that I've made an environment that's going to allow, yes, my journey, but that's really only one journey. So how do I, you know, make these choices so that everybody's experience is kind of, you know, somehow, you know, that I make decisions that I think this is the best way I can facilitate everybody's experience by choosing to construct the environment in this particular way. So then the question of ephemerality for me sometimes is kind of a challenge because it's not like the thing comes and performs and then it's gone because I think it's gone in somewhere that then folds into the next thing and it comes out. So I mean of course it's gone in that it's not, you know, we can't record it or, you know, I'm not holding it so I can repeat it, but it's a set of information that doesn't disappear, I think, actually.

EE: Well, that's true.

MY: I don't like to think of it as disappearing.

SE: No.

MY: Yes.

SE: I get that completely.

MY: Yes.

SE: And I think also those traces, the traces that are sort of left of something that has just taken place. Those are kind of, there's an emotion that goes with that as well.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: That's appropriate to that and -

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: - I think as performers, that's what addictive about being a performer, being a performer within this particular process, if you like, within this practice because you want that fix again and you kind of know how to get it, which doesn't necessarily mean, you know, repetition as such.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: So the repetition of something that has taken place -

MY: Yes.

SE: - previously, but we kind of know how we can move ourselves into that place again, you know, in general terms. So as I say, there's an emotion that goes with that too, I think.

MY: Yes. Yes. Yes. So it's interesting because it kind of brings in that question also. I mean for me, again, this is kind of, you know, kind of in some way questions that I'm dealing with, but you know, they're potentially relevant in the conversation. It's, you know, the... Because I'll go back to the ephemeral because it's kind of useful also in terms of how we as performers and artists and collaborators of a piece, you know, how we hold the vision, number one, of the piece, but then hold it from let's say beginning to end if there's a timeframe in it. If we, you know, it's kind of a structural question too sometimes, you know, in improvisation, you know. How do we hold the information? Or process it maybe is a better word, as it's unfolding in improvisation so that not that we can kind of grab it so we can construct the timeline or something, but yet there is a kind of a crafting that needs to happen, I think, in my experience. So this is something I'm working with, I guess. You know, there's a crafting of what has emerged in relationship to what will emerge so that, you know, over time, that the vision of the experience that you've set up kind of does something by the end.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And so that's, for me, kind of again, it's a question of structure, I think, and it's this question of how we deal with materials.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know, how we deal with whatever, you know, our imagination, how these things fold into one another in the context of the piece and that feels just really important to me at the moment.

SE: Yes.

MY: Because ultimately, you know, in the improvisation, yes, we're dealing with things that can just, you know, arise and emerge and we have to manage that in a way.

EE: Yes.

MY: It's our responsibility to kind of manage it.

EE: Yes.

MY: Or maybe craft it in the moment. And so how do we do that and allow all the openness and the unfixing and kind of do that, but also make sure that we kind of know that we have responsibility for the vision and the overall experience -

SE: Yes.

MY: - that we're kind of trying to construct? So they're interesting places and sometimes they collide. The thinking of the piece or the thinking of what -

SE: Yes.

MY: - the structure is collides with the kind of capacity to listen.

SE: Absolutely and, you know, there are two seemingly discrete processes at work here, but actually they come together and we know that they come together when we're successful here. One of them is about the compositional nature of good -

MY: Yes.

SE: - effective improvisation.

MY: Yes.

SE: And there's too little acknowledgement of the -

MY: Yes.

SE: - essentially compositional nature -

MY: Yes.

SE: - of improvisation.

MY: Yes.

SE: There are certainly people, you know, improvisation is about a certain type of randomness.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: But we know this is not the case.

MY: Yes.

SE: We also know, I mean composition is also narrative. You know, as a species, we are hard-wired for that too. We love story-telling.

MY: We love it.

SE: We love things that kind of make some kind of sense.

MY: Sense.

SE: Yes. So in those moments, we are editing. We are reconfiguring. We are narrativizing whilst still remaining always in the moment. So you know, so

something new and unexpected might emerge. Now, what we know is we haven't started out with a fixed narrative structure and we can't do that.

MY: Yes.

SE: And we shouldn't do that.

MY: No.

SE: So in a sense, we have a broad intention, but we don't have a fixed goal.

MY: Yes.

SE: And we don't know where this is going to end.

MY: Yes.

SE: And that's the beauty of it and that's where it remains live and exciting for us as performers and hopefully as audience. But all the way through that process, you know, we're responding to what's, you know, to what's emerging and we have to kind of keep a firm, but at the same time a light hand on the tiller.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know?

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: So let's accept that, you know, that something, you know, that we couldn't have legislated for has just happened and it might have, as I'm starting to get a sense of where I feel this might be going, my goodness, that's taken me off somewhere unexpected.

MY: Yes.

SE: Ok. Right. Well, let's take account of that. What does that mean? What might that mean? And what might come next? What are the new possibilities of this? But I think structurally, you know, we have to have a sense of that.

MY: Yes.

SE: A sense of that.

MY: Yes.

SE: And whilst, you know, in my own work, so much of it will often, I think, feel for those that witness it like a very abstract form of expression quite often, I'm conscious all the way through the process of making that, you know, this is in effect a piece of architecture, you know.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: So yes, sort of the word that keeps springing to my mind as you're saying all of this is intuitive, you know, because people would describe me as very intuitive, you know. So it's a sort of a sensory connection with what's going on where you're able to, without thinking, process the information going on around you.

SE: It's decision-making, isn't it?

EE: In the decision-making.

SE: Yes.

EE: That seems to work in how you're doing it, whether it's working with or against.

MY: Yes.

EE: Because like at times when Steve was doing some things, if I thought I can't really go there, I started pulling it a different direction.

SE: Yes.

EE: And then Steve decided -

SE: Yes.

EE: - some other times he was bringing it in another direction.

MY: Yes.

EE: You know, and it's all that intuitive response, isn't it? Like as well as all the other complex things that are going on, or you're learning all the structure, all your creative process or converging, you know, in that moment. And isn't it like as well, you know, when you're talking about how you prepare for this performance, and I'm saying this as a novice, is that, you know, I'm sure for an athlete, you know, some days, they get up and they're ready for it and you know, they're up for it and it all happens for them on the day. And other days, they get up and their energy isn't quite the way it should be and they're trying to get into that. Is it the same for us as well in a different way using that type of analogy?

MY: Yes.

EE: Some days, you'll come in here and you'll just be astounded by what's going on and the inspiration and the creation. Other times, you come in and you think it's flat.

SE: Yes.

EE: It's not happening.

SE: Yes.

EE: You know?

SE: But you know, as I was saying earlier on -

MY: Yes.

SE: - I think that in my own work, whereas when I was perhaps less experienced within it, within the context of it, I would have had the expectation that my warm-up needed to yield a kind of an optimal level of kind of physical preparation and that if I wasn't there, I'd be a little bit worried.

MY: Yes.

SE: Oh hang on a minute, the voice isn't working in the way that it normally does. You know, what am I going to do? Wow, this is a problem. Now, I don't have that expectation and I'm quite interested in certain performance situations, particularly wholly improvised situations in which, you know, I'm invited to just kind of be in a space and create sound and some kind of presence. I'm kind of quite intrigued by the fact that, you know, that my energy levels are different and you know, sometimes I don't feel quite as comfortable in that performance space at that time and there might be all kinds of reasons for that, you know, because we have lives too beyond performance. But I'm kind of quite interested in running with the grain of that. So what can that suggest? What can that be in terms of a piece? What might it say about, you know, this person, this presence in the space right now? You know, sometimes, and I think this is particularly the case with repertoire-based art, we want to pretend the difficulty doesn't exist in the making. You know, the whole point of it, I know it's the same with, you know, kind of certain styles of dance, it certainly is with, you know, kind of classical singing, for example. You know, the whole idea is to give the impression that, you know, that this is effortless. Well, you know, there's some value in that occasionally, but I'm interested in a different kind of art and a different kind of making. Actually, I'm interested in something which might kind of present a fuller prospectus of what it is like to be human.

MY: Human.

SE: You know?

MY: Yes.

SE: And guess what? Sometimes things aren't easy, you know. And what are we here for? You know, I don't want to be a machine, you know.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: I mean go and listen to a record.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, a CD or something. My god, you know, there are wonderful recordings of great singers singing, you know, great classical repertoire, for

example, or jazz. Go and listen to them, you know. And you know, enjoy, you know, the apparently effortless nature of the making of it, you know. But I think we're interested in something different than that.

MY: Something else, something else, yes.

SE: Broader than that.

MY: Absolutely, yes, absolutely. It reminds me, I may have mentioned this one the last time, Eugene, when we were talking, but Rosalind Crisp, who is Berlin-based, but Sydney-born improviser and performer that I have worked with over the last two years. We made a connection and she's incredible and has done like incredible work in dance with improvisation. But I just loved it. She talked at one point last year when we were working together, she talked about her transition from working in sort of dance and choreography, let's say, into improvisation, even though she wouldn't distinguish improvisation and choreography because of course it's choreographic.

SE: Yes. Yes. Yes.

MY: It's completely choreographic.

SE: Of course, yes.

MY: It's all about decision-making. The decisions just happen at a different time.

SE: Yes.

MY: So it's completely choreography. So she doesn't distinguish, but it's a useful umbrella term in some ways for us to be able to distinguish. But she talked about this transition for her in her own practice, you know, where she said she just got so exhausted, and I'm paraphrasing her, but she got so exhausted or fed up with constantly trying to continually make the thing right before a performance.

SE: Yes.

MY: Because ultimately, when you're choreographing, you're in rehearsal. No, no, no, just a little bit more there or a little bit more like that, no, no, drop the weight of it more or push this a little, you know. So you're constantly just working towards getting the thing right because it always feels like it's never quite right. And then you know, then you spend all that time and then, you know, she said it was just a complete, just like point of like resistance to that, like constantly waiting for the moment when you could make the final right decision before it went onto the stage.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know, and it's just so absurd.

SE: Yes.

MY: In some ways.

SE: Absolutely.

MY: I mean it's kind of absurd, you know.

SE: Absolutely. Yes.

MY: And so I just love that kind of way, like choreography spends its time trying to get it right, trying to get the thing right.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know?

SE: Yes.

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: And that's, you know, when you're in a rehearsal room, it does come down to that.

SE: Yes. Absolutely.

MY: No, no, no. That just needs to be a little bit higher or a little lower or no, kind of a different direction. No, no, no, that's the wrong direction. It's insane, you know, this kind of.

SE: And what's really interesting here of course is -

MY: Yes.

SE: - how much difference would those kind of slight recalibrations in movement -

MY: Yes.

SE: - how much difference are they going to make to a piece?

EE: Anyway.

SE: In terms of affecting the audience -

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: - and giving them particular kinds of experience -

MY: Yes. Yes. Exactly. Exactly.

SE: - but in that situation, we carry with us a notion of something that needs to be complete.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: That needs to be perfect.

MY: Yes. Yes. Yes.

SE: That never happens.

MY: Exactly. Yes.

SE: You know, we can strive for it, but it never happens.

MY: Yes, exactly, exactly.

EE: It's a funny conditioning, isn't it? Because like even like -

MY: It is.

EE: - as a musician, like playing in things like the Feis Ceoil where you're playing classical pieces and someone might play a wrong note and -

SE: Oh my god.

EE: - you gasp. It's a wrong note.

SE: A terrible thing is happening.

EE: What is a wrong note and what does that mean over a context? And maybe the playing was inspired.

SE: Yes.

EE: And maybe it was interpreting what the composer wanted so fully and fulsomely, but they played a wrong note.

MY: Yes, I know. We are conditioned.

EE: I was conditioned -

MY: Yes.

EE: - into believing that, you know.

MY: Yes.

SE: Or that the composer would not have understood as a possibility.

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes.

SE: You know, and in that moment of kind of being on that kind of arc, that trajectory of making and the excitement of that, something remarkable happens, you know. That a composer could never have imagined -

MY: Yes, anticipated, yes.

SE: - could never have legislated for. Yes.

MY: Yes. This goes back to the question of agency in some ways, you know, for performers, you know, which is kind of a slightly different question in some ways, but there was something else that was kind of resonating. It'll come back to me. But yes, this idea of, you know, yes, so getting the thing right or fixing it and putting it in the right place so that, you know, the experience. So yes, oh yes, so it takes me back to this kind of question of the experience. You know, what is the experience that, you know, one hopes to construct?

SE: Yes.

MY: And I sort of also think about it, you know, in a piece. Like it's like a world, like my responsibility is to set up a world or an environment in which, you know, if it's a collaboration, you know, that world gets set up amongst the collaborators so that, you know, things can unfold, but also in terms of whatever the piece is, if, you know, I'm holding a piece, you know. It's about the construction of that world and how can the decisions that I make around who is involved in the piece or where the piece is set up or where the audience might sit or those materials, that all feeds into the overall experience, the potential of the experience for the audience. And this is another aspect that's kind of for me, in terms of the improvisation or the work, like recently, I've been having this kind of question about what do I want the audience to experience in any given piece? And I think, you know, it's kind of we always have to ask that question. And so recently, I've sort of, you know, been thinking about well, to me, it feels important that the elements that people see or the things that are happening in the performance space of the elements that people experience are irrelevant. Just bear with me. They're irrelevant as elements because ultimately, it's the overall experience that's left in the end -

SE: Yes.

MY: - that is what's important.

SE: Yes.

MY: And I've kind of been tracking this in terms of my own experience of going to see work and I leave and then I have these kind of like oh yes, that section and this section and oh, those materials and that dance or, you know, and then that's it. And then I'm like what's that? That I kind of leave with an experience of kind of particles of a piece or something, as though I would go to a gallery and kind of oh yes, there was kind of this brushstroke and that brushstroke -

SE: Yes.

MY: - and then I leave. This is just something about what I'm seeking myself also in there in terms of what I'm kind of hungry for in terms of an experience when I go to see something. Or then there's the times where I go and I'm kind of like there's this kind of overall sense of like oh, I was moved or I was touched or I was challenged and it's nothing to do with the particles of the piece. So I don't know. It's kind of it's my own experience of what I kind of seek when I'm viewing, but also how I've been kind of trying to figure out how I can construct an environment to present an experience that I feel is valuable or relevant to an audience. And then it comes into how do I make decisions that can construct this world or this environment in which people can have an experience and then have it, but that it's not like seeing things? Oh yes, I see that section happens there.

EE: Yes.

MY: There's the music or there's the film or... That kind of element thing gets like dissolved away in some way.

EE: Yes.

MY: But it's to do for me with how do I decide about what's relevant in the process of making?

SE: Yes. Yes. What are the essential elements?

MY: What are the essential elements? Yes.

SE: That create the impression.

MY: Yes.

SE: Absolutely. Absolutely.

MY: Yes.

SE: But you know, I can't help feeling here that certain types of theatre, you know, can be our guide here.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, if you look at, you've quite often kind of quite strict, very, very distilled theatre.

MY: Yes.

SE: A certain type of theatrical expression, you know. You know, if you look at Beckett, for example.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: You know, actually there doesn't appear to be very much going on.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, and sometimes there isn't.

MY: There isn't.

SE: Not kind of visibly or audibly.

MY: Yes.

SE: And yet the experience of it is so deep.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: It's so deep. It reaches into anybody who witnesses it.

MY: Yes.

SE: And leaves something.

MY: Yes.

SE: It leaves a trace of itself -

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: - that people carry away with them.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: And I often find, you know, certain types of Japanese performance arts of one sort or another often has that ability -

MY: Yes.

SE: - to kind of really distil it. It knows what it wants to say and it finds the means to doing so with a certain economy.

MY: Yes.

SE: You see, our traditions are virtuosic, aren't they?

MY: They are.

SE: And they're very much about display.

MY: Yes.

SE: Primarily about display.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, prepare to be impressed. You know, listen to this, you know, or watch this, you know. Spellbinding, isn't it? How do I do that? Well, of course it's years of training, you know, but actually what is that saying apart from that? What is it actually saying? Well, you know, if you were to distil that as a moment, as a moment of experience, what would it say to you, you know? Probably very little. You know, it lacks substance.

MY: Yes.

SE: And you're right, Mary. I mean, you know, the challenge for us is to say what we want to say with something that has impact and economy, you know.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: But it's a challenge because culturally, you know, we like to kind of fill in all the gaps, don't we?

MY: We do, yes, yes, and the expectations.

SE: And answer the questions, not just set the questions up, but then answer the questions.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know.

MY: Exactly.

SE: And we kind of pat the audience on the head then.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, wow, wasn't that great for you, you know?

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes. Yes. That's a lovely way to think about it, like you know, setting up, asking the questions, but you know, there's always the kind of the resolution, you know. We'll also answer them for you.

EE: Yes. Yes.

SE: This is why, you know, and I know we've talked a lot about this and we incorporated this into the experience of our first performance together. You

know, the Q&A I think becomes really... Become a very important instrument here for us.

MY: Yes.

SE: As well as for audience.

MY: Yes.

SE: So you know, we give them that opportunity. We provide that opportunity for them to talk about their own experience, but my god, how much does that tell us about what the piece is?

MY: For sure. Yes.

SE: Because actually we don't know what the piece is, do we?

MY: No.

SE: We actually don't know. We can have a general sense of how we experience it in the making and in the presentation of it -

MY: Yes.

SE: - to performance, but we cannot know.

MY: No.

SE: We talk about audience. Well, actually, you know, that's a bunch of individuals.

MY: Yes. I know.

SE: You know, just happen to be present at that time.

MY: At the same time.

SE: You know?

MY: Yes.

SE: They all bring, you know, all kinds of different means of interpreting what they're witnessing with them, you know. And how much do we find out through that, you know? I mean we've talked extensively -

MY: Yes.

SE: - about this stuff that, you know, that's been reflected back to me about it. Something that I've, you know, that I've felt I had some kind of ownership of -

MY: Yes.

SE: - in the making, you know. Well, of course that's another issue, isn't it? You know, once you kind of you push what you're doing out into the space, you know -

MY: Yes.

SE: - it's external to you.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, it's an object of some sort.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know?

MY: Yes. Absolutely.

SE: And people will, you know, will experience it in different ways.

MY: Place it together, yes.

SE: Yes.

EE: And because you haven't contrived it -

MY: Yes.

EE: - and because it's spontaneous, the questions are open.

MY: Yes.

EE: And there are spaces for the audience to exist in it.

SE: Yes.

EE: Because they begin to understand it's not contrived.

MY: Yes.

EE: That they're nearly making it with you.

MY: Yes.

SE: I'm just thinking back, Eugene, to the piece that Oscar and I created based on those texts by Bateau.

EE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: And so it was hardly improvised. What we had was the text. In fact, we were feverishly editing these texts the morning of the performance, you know, and getting a whole lot out of it.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, if only they were here now.

MY: Oh yes.

SE: Because this is the piece, you know.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: And in fact, you know, can we actually make the piece as interesting as this this afternoon, you know? But the first question, there was a Q&A afterwards and the first question was, 'Could you tell me what that meant?' And Oscar, I think, no, it was the second question, and Oscar had asked the first one and I think we were still engaged in responding in some way, at least kind of giving the appearance of that, and he just went, 'Steve'. In that moment, I thought thanks for that, Oscar. Thanks so much for that.

MY: Lovely.

SE: And you know, and I said, 'Well, I don't know. You tell me what it meant'.

MY: I know.

SE: You know?

EE: But we're conditioned to make meaning of it.

SE: Yes, absolutely. You know, I said look, I can speak to you about its elements, its core elements.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: I can tell you something about the experience of, you know, of making it -

MY: Yes.

SE: - in those moments.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: But you know.

MY: Well, this is a challenge of the kind of theatrical setting, isn't it? I mean you know, the audience often come with the expectation of, yes, having to be sort of,

you know, given some meaning or that there is a meaning inherent. I mean you would have a defined meaning for them.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: In terms of the piece, you know, and you know, this question of what is it about? And you know, when I did the last piece that I did, Eugene, we talked about it in the gallery context. It was purely to free myself of that. I said I will do this in a gallery because the expectation and what people bring is, the questions they bring into a gallery when they open that gallery door are always different -

SE: Yes.

MY: - to what they bring when they sit down in a theatre.

SE: It's true.

MY: Always.

EE: Yes.

MY: And that's just, that can really support the work to be seen in a particular way and so you know, it's important, I think. And you know, it's really a certain kind of work. Like do we find, we, but also the bigger 'we', but do we find ways to, you know, really try to push the question around that expectation in the context that the expectation comes with? Or do we try to just reposition what we do in a context that we think the expectation might be different or the kind of thinking might be different? Which is why I moved it, or said, you know, this piece has to be in a gallery because I can't say what I need to say with the expectation of a theatre because it wasn't meeting the idea, you know.

SE: This takes us, Mary, to a really interesting place now.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: Because I think we have to be very, very mindful of what it is we think we are creating here. So we have some basic elements -

MY: Yes.

SE: - that we bring from our own disciplines, but then we also bring awarenesses that come from, you know, some understanding of, you know, how theatre works, how certain types of theatre work, of the expectations, as Mary was saying, that go with the performance in a gallery space, for example. Now, we have the means here to make this into a gallery space or a theatre or a conventional concert space. Now, where we have got to with the first performance, I think, Eugene, and I think we talked about this yesterday, Eugene was saying earlier on, Mary, we had introduced some additional performance elements. So for example, we played with the expectations of audience about, you know, when the piece started, for example, you know. So why is that guy sitting and sitting there?

EE: Sitting.

SE: Ok, why is he sitting there?

EE: Yes, and that was a little bit disconcerting.

SE: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. And then all of a sudden there are these kind of extraneous, seemingly extraneous pre-recorded sounds. So hang on a minute, is he sitting there and they're playing that music because they're running late? Because the other guy is not there and there's a piano. There's a piano.

EE: He must be caught in traffic.

SE: Actually, now you mention it, so there's a piano over there and he's over there. So he's maybe not the pianist then or is he? Maybe at some point, he's going to get up and walk over to the piano. Shit, what is going on here? So we'd already started to, you know, to kind of play with certain expectations around that type of performance, that style of performance, that environment of performance. But I think, you know, the next stage I think really needs to embrace some of the issues.

EE: I've a funny aside because I was outside the door for five minutes and Sandra was late. And I'm standing in, you know, halfway out, halfway in. So she says, 'Oh sorry Eugene, when is it starting?'

SE: Yes, exactly. Well, it couldn't have started because you were outside.

EE: Yes. And I said, 'No, it's started already. I'm just waiting to go'. And she said, 'Oh merciful hour', she said. So she went in anyway, but I think I've met three times later and she's apologised for interrupting or, you know, breaking me out of the zone.

MY: Your performance.

EE: Yes.

SE: Exactly.

MY: Your performance.

EE: Yes. Yes. But it was funny because -

SE: Ruined it for you.

EE: - you know.

SE: Completely ruined.

EE: Do you know, like even that itself is an interesting anecdote.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: Breaking up the expectations.

SE: Yes.

EE: You know.

MY: Absolutely.

SE: But I think, you know, here, I think this is a much more, in a sense, it's a much more flexible space than the Tower, I think, although that appears to be more flexible.

MY: Yes. Interesting.

SE: In a sense, it appears to be kind of less incumbent, but I think here, for us, this suggests certainly that it could be the location for both kind of a relatively conventional concert performance of one sort or another, or clearly a space for dance too for that matter, but also perhaps a theatrical space. But I think we have to have an acute understanding of what kind of experience we want to make now. We might choose to utilise many of the same basic elements in terms of sound, for example, obviously and we're free to develop that too, but I think, you know, this can be a very flexible space. And I think for people who know this space and because they would associate it with -

EE: A certain configuration.

SE: - largely the way that it's configured and that, it almost looks as if this, you know, this has to be fixed in this way. I think if we were to, if you like, radically clear the space, that that might be kind of quite effective. Immediately that would have impact for people. But I think we're going to have to be very, very clear about what it is we think we're making. As I say, we've got the, you know, we've got basic elements, but we know that we can change the experience. We can condition the experience in particular ways.

EE: In that performance, I think what amazed me was there were simple refined things like Steve sitting on the chair and the light. They were just simple things. It wasn't like great theatrical moments of... But they still created all that disruption in a positive way.

SE: Well, we decided that I wasn't just going to sit disengaged.

MY: Yes.

SE: It was important for me. Yes, I mean, you know, in that moment, you become, you know, a sculpture.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes. You know, if you're not moving, then, you know, we read that in particular ways. So you know, I was completely motionless. I was completely still and so we know that that says something straight away to audience. It wasn't as if I was waiting for someone to come in.

MY: Yes.

SE: Clearly not.

MY: Yes.

SE: So the performance had started.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes. But I think we can, and this of course is where your movement would have enabled us to go to very, very interesting places, I'm sure, here, so.

EE: But isn't it also your interpretation of what we would do from your point of view?

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: Which wouldn't be the way we might think.

MY: Yes. For sure.

EE: That brings in another discipline -

MY: Yes.

EE: - a way of seeing it.

MY: Yes.

EE: Seeing the space.

MY: For sure, it does completely. I mean yes, it does, it does. And I mean I think just let's see. I mean of course there is the question, yes, because you know, when... Well, it's very different to have a duet to have a trio.

SE: Absolutely.

MY: Full stop.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And so you know, if you sit there, Steve, and you're there for five minutes, and then somebody else arrives, stands, you know, there's just these other points of intersection really, isn't it?

SE: Absolutely.

MY: You know, it's just all of a sudden, there's a whole other series of possibilities. So I guess it's also, Eugene, you know, just in terms of, I suppose, you know, for you, but also for everybody, in terms of if the previous piece, you know, went somewhere and was what it was, then yes, what are the new things that you're pushing in terms of your research also? Like of course that's the question you're asking yourself. I'm not here to ask you that question, but I'm asking it so I can kind of find a way to respond to, you know, what I might be able to bring that can support the kind of moving of that in whatever way feels right, you know. Because again, you know, it's a creative journey, a creative process and a journey that I will, you know, get huge amounts from and nourish my own practice in different ways, but I know that probably underneath that, you have certain things that are particularly relevant in terms of your kind of your research and where you've gone and where you need to kind of really, you know, turn. What's the corner you need to turn with that sort of?

EE: Yes.

MY: You know, in terms of your own practice. So that's kind of an interesting thing also in terms of collaboration, you know. There's collaborative, you know, because I think that's inherent in the vision of this right now from the very beginning is that, you know, there is a turn potentially of something that needs to happen from where the other piece was.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: You know?

EE: That's exactly it. Exactly it.

MY: And what decisions need to get made -

SE: Yes.

MY: - in relationship to that? In relationship to the joyous kind of collaboration? The elements that we'll all feed from and with. So I guess it's just to keep that in mind and that does carry into the question of, you know, of course a duet is different to a trio and a trio will present loads of other challenges and opportunities in terms of space -

SE: Yes.

MY: - timing, context for, you know, the audience. All those things, you know, and also, you know, there's also, I mean there's so many elements that kind of add, outside of time or space or another material.

SE: Ok, get that, ok, but do you want to say something more to me? You know, question the audience? Are you wanting to say something more to me? You know, is there another layer of meaning here that you'd like me, you know, to kind of try and cut into? And I was just saying to Eugene yesterday that for

purposes of self-definition in terms of what I do, increasingly, I see myself less as a... Certainly not as a singer. A singer is an aspect of what I might draw on. Certainly, my main medium is voice, no question about that. You know, I don't have a problem with that.

MY: Yes.

SE: But what am I engaged in? So what is that engaged in? What is that an instrument of? So it's an instrument.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: Ok.

MY: Yes.

SE: What is it being put in the service of?

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: And increasingly, I think that I'm actually an effective artist who happens to be using voice as the main medium. So that can express itself, that desire to be affective can express itself in all kinds of ways and can put in all kinds of contexts. So everything from a relatively conventional, maybe not entirely, so a relatively conventional concert setting. You could set things up so that it still plays in that way certainly. But you know, I just finished a theatre project with myself as the sole player and then an ensemble of improvising instrumentalists as well in the space, but not visible within the space. And then a working gallery. So I create kind of performance art pieces in galleries. So I'm asking myself, you know, what can this be? So you know, we had some text which gave us a kind of a starting point and you know, it offered kind of certain anchor points as well structurally.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: So that was kind of useful. So yes, you know, that's the possibility. Of course we have Eugene's wonderful playing. We have my improvising, my voice as an improvising instrument. The space in the first performance, the space was, as far as lighting was concerned and you know, we will know, you know, how much impact lighting as placed in particular ways can have as far as experience is concerned. You know, it's really important there. We didn't really explore that in any kind of meaningful way.

EE: We didn't have time.

SE: I mean we didn't.

MY: Yes.

SE: We didn't.

MY: Yes.

SE: So that's something I think that we could really look at.

EE: Well, the lighting here is much more sophisticated anyway.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: Than the other theatre, so there's a lot more to explore here.

MY: Yes.

SE: We have, I know we started to talk about this yesterday, so if we have these texts, well, texts can be sounded and texts can be responded to in the sounding through the more kind of abstract means of an instrument. In this case, piano. But also as we know full well, you know, text can be visual as well. It can be visualised and there are ways in which we can do that. So there's a screen up there and then there's flats outside that you could come project onto -

MY: Yes.

SE: - in various ways. Ok, well, if you put them in the space, then you know, they're also kind of sculptural. Yes, so then how could we configure ourselves in relation to them? That sets up a whole bulk of questions then, doesn't it? And ok, so we were talking about the possibility of dispensing with the seating system. Ok, so then where do you put the audience and how do you relate to them? Do you remain static or do you move around the space? So for example, one of the things that I've been playing with in terms of developing my own performance pieces, solo pieces is actually literally bringing the sound to the audience, so moving through the audience, so actually kind of positioning them and configuring them in particular ways, lighting the space and then giving them the experience sometimes of being very, very close to the voice with the voice being literally in their ear.

MY: In their ear.

SE: You know, on my shoulder. Now, that's an experience, a very particular kind of experience, isn't it? You know, clustering them in certain ways, so to get them to ask questions about what kind of relation they are into other people in the audience. Well, who is that I'm sitting next to? And why am I sitting next to them like this? You know, why are we configured like this? You know, what's that about? And then oh my god, so there's a little pathway here and the voice seems to be getting closer to me all of a sudden. You know, it's dimly lit, but all of a sudden, I know, you know, my receptors are telling me that that voice is getting closer to me. Why is it doing that? How does that make me feel? So stuff like that, you know, can all be brought into play. That of course requires movement of, you know, of some sort.

So there are a whole load of ways that we can go. One of the other things that we talked about is my vocalising into the piano, so then activating harmonics on the exposed strings.

EE: Yes.

SE: But there needs to be a choreography. There needs to be some kind of justification for it. You can't just have the dude who's been singing or reading the text -

EE: Sticks his head in the piano.

SE: - you know, he gets up at some point and goes...

MY: Here's my next trick.

SE: You know, but it would play in a certain way, wouldn't it? You know, but -

MY: Yes.

SE: - you know, how do you integrate that into a performance of some sort? And if it's a kind of a theatrical performance at some level, as soon as you start moving, you know -

MY: Yes.

SE: - you are suggesting certain things, aren't you?

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes.

SE: So it's not just the journey that you make, but it's how you make the journey.

MY: Absolutely. Yes. Yes.

SE: So you know, there are so many ways, sorry about that, Eugene. There are so many ways that we can go with this, so many ways in which we might develop the piece.

MY: Yes. Absolutely. Absolutely. And in a way, setting up or kind of coming to some kind of decision around what that kind of environment might be -

SE: Yes.

MY: - really has the potential to unlock the necessity of materials and -

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: - how it's navigated.

SE: The logic steps. Absolutely.

MY: The logic of the piece. Yes.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Because of course, if you say ok, well, the audience will arrive and they'll come at 8pm and you know, they'll all be seated and then it'll be over by 8:45. Like that has a particular arc of expectation and time and viewing position, you know, and all that. So that defines certain things. Then you have to kind of say ok, so we need to kind of say ok, we're managing the logic of the piece in relationship to those parameters.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Which say something very particular.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And as I say, right, throw that one out the door for a second and say ok, actually it's going to be for 10 people only at a time and it's going to be 20 minutes long and people are going to be invited to come over the course of a day, you know.

SE: Yes.

MY: And you know, the seating is going to be random. 10 chairs are going to be placed -

SE: Yes.

MY: - all around, you know. And then that's a whole... That opens up a whole other logic -

SE: Absolutely.

MY: - to the experience.

SE: Yes.

MY: And I mean they're just... But they're choices really.

SE: Yes.

EE: Exactly.

MY: And they're choices around well, I think they're choices around two things. Well, what's the necessity? What needs to be said and how can the environment support that in the best possible way, but also what might facilitate the kind of deepening of the research journey that you're on independently of the collaboration, but kind of so, you know, what takes what's been achieved, let's

say, in the process up until now, what takes it to the next journey and what's the logic of that?

SE: Yes.

MY: To me, I mean you can't simplify things down, but it seems like -

EE: No, but that's like, yes.

MY: - they're kind of two questions that feel really important.

EE: No, they're essential. Yes.

MY: And actually will really help kind of making the choices around, ok, well, you know, if Eugene, if you were saying well, look, actually I've had a conversation with Helen Phelan and, you know, not that she'd be saying this, but you know, it's got to be a concert or something, then that defines something.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know?

SE: Yes, it does.

MY: Or if you say well, yes, I had a conversation with Helen Phelan.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And it would seem like a concert would be best, but you know what, I want to do an installation -

SE: Yes.

MY: - because I feel that's really relevant and I feel I can ask more questions about the space or time or, you know, and then that also defines the decision.

SE: Yes.

MY: I mean it's never really that clear-cut, but you know, and clearly you've been having this conversation in terms of that environment, or you know, space.

EE: Well, we started having the conversation about space because -

MY: Yes.

EE: - our anticipation of your arrival.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: Because we wanted to say well, what can we include?

MY: Yes.

SE: But we started with that though, Eugene, didn't we?

MY: Yes.

SE: That very first time that we met.

EE: We did, yes, and it was quite alien to me.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: Because Steve was -

MY: And I remember you telling me, excuse me, I'm going to stand for a moment.

EE: Yes, no, do.

MY: I remember you telling me, Eugene, about that question of space, you know, at that time.

EE: Yes. And Steve was walking around taking in the space and I'm going, you know, what's that about?

MY: Yes.

EE: You know?

MY: Yes.

EE: But he was genuinely I suppose in an embodied sense trying to take in it for his being.

MY: Yes.

EE: Everything that was around him -

MY: Yes.

EE: - that was going to inform him -

MY: Yes.

EE: - for whatever was going to happen.

MY: Yes.

EE: Which was totally alien to me. I just want to go in and sit down and start.

MY: Yes.

EE: Do you know?

MY: Yes.

EE: Because I was so conditioned. There was the piano stool.

MY: Yes.

EE: The lid was open. Off you go.

MY: Yes.

EE: And suddenly I find myself walking around the space with him and he encouraging me -

MY: Yes.

EE: - to stand close to him, away from him.

MY: Yes.

EE: Different directions. Walk slowly.

MY: Yes.

EE: Run. All the different things that -

MY: Yes.

EE: - would stimulate breaking out of your conditioning.

MY: Yes.

EE: You know, and that's what happened at the beginning.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes. Yes. So that was our starting point. So it's really not surprising at all that we've come to here now, you know.

EE: Yes. Yes. Definitely.

SE: At this point. It just seemed like an obvious place, you know, to go to next, if you like.

MY: Yes.

SE: An obvious extra element to bring into this mix.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, I'm starting to feel the possibilities of what emerges in this second phase, Eugene, much more of something which is -

EE: No.

SE: - not looked down upon.

EE: Directional, yes.

SE: But you know, gets much closer to the audience's bodies and to their ears and, you know, their skin and, you know. I'm seeing this as much kind of less encumbered space where we open it up actually. We actually create, you know, the sense of being much bigger than it is now and of course that's easily done because when we take away, you know, this clutter, the experience of being in here -

EE: Well, interestingly enough, I went to, you didn't see the Brian Eno installation?

MY: No, I didn't.

EE: It was very interesting.

MY: Yes.

EE: And relates because it was all about space. So it was a room I'd say this size or bigger. Ok? But when you walked into it, it was dark. Ok? And it had this beautiful slow-moving kaleidoscope of images that were all in different colours and they were uniform, but because they were changing up so slightly, you nearly didn't notice them. But they were changing dramatically, but slowly. And you had this score underneath that had these interesting slow-moving unusual sounds completely washed across the space and that sound was there. It was slow and hypnotic and whatever and the things were moving. And then he had three mounds. They were like little stones and they were lit almost bright pink. One was a strong blue colour. Different places, you know, and then he had a couple of sofas where people could just sit.

SE: Yes.

EE: Now, as your eyes were acclimatising to the darkness, you're beginning to see more of the elements, you know. And so I sat down. I actually stayed for an hour and a quarter and just sat on the sofa and just watched the thing and listened to the sounds. And it was just very interesting. That's a model of, you know, so it was dark, you know. There was lots of colour. There was sound. There was time.

SE: But crucially, he was not in the space himself.

EE: Yes. He was not in the space. Yes.

SE: And so that was installation.

EE: Yes, exactly, yes.

SE: But if you put bodies into an environment like that, then all of a sudden, expectations change that way.

EE: Change, yes, yes.

SE: And that would need to be something that we should be careful -

EE: Yes, of course, yes.

SE: - of kind of not confusing the environment.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: But I suppose I was, yes, I was saying like it was interesting that the sofas were there.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: Because they suggested comfort.

MY: Yes.

EE: They suggested an invitation to sit.

MY: Yes.

EE: You know, all these other signals.

SE: Well, that invitation is really quite interesting, isn't it? So the sofas, you know, have their own presence in the space.

MY: Yes.

SE: So we judge them as objects, but also with that, you know, keen desire that we have to, each of us, to narrativize things. You know, it's like ok, what kind of story is this telling, you know? So we're looking, when we go into a space which, you know, which is alien to us, it's not our space, it's not a space that, you know, that we know as a place through our own experience, then you know, we send a sonar out, don't we? All of our receptors are wide open because we want to try to figure out -

EE: Which is great.

SE: - you know. I mean, you know, that's a very, you know, primal response, isn't it? You know, is there danger in here, you know? Is there something that I need to be wary of?

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes.

MY: Absolutely. Yes.

SE: You know, can I feel comfortable here?

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, what grounds are there for me thinking that I can be comfortable in this space? So that operated at, you know, a very, very deep level.

MY: Absolutely. Yes.

SE: And what we do then in order to make sure that we don't feed those sorts of anxieties -

MY: Yes.

SE: - we have spaces like this, don't we?

MY: Yes.

SE: So everything knows the conventions of being in here. Everybody can read that. Well, they are seats and you sit in them, aren't they?

MY: It's clear.

SE: And in fact what they suggest is that this is the performance space and that I'm going to be up there and I'm going to be looking down here and there'll be some performance of some sort here. So we're comfortable with that. We don't feel any sense of anxiety about that. But you know, we can play with those sorts of anxieties, low level anxieties, you know, in terms of how you might light the space, in terms of how you invite the audience in. Taking away the certainty of that and for example, you know, putting clusters of seating at various points around the space where they have decisions to make themselves. And in so doing actually become part of the piece.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: Part of the choreography, part of the design of a piece.

MY: Yes. Exactly. Yes. And I think, you know, in some ways, it's not about... It's really about supporting people not to be in anxiety about it.

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: That's actually, so it's really interesting.

EE: Yes.

MY: Because yes, it's creating environments that we would feel can support the experience of the audience, but being very conscious of the fact that sometimes, and I know this myself when people came to see my piece in the gallery recently. Like it took so much work to figure out how can I set things up so that the audience don't just cling to the wall, you know?

EE: Yes, yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: Because no matter -

SE: Yes.

EE: Yes.

MY: - what, the minute that they come into the gallery -

EE: That's a very important point.

MY: - and there's like pictures and sofas and installations and they'll walk right through the middle of it no problem.

SE: Yes.

MY: The minute they think though there's going to be a dancer here sometime soon.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Sometime soon, there's going to be a dancer here.

SE: Yes.

MY: So we're just going to cling to the back.

SE: Yes.

MY: Or there's going to be some kind of a performance here.

SE: Yes.

MY: I'll just cling to the walls.

SE: Yes. I'm not going to get in the way of this.

MY: Exactly. This is now something else.

SE: We also have that fear of the performance coming to us, don't we?

MY: Yes.

SE: So you know -

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes.

SE: - if I'm, you know, if I kind of intrude in that space, you know, they might well end up performing right next to me. And so everybody's gaze is going to be on me as well as them, you know, so there's that terrible fear of that.

MY: Yes.

EE: And it's even worse if you know them.

SE: Yes.

MY: Exactly. Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: That is right. I see that too in gallery spaces.

MY: Yes.

SE: You do a lot of that yourself.

SE: Yes. Absolutely.

MY: Yes.

SE: And I see, what's really funny to me particularly in, you know, kind of countries like Germany and Austria and Switzerland where everything has to be just so in gallery spaces, you know.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: And all gallery staff are there, not it would appear to facilitate the experience -

MY: The excellent.

SE: - of the audience, but just to protect the gallery.

MY: They don't want it to go wrong.

SE: Absolutely. So I see that. I see people kind of, you know, scurrying out of what they know is going to be a performance space and these kind of big beefy uniformed attendants, you know.

MY: Yes.

SE: Screaming at them to get away from, you know, the objects, the artefacts, you know.

MY: Yes. Exactly.

SE: And so they kind of shuffle forward dutifully, you know, not questioning that. And then all of a sudden, they realise they're back in the performance space, you know.

MY: Oh, dancers there.

SE: Yes.

MY: But it is fascinating how much, you know, it takes, how that needs to be attended to.

SE: Yes.

MY: Like honestly.

EE: 100% because then -

MY: The length of time the conversations around it because the piece I was doing as well, this recent piece was moving from one space to another in a gallery. I mean the amount of conversations and trying and testing that I had to go through in terms of how can I facilitate an audience to move from one space to the other so that the experience of the piece doesn't get interrupted by being shuffled along by an attendant or something? Can you move now? Can you move now? But that it's inherent in the invitation of what's happening.

EE: That you know.

MY: That they follow, but then you're dealing with an audience who are so afraid to do anything.

EE: Yes. Yes. It doesn't happen. Yes. Yes.

MY: It's so...

SE: Mary, I had this remarkably kind of comedic experience during a performance in a gallery in Porto and it was a promenade.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: You know, so I was working with another actor, vocalist, and we were improvising this journey through the galleries. And one of the gallery spaces, most of them were kind of relatively conventional, although it was a modern building. But one of the galleries was quite tiny and they showed film in there generally. You know, so generally stuff on them so, you know, people could kind of come and sit in the darkness and watch. But this was kind of very, very tall somehow, you know.

MY: Right.

SE: So Maggie and I had thought to ourselves when we first arrived in the gallery, 'Let's go and check that little space out'.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, how is it acoustically, for example:

MY: Yes.

SE: And it had this remarkable acoustic because it was so tall. So it sounds cavernous somehow. So we thought great, ok. Well, let's incorporate that. At some point we'll disappear into that space and we'll starting sounding, thinking that the audience was going to remain outside. So they'd got so used to following us through the gallery space, so they'd conquered all their fears of this at this point, so they're shuffling along with us quite happily. Maggie and I disappear, we thought disappeared into this space and we're kind of sounding away and then all of a sudden, we got this sense of the space being kind of closed down still further and you know, all of a sudden, we were aware of bodies kind of pressing in around us.

MY: Yes.

SE: And then to boot, and this was remarkable, somebody started to vocalise with us.

MY: Oh wow.

SE: And then all of a sudden, there were other voices in there.

MY: Wow, amazing.

SE: And what was really funny was at the end of the performance, the curator was absolutely thrilled with the audience having participated so directly in this, as if we had planned it. Loved the way you invited the audience into the little space and then brought them into the performance.

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes, of course.

SE: Yes, actually, we spent a lot of time on that. So you have to be careful what kind of expectations.

EE: Yes.

MY: True.

SE: What kind of invitations you make, don't you?

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes, yes.

SE: You know?

MY: Yes.

SE: And you can't always legislate.

MY: Yes. It's so true.

EE: Yes. Yes. Yes. And it's really what you said, it strikes home to me about attending to that.

MY: Yes.

EE: Because I remember, Steve, in our moment, I use this expression, he was nearly having a hissy fit because he didn't know whether to stand or sit. And to me, it was quite evident, you know, as a musician.

MY: I stand or I sit?

EE: Jesus, what's the problem?

MY: Yes.

EE: Like you know?

SE: Yes.

EE: Just in the moment, you know, I'm thinking -

MY: Yes.

EE: - we stand or sit, but afterwards, I really got it, you know.

SE: Yes.

EE: Or Steve wondered how he was going to get off the chair.

SE: Yes.

EE: And move to a stand that was two feet away. He's sitting on a chair here and the music stand is here with some text.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: And he's wondering, Jesus, he just gets up and walks there, you know. And yet now in this environment, I understand completely, completely that everything can be interpreted, you know.

MY: Absolutely.

EE: Everything can be misinterpreted as well.

SE: Yes.

EE: So every movement is important in the space. Every movement. Do you want that signal? Is that what you had in mind?

MY: Exactly.

SE: Yes.

EE: You know, so it's -

MY: Exactly.

EE: - really interesting that I have grown to understand what you meant about getting to this stand -

MY: Absolutely.

SE: Yes.

EE: - that was just there.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes.

EE: From here.

MY: Exactly, because we can so easily say oh well, you know, that's just a functional step. Next.

SE: Yes.

MY: Next important thing, you know.

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes, exactly.

MY: But when you begin to drop that consideration of what's important, which you kind of have to do when you're improvising because you don't know what's coming really.

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: And so how are you to judge that, you know, this is the most, you know, important thing I do? Or, you know, sitting on the chair is the most important and then when I get to the stand, it's going to be the most important and then what happens in between is irrelevant.

EE: Yes.

MY: You just can't do it.

SE: Yes.

MY: It's kind of so fascination, you know.

EE: Yes, it is fascinating for me.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: No, I can see that. I remember. I will always remember your face when I asked the question and I was kind of asking it of myself really. So stand there, chair here. Steve sits on said chair for first time and then, you know, I kind of look at the stand and then I think well, ok, how many steps is that roughly, you know? And I say to myself using say into the space, you know, how am I going to get over there? You know, and I saw Eugene kind of going, 'What? What? Well, I'm relatively inexperienced in these matters, but I think I can help you'.

EE: Isn't it amazing how something simple can be such a big learning curve?

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: You know, for someone not involved in theatre, you know.

MY: Yes.

EE: That you understand that.

MY: It's amazing. But if that unlocks that fast, not unlocks, but if that becomes, you know, so quickly because sometimes it takes a long time for people to really understand the value of what sometimes we might call transitions.

SE: Yes.

EE: Yes.

MY: In, you know, that setting. You know, how do we transition?

EE: Yes.

MY: But how can that transition be as important as what happens before it and after it?

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes.

EE: And when I'm improvising, let's say using the keyboard, I feel it's a series of transitions.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes.

EE: That's what I feel is happening.

MY: Yes.

EE: A transition from one moment to the next.

MY: Yes.

EE: Not necessarily moment, but moments.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: To the next item that transitions.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: And sometimes those transitions intersect.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes.

EE: And sometimes, as you have visualised -

MY: Yes.

EE: - they go that way.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: It's quite interesting, isn't it? You know, in the West, we have not traditionally had, if you like, philosophies of how we deal with transitioning.

MY: Yes.

SE: Whereas in the East, particularly in Japan of course -

MY: Yes.

SE: - this is terribly important.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: So ma as a space and a time between events or objects -

MY: Yes.

SE: - is something that is very, very important within that culture.

MY: Yes.

SE: And their lives.

MY: Yes.

SE: And plays a huge role in Japanese theatre, you know, particularly kind of -

MY: That's right.

SE: - certainly the more traditional -

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: - theatrical traditions. But also, you know, more modern traditions like Butoh, for example, you know. And you know, we just don't seem to... The idea here I guess is because we are always keen to make ourselves so busy that, you know, a transition, you know, is an unfortunate gap between things. You know, we need to do that as quickly as possible, you know. It doesn't really matter how we do it, you know. There's no sense in which you would inhabit those moments, you know.

MY: Yes.

EE: And that's what you were saying as well when you were talking about your own dance.

MY: Yes.

EE: That all those moments in between.

MY: Yes.

EE: That's what struck me.

MY: Yes.

EE: It wasn't the starting, the launch, the impulse or the end that fascinated you. Or they did fascinate, but what really fascinated was -

MY: Yes.

EE: - all those moments in the movement.

MY: Exactly. Yes.

EE: That you could pick out, that you could engage with.

MY: Yes, which is for me is to do with a question of detail, you know.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes, we have, you know, you've so much that goes on in every kind of, you know, movement or gesture that we do, you know. And the thing takes form at a certain point in the space, you know. But as a practice of tracking, you know, the detail of what happens from a place of initiation.

SE: Yes.

MY: Then all of a sudden, you're in a transition all the time because where this was going, there's multiple opportunities for something else entirely different to happen in those.

SE: So is it a state of becoming something else, isn't it?

MY: Constantly becoming.

SE: Yes. Yes. Yes.

MY: You know, and so fascinating, and even, you know, then things do take form or they feel more complete or something and then there's another kind of layer of transitioning where you say ok, well, something else is going to happen now. But if you're kind of, if you're not with that place of transitioning in the same full way all the time, then the kind of the opportunity and the juice of what's in the thing can't really -

SE: Yes.

MY: - kind of come out.

SE: Yes.

MY: So it's a performance question too, isn't it?

SE: Absolutely.

MY: It's how we inhabit performance -

SE: Absolutely.

MY: - when we're in improvisation because -

SE: Yes.

MY: - it's a performative question because it's also to do with attention and presence.

SE: Definitely.

MY: You know, so all those things kind of come into who we are with our material when we arrive into the space, you know. So it's kind of... But there is something. So the detail for me is about, you know, finding, being able to be really alive in the opportunity of the body so that it's not, yes, of course, you know, all these things happen. And they'll arrive into, you know, forms and they change in space and it's kind of, you know, everything. But if we really went into, you know, and it doesn't always mean slow, but when you really try and inhabit, you know, the details between where something takes off and where it goes, then the possibilities are endless and they also can be honed then and crafted in relationship to the vision -

SE: Yes.

MY: - that one is holding for the piece.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: All the way through.

SE: Yes.

MY: And that becomes the support to make the decisions then also because, and this is to do with, you know, the beginning and then the thing that's ended. Then it's sort of, so it's complete. So the next decision gets made out of something that was kind of complete in my head, you know.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: That might not be complete to anybody.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: But if I feel well, that's completed itself, you know. And of course, there's times where it's great and it's completed. It's completed. And the dissolution is so full.

SE: Yes.

MY: And then it's so something else can happen. But I love how you talked about it as transition. Like everything is ultimately the transition.

SE: Absolutely.

EE: Yes. I just love that word, you know.

SE: Yes.

EE: It just feels it's appropriate for how I have been thinking through my improvised playing.

MY: Yes.

EE: You know.

MY: Yes.

EE: In relation to Steve as well.

MY: Yes.

EE: Because I'm feeding off also the visuals.

MY: Yes.

EE: I'm also looking at Steve.

MY: Yes.

SE: Yes.

EE: And my transitioning is interplaying with everything to do with his movement as well as his sound because he might move in a certain way. I can see that he's maybe enjoying even what he's doing.

SE: Yes.

EE: So why would I interrupt that?

SE: Yes.

EE: Or maybe I feel he's coming to rest on something, so I transition him to something else.

SE: Yes. Yes.

EE: So it's not always about the sound.

SE: That's interesting actually, Eugene.

EE: It's about the being.

SE: Yes. Yes. Actually, maybe I'm not as aware of those visual cues that I'm giving as I might be, but then maybe then they'd be a little bit more self-conscious because it's a kind of a very kind of authentic type of choreography, if you like, because it simply just goes with the movements. Maybe it expresses in certain moments just the opening out of the voice into the space or a particular kind of trajectory or, you know, but it happens. It happens. It's not something that I've planned for, but I couldn't really do it any other way.

MY: Yes.

SE: Because it's rooted absolutely in the body, you know.

MY: Yes.

SE: And so in that sense, it's a kind of a dance or movement practice.

MY: Absolutely. Yes.

SE: You know, in itself.

MY: Yes.

SE: And sometimes I'm not quite sure what comes first.

MY: First. Yes.

SE: Which is interesting.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know?

MY: Very fascinating.

EE: Yes.

SE: So my response -

MY: And very fascinating from a dance perspective.

EE: Yes, I can imagine.

SE: Yes.

EE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Because this is still the dialogue. Oh well, when am I generating, you know, in movement? You know, when am I -

SE: Yes.

MY: - generating the movement or when is the movement generating, you know, the thinking or something, you know?

SE: The thought process.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: Absolutely. Yes. Yes.

MY: So it was kind of those kind of places. What comes first -

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: - is not the, you know, but it's kind of an interesting thing to track because I find it useful to this question of generating like when do I know I need to go into generating -

SE: Yes.

MY: - to find also?

SE: Yes.

MY: You know, because sometimes I have to stimulate generating so that I can kind of go into finding or sometimes I need to be really in finding.

SE: Oh, that's really interesting. There's so many parallels between -

MY: Yes.

SE: - our processes here because sometimes I'm aware of... So right at the beginning of an improvisational, though this could happen at any point in it, but you know, how do you start an improvisation?

MY: Yes.

SE: Ok.

MY: Yes.

SE: So you wait.

MY: Yes.

SE: And you wait for, you know, for an impulse.

MY: Yes.

SE: And then in my case, that impulse will generate a sound of some sort.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: Now, I rarely, very, very rarely try to condition -

MY: Yes.

SE: - that sound.

MY: Yes.

SE: Because in a sense, I'm just kind of interested in, if you like, the arc of that.

MY: Yes.

SE: And I don't want to interrupt it. I want to encourage it because I'm not consciously making decisions.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, and neither should I.

MY: Yes.

SE: But I think we would probably both acknowledge that within the context of the kind of the authentic movement or sound, that we do make certain judgements every now and again.

MY: Yes.

SE: Which is interesting.

MY: Yes.

SE: Which is interesting. So we do shape.

MY: Yes.

SE: But I know for myself, right at the beginning of an improvisation or at the beginning of a phrase even, I will just simply respond to, you know, to that current that seems to be kind of running through me, that charge and then I express it. I articulate it in some way and then I get a sense of what might come after it. It will inform something. So you know, there will be a moment when I kind of throw the voice into the space and the voice does something that I wasn't expecting. You know, it might be mediated by the space in a particular way, by the acoustical properties -

MY: Yes.

SE: - of the space. So a quality of sound, not just the pitch, but the quality of the sound might be suggestive to me of something, you know. And all of a sudden then, I don't know, there might be a certain poignancy in that quality and all of a sudden, I can feel myself affected by it, almost like I'm saying to myself, 'Wow, that's how you feel right now'. Well, ok, let's move on with that as an enquiry.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know?

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: Is it the same with movement?

MY: Yes. Yes. Yes.

SE: Yes.

MY: Absolutely.

SE: Yes.

MY: And I mean and then you have this moment of oh, here's this. Do I move on with this enquiry or, as you say, the judgment or maybe it's an aesthetic choice around the piece.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And maybe it's like well, no.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Because I know what's happened in the last 10 minutes of the piece.

SE: Yes.

MY: And I think something else is needed actually -

SE: Yes.

MY: - in terms of what my understanding -

SE: Yes.

MY: - of the arc is.

SE: Yes.

MY: And so shed, that's a word that Rosalind Crisp uses a lot actually and I kind of really draw on it. So when do you need to shed? And it's just a really, you know.

SE: Yes.

MY: That you shed it.

SE: Yes.

MY: You know, you shed the thing -

SE: Yes.

MY: - because from some processing of holding the piece, you know that it needs to go at the moment actually. It needs to go, like not direction.

EE: That's interesting. That's very interesting.

SE: So Eugene, that's what you're reading when you sense that I might have fulfilled -

MY: Yes.

SE: - a kind of a line of enquiry. It's not the whole enquiry.

MY: Yes.

SE: But it's part of it.

MY: Yes.

SE: But there's a sense in which that has resolved itself in some way.

MY: Yes.

SE: It has culminated in some way and then a transition of some sort -

MY: Yes.

SE: - needs to -

MY: Yes.

SE: - occur. But you're reading that in sound, but also in terms of, you know, its visual expression as well.

EE: Yes, absolutely.

SE: Its physical expression.

MY: Yes.

SE: Which is really interesting.

EE: And for me like as a novice -

MY: Yes.

EE: - when I started doing, this compulsion to move it on myself.

MY: Yes.

EE: In a way that was an inexperience and now I find myself waiting. Waiting to move on because -

SE: Yes.

EE: - I'm not ready to move on.

MY: Yes.

EE: What I'm going to generate hasn't arrived.

MY: Yes. Yes.

EE: And I've shed it.

MY: But you're still in performance.

EE: Oh yes, very much so.

MY: And that's the key.

EE: Yes. But you're in that poised moment of waiting.

MY: Yes.

EE: And it's the nicest moment.

SE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

EE: Because there's all the potential and expectation of what's going to happen.

MY: Yes.

EE: And they're not forcing you. They're not forcing you.

MY: Or it's the most terrifying moment.

EE: Yes. Oh god, yes.

MY: And that's where -

SE: Yes.

EE: Absolutely, yes.

MY: Because sometimes when you feel -

EE: Yes.

MY: - kind of I have nothing.

EE: Yes. Yes.

SE: Yes. I think I'm spent here.

EE: Yes.

MY: Nothing's making sense right now.

EE: Yes.

SE: Anybody out there got any ideas?

EE: Well, nothing is better.

MY: Than stuff.

EE: Than stuff.

MY: Absolutely.

SE: Yes.

MY: Absolutely.

EE: That's what I've discovered.

MY: Absolutely.

EE: Nothing is better than stuff.

MY: But then it's also again, this goes into the kind of choreography or non-choreography. It's you're choosing then, again, talking from experience, but you know, I'm standing there thinking ok, oh yes, I could do a whole load of stuff here.

EE: Yes. I know, yes.

MY: Fill in the gap.

SE: Yes. Yes.

EE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Or you know, yes, I can say ok, I feel I need to generate and I just go into generating.

SE: Yes.

MY: Wherever generating is coming from, it's coming from my discomfort or it's coming from my anxiety about having nothing and so I generate.

EE: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

MY: You know, whatever it is.

SE: Yes.

MY: And then all of a sudden, generating is... But I'm always keeping in my radar that what's essential here, you know?

SE: Yes.

MY: What's necessary?

SE: Yes. I'm still operating within this arc, yes.

MY: Ok, it's necessary for me to generate. Exactly.

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: And I'm generating because it feels really necessary right now.

SE: Yes.

MY: But I'm continuing to hone that all the time. That necessity is there and then all of a sudden, something really kind of comes and then it's...

SE: Yes.

MY: But for me, it's always that question of what's necessary?

EE: Because I've noticed sometimes when I'm not happy with what I'm doing, it's because it's superfluous.

MY: Yes.

EE: Isn't that funny?

MY: Yes.

SE: But it's also probably because the conscious -

EE: And I don't like it. I don't like it. I inherently don't like it, you know, because I shouldn't have done it.

MY: Yes.

EE: You know, because I should have waited. Isn't that funny?

MY: Yes.

SE: But I think also there, you know, when we stop, even if it's just for, you know, the briefest moment, stop trusting in the methodology, that of course is where, you know, the conscious mind wants to rush in. So it's conscious mind in panic mode.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: What comes next? And I know that, you know -

MY: Yes.

SE: - when I first started to do solo pieces in gallery spaces, it was at that point that I would often resort to links.

EE: Oh yes.

SE: So ok, so wow, do you know what I can do? You'll never guess what I can do. At this point, I'm about to show you. Prepare to be impressed, you know. Here comes Steve, full throttle, coming at you, you know. And then, you know, I'd finish it and you know, I could feel myself kind of almost kind of swaggering out, you know.

EE: Yes.

SE: Oh.

MY: I was my best there.

EE: Yes.

SE: Guys, yes. So you weren't sure up till that point, were you? Hey, I've got you in there now, you know.

EE: Yes. Yes. Yes.

SE: And it's so cheap and torture, you know.

MY: Yes.

SE: I'd finish and I'd go...

EE: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: You know?

MY: Yes. We'll pull out the -

SE: The moves.

MY: - moves in the thing because it's going to impress.

EE: Yes.

MY: Even if we kind of know it's going to put a dent in what's been filled, you know.

SE: Exactly.

MY: But it's just this desire to sort of say oh fuck it. It's just impossible to kind of sometimes manage it.

EE: Yes.

MY: You know the expectation is for some high kicks or something.

EE: Yes.

MY: And you're thinking ok, I can do this and it'll get me through. I know it worked really well in some other galleries.

EE: Yes. Yes.

Appendix 8 DISCOURSE May 1st 2019

First Prep Second Performance Eugene & Steve

EE: Eugene
SE: Steve
AN: Alan

ST: There's a sense in which in, particularly in the long improvisational piece in which because we're always inhabiting the moment, there's always the possibility of somehow losing sight of the general picture, of the wider picture, so of what we are wanting to achieve. So there's a whole host of issues there in regard, for example, to the way that we compose around the text. What should have primacy? So do we compose instrumentally and then find ways of dropping the text onto that kind of bed of sound? That's certainly one way of going and I, you know, I participate in that kind of creative process quite regularly. The other way of course is to start with the text. So we have a choice there. We have choices to make. Of course, ideally, we should mix and match. So at some point, it should seem as if it's the abstract sound that has primacy, that that's kind of leading the piece and sometimes it might be that it's very clearly the text which has primacy. But we can explore those two ways of proceeding.

EE: And tell me, what do you think? Like if we start with the text as having primacy, do we then, are we moving away from the improvisational model then by fixing that somewhere?

ST: Well, it's all about really levels of fixing, isn't it?

EE: Yes.

ST: There. Now, we are not tied to kind of a puristic intention here, which is concerned only with free improvisation.

EE: That's it, yes, yes.

ST: That's not a god that I care to worship.

EE: Yes. Yes.

ST: Do you know what I mean?

EE: Yes. That's important to say.

ST: Absolutely.

EE: Yes. Yes.

ST: So I'm quite happy to fix partially, to say well, ok, you know, we'll fix these points. These are the anchor points. We will know where we are in this -

EE: Yes.

ST: - journey as we pass through them, but how we get between them is open to the moment. And this was why, for example, and this wouldn't be the only way of doing it, this is why I thought of those refrains.

EE: Yes.

ST: Having fixed them in Seán's piece and we were amazed at the impact that that had on audience when we Q&Aed afterwards. Audience -

EE: And was the refrain different each time?

ST: No, it was exactly -

EE: Ok.

ST: - the same, but it could be different each time. When I say it was exactly the same, it was always in unison, but then it was a male voice and a female voice, so you have the difference in pitch -

EE: Yes.

ST: - and timbre. And we kind of worked that. Sophine is very clever in the way that, she's an actress as well as a wonderful singer, so we kind of played with the edges of that, you know. But afterwards, audience in a sense thanked us for the structure that that offered them because the rest of it was, you know, it was just kind of constantly in a state of flux, you know.

EE: Which is ok too.

Appendix 9 DISCOURSE May 1st 2019

Preparation for the second performance

EE: Eugene
SE: Steve
MY: Mary

SE: Really picked up this, so what Eugene and I have started to envisage was text operating much more prominently as image, so as something visual rather than just in sound.

MY: Yes.

SE: So we were kind of, we were trying to in a sense, I guess, define the kind of space we were wanting to create.

EE: Yes.

MY: Yes.

SE: So you know, we had talked in general terms about... Certainly, with expanding the space or clearing the space with the removal of the seating system, we then, of course, we're starting to push towards something which in general terms could be described as installation. And I think certainly we had discussed -

EE: Yes, we had discussed that.

SE: - the work as a -

EE: We have, yes.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: - as, you know, as an attempt to create an experience for audience and for artists alike. So something that's, you know, kind of immersive and kind of involving. And so once you start to consider it as an installation space, of course you then have to consider what kind of elements you might have that will make it into a kind of a fully satisfying experience for audience, you know.

So then we started to go back to the issue of what we were composing and so the decision had to be made about the texts, what kind of role the texts would play. They'd been very prominent in the first iteration of this project, but in a quite formal way. So in a kind of relatively, although there was a certain element of expansiveness in the way that we treated them, formally, we were still performing them as five stanzas, you know, to fit a sequence. So that conversation then started to draw attention to the role that we wanted the text to play in this new iteration and then we started to imagine the text as something

kind of fluid within the space. So it's sonic and it's visual. Ok, so then we're talking about...

Are we talking about projection? Well, of course we were. We were also talking about a very particular type of projection as well. So a projection of the text which would -

Preparation for the second performance

EE: Eugene
SE: Steve
MY: Mary

MY: What I was trying to do was also work with the idea of things not feeling fixed.
Yes. So that there's kind of fluidity –

SE: Yes.

MY: - in its identity because it's not like we constructed this material for this so that
there's this kind of fluidity around those things. So you know, conceptually,
trying to make sense of these things, you know.

SE: We've been talking about fixity as well.

MY: Oh.

SE: And non-fixity.

Appendix

11

DISCOURSE Mary 3rd 2019

EM: Eugene Murphy
Mary: Mary
Steve: Steve

EM: So this is May the 3rd.

Mary: Yes it is.

EM: 2019.

Mary: It is isn't it.

Steve: Here we are.

EM: So you have your copy book with you.

Mary: Yes I kind of...

EM: Very consoling here.

Mary: You know I kind of feel there is sometimes I don't trust my memory these days or something I should but there are just something that I feel that I ...not I lost but certain things that I couldn't hold on to since the last meeting. Last...and I felt I didn't have my notebook. I always have my notebook so that's why I said. Bring your notebook today Mary.

Steve: I've got mine with me actually.

EM: Do you.

Mary: Yes the old notebooks are great sure half the time I never go through them but.

EM: Sometime she will.

Mary: There is stacks of things. They are archives too.

EM: They are.

Steve: Absolutely.

Mary: And you ...and similarly I do pluck out I kind of have got a better system now where I kind of record on the outside what the bulk of the projects that are in them and sometimes I do ..what was I working on with that person or just flick. You know and when I am very organised then I have highlighted certain things that ...yes the old notebooks. Something about them.

EM: Well we are dealing with so much information so much data in the context of a project like this.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: I think it's unreasonable to expect yourself to be able to hold it.

Mary: To hold it. Yes for sure.

Steve: Particularly detail.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: You know the broad brush stuff.

Mary: That stays.

Steve: We in bed that don't we.

Mary: Yes that stays yes but sometimes it's even words. It's not even that if things, they are kind of ideas that are kind of encapsulated in certain words and they are very important somehow when you look back it's not the word, oh yes that was completely in relationship to that thing we were working.

Steve: Yes, yes yes.

Mary: You know it can be.

Steve: But they can still act as triggers can't they?

Mary: They can.

Steve: Sometimes they can be very vivid in that way you know.

Mary: Yes.

EM: And sometime things ferment you know.

Mary: Yes.

EM: And then come back to it.

Steve: Definitely.

EM: You treat it in a deeper way maybe.

Mary: Yes exactly.

Steve: Absolutely. So I guess we need to start by kind of mapping out our expectations of the day so...

EM: Yes.

Steve: You know what, what do we need to achieve. What do we think we can achieve today. Your presentation is at what time?

EM: I leave here at half ten just to gather myself and have a look at it. It's at eleven. I have asked permission to leave and I'd say they will let me leave. So I should be back by half eleven.

Steve: That's ok.

EM: The thing is at eleven but I'd like a little bit of time just to recollect or.

Mary: Yes to switch modes.

Steve: So one of the things we are going to do maybe if we can is to map out this space and get a sense of it's dimensions.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Where we are likely to operate and what we can hope to do within this.

EM: Probably that plinth or that block is in at the back would it be.

Mary: It's in the back room I think yes.

Steve: Any kind of impressions from yesterday we are talking about stuff just kind of bedding ideas. Is there anything that, that has occurred to any of us. Just yesterday if you like and we discussed a whole range of ideas yesterday. A whole range of approaches to the performance we obviously then that...

EM: I feel the thing that I am not sure about in all of it is the audience perspective. That's something I think that really needs to be wrestled with.

Steve: Are you talking about that in terms of the relationship..

EM: Yes the relationship with the....activity and how thathow they are not frustrated in the space because that...

Steve: You see funnily enough I was talking about things starting to percolate if you like. It occurred to me that we were talking about those sorts of issues yesterday you know those kind of relation lines that we will make for audience you knowI often think to myself that it is an unreasonable expectation to believe that it's possible to determine how audience will experience and I don't think that there is anything wrong with acknowledging the fact that everybody's experience will be slightly different obviously we perceive things in different ways. We interpret them in different ways. We understand that but I don't think there is anything wrong with somebody not being flush on to a screen for example in terms of their sighting of it. I think we are trying to create an immersive experience. An immersive space for an audience. I don't think there is anything wrong with audience really in a sense you know rather than doing

this in order to experience it fully they have got to be a little bit more mobile you know. Not physically so necessarily but that is also something that you could incorporate but I feel as if audience in itself does not need to, needs to be kind of more active in the interaction with the piece.

EM: I suppose because there is the element of the unknown. Even with what you are saying. Looking around I don't know what they will be looking around. How high, how low.

Steve: But we will be, we will be, we will be presenting them with a lot of information and it's on the move constantly so it's pulse will be relatively slow but I think in a sense they will bring their own choreography to that and so I don't think we should worry too much about ...you know a clear sight lines. You know those very straight relational lines I think here what we are wanting is this rather rather than that. So I think that they will be constantly scanning the space anyway for information and I think that's fine. We are going to invite that anyway because we are going to be the text is going to be appearing all over the space so there won't be a single focus for the gaze. Throughout the piece. So in that respect they are much more engaged I think, so I don't think we should worry too much about. I think we need to dispense with that idea of you know establishing those tramlines of sight and gaze.

Mary: I mean I think, I think there is no way really with if we disperse people around the space I don't think there is any way to achieve any kind of clear lines. I don't think. So I think that's I think we definitely have to accept that there is going to be nobody with a perfect view or what a perfect view might be.

Steve: Exactly.

Mary: You know or yes there might be somebody sitting you know direct onto the screen or maybe there is not you know or they might have to turn a little but I do ...I think that there is still for us a question in how do we set up the experience so that, so that is okay because it's absolutely legitimate you know to say well ok there is the piano and you know this is probably maybe there is a screen. If this is the setup right, there is a screen there, there is a screen there. So where I am sitting is really good as in I feel comfortable right now if I thought ok there is a screen there, there is a screen there. I feel that is kind of a nice way to kind of to be able to and I am comfortable with doing that you knowthis and this...but maybe how is your seat Eugene or how is your seat there. Are those and it's just we have no way of anticipating how anybody will feel but there is for us a kind of a rigour that we have to go through in order to kind of pre-empt some things for people. That's our job really isn't it?

Steve: Absolutely, well we curate don't we. We curate their experience to an extent.

Mary: Yes and maybe the thing is we deliberately we make sure that nobody has a direct...so you know we make sure there is no chair that sits with a front on view of a screen and maybe they are the choices but you know what is that like. What is it achieving for the audience would be the question. I mean the question of immersive is really interesting isn't it because we all have an idea of what the

immersive is for ourselves. It's interesting but yet there is no way to anticipate the audience.

Steve: There isn't. There isn't.

Mary: But yet we make some choices based on what we think might allow people enter an immersive experience that we kind of define what's immersive in some ways.

Steve: We do, as we curate we offer cues don't we.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: In a sense we are, we are offering a lens.

Mary: Yes, yes.

Steve: For example I don't know that Eugene stands to play for example.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Is probably a moment when everybody's attention would be drawn to that.

Mary: Changes.

Steve: You know so we understand so here we are talking about that choreography aren't we?

Mary: Yes.

Steve: It's almost like the choreography of the gaze and there is a form of storytelling taking place even if it is very very abstract.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: In those moments. So certainly we could kind of start to map that out. Couldn't we?

Mary: Yes.

Steve: And then we are talking about ourselves as players in the space as presences in the space and what is our function of the curation of the experience. What is it that we are wanting to say physically and I think here you have Mary's experience would be much deeper and broader than

EM: Yes.

Steve: Than ours, obviously I am curating myself in all of the time when I come and put solo work together so I have some sense of I don't think I understand space in the way that a dancer does. I don't. So maybe then we, maybe we could aim in some way today and I suppose mapping out the dimensions of the space would

be part of this maybe we could by the end of the day to have some kind of blocking.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Just generally.

Mary: A general, I think that would be good yes not that we have to fixate on it.

Steve: Absolutely not.

Mary: But, just so we have something that we know that we're moving from or towards so you know because I guess where we are at is that all the options are open.

Steve: Yes.

Mary: But we know that there are some potential pitfalls in terms of what the audience might experience in terms of how to kind of set the space up because we are fixing some parameters. Like we are saying you choose a seat and you sit there for forty minutes so it's not, there is not choice for them. There are certain choices in terms of they can move if they are comfortable for them to do that but we are not saying there are no chairs and you walk in like you are in a gallery so you have choices to stay or to leave or to maybe view from over there so we are fixing a certain when people sit on one chair, they are sitting on one chair probably. I mean we are probably not opening so that in itself is you know it's putting people in a, in one place so I guess in one way we need to know what experience of those place potentially is. It's...it's not quite random because we know that some person is going to be sitting this way and some person might be sitting that way and some person might be sitting that way so do we need to know you know from our experience what that's like and the only way we can know that is really is I guess by kind of mapping the space and figuring out what that feels like.

Steve: The issue that you raised there Mary about audience sitting in one place. I mean we could subvert that couldn't we. We could actually give permission, we could in a sense encourage the movement of the audience around the space I mean obviously we would have to make sure that there would be limited that obviously there would be probably best if they didn't come right close to us but you know, we might have a different view on that but I don't know so giving the...seeing the space as a viewing space not just a listening space. Something that is installationsomething which might benefit from certain amount of movement of the view in that case as part of the experience I mean we can dismiss that idea right now if we can choose but nothing is fixed, just yet.

Mary: I mean I love the idea. I love the potential of it. I think from my experience. When people go into a certain context even a room that they associate with a different approach like a theatre room that a lot of people will have had a general seating experienceinviting them to move around the space or change their location almost becomes something that they have to negotiate themselves which can really work but which also can interfere.

Steve: Yes yes.

Mary: You know this too Steve from your experiences and I am just wondering int his context specifically. If we were going into and I have seen it even in a gallery. When you invite, you write it on the note. Please feel free to move around during the performance. Change your location. Generally people don't.

Steve: It's very true.

Mary: Isn't it...they just don't and I understand ...and sometimes I know that I have been invited to do that myself. I got a piece and please move around. I'd like you to see the piece from different angles and then I sit down and think, I actually don't really feel like moving you know I like where I have sat actually and then I begin to think but I know the artist really wanted me to move and I should move.

Steve: Yes.

Mary: Is this a good moment.

Steve: Do I need to...

EM: All the anguish that that entails. Takes the focus away.

Steve: There is an anxiety attached to that isn't there.

Mary: Which conceptually could be interesting but I wonder maybe it's not the question that is being asked here. Or maybe it is I don't know or maybe it's not the place to have that question.

Steve: Yes possibly.

Mary: Or maybe it is?

Steve: I am kind of now, I am kind of thinking ways in which we could offer the opportunity to view the piece from a different angle. So it could be that we have a relatively regular bank of seating, cluster of seating or a couple of and then we have other kind of unoccupied clusters and so the, so the instruction to audiences or the invitation to audiences would actually be put some, some, some chairs in different parts of the space. You are entirely welcome to stay where you first alight but if you feel as if you need to experience the piece in a slightly different way almost so that you in doing you become active within the piece then the opportunity is therefore kind of facilitated.

EM: I am just being honest here. If someone I know very well is sitting close to the piano I will be absolutely uncomfortable and distracted instantly.

Steve: But we would take account of that so you wouldn't have somebody. You wouldn't have a seat or seats there but you might have some seats over here.

Mary: Yes.

- Steve: And perhaps that wouldn't disturb you quite so much, hopefully that wouldn't disturb you at all. Obviously we have to take into account our own sensitivities here you know.
- EM: Because I just remembered two dancers that I know really, really well and I was sitting in the front row and part of the dance was the last part they were working very pornographically towards me and ended here and I don't know which way to look.
- Mary: Get out of my face.
- EM: But it's almost like the moment was broken because there was too many complexities in that performance/personal relationship.
- Steve: You know Mary is probably right maybe we just make the decision well you know that's a discussion we could have on another occasion. If we were to meet to collaborate on another piece maybe that could be central to it. More significantly part of it.
- Mary: What's central is kind of important isn't it because it might be something that you say well, maybe this environment or this context the fact that everybody that will come will know it is a theatre or all their experiences will be laden with memory of seating arrangement and should that matter. Probably not but maybe it does, whereas if they were going to see it in another context there might be more opportunity to take that questions and also I know, I did this piece in visual. I don't know if you know Visual Contemporary Art Gallery in Carlow. A beautiful space.
- Steve: Oh yes, yes, yes.
- Mary: Really beautiful and I had this question, how you know had done it and audience staying in like this circle around me as though they were in a theatre, they stay back. I had this lovely desire, it's not a pressured space I want you know and I put seating around. Right, let's say this is the gallery space and so I place kind of random seating. There were nice benches and you know some people came and sat in them and so many clung to the walls and I had all these empty seats and it was such a weird performing experiences because there were these empty seats that I had invited really people to sit on and then they didn't sit on it and I feel really weird. It's like ok they are uncomfortable clearly to sit here so now I kind of have to deal with that in my performance. Which is ok but I remember kind of feeling afterwards, hmmmm why didn't they sit down.
- Steve: You should have scolded them!
- Mary: I put the seats there, I wanted you there. Why the hell didn't you...
- Steve: This was a beautiful experience.
- Mary: What is wrong with you people.

Steve: But interestingly enough of course Mary...and you will know this full well you know in that situation. Unoccupied chairs have a presence don't they?

Mary: They do.

Steve: They are shouting, they are shouting stuff out at you. It is information for you as a performer.

EM: It's not nice information sometimes.

Steve: For me I have to say sometimes that can be quite useful, it can be quite energising. It can actually take the improvisation, the space that I am then operating from and the internal space. I can interpret that in all kinds of ways you know. So it can be useful but it can also be disconcerting can't it and slightly frustrating. Jesus, this was the plan...this was the plan and you have bloody...

Mary: And of course you are working with being able to but I think from that, in that moment yes it did give me a bit of anxiety because, only because I think it dispersed some sort of atmosphere that I sort of felt that was necessary. I should have been able to let that go or something. No it did. I mean the piece was most difficult to consolidate in that space anyway so they were kind of other challenges as well on top of that one in different parts of the space where I had other things going on. It was kind of overall I was left with a oh my God what happened there you know. But the seats I remember thinking oh my God I can't believe it's so obvious that you sit on those seats and you have people clinging to the wall. Which is fine. So I guess you know, you know I am carrying that as a kind of a recent memory also and wondering do we have the time to certainly really dig into the question you know. I actually felt that how far would I have to go in order....If I have really felt like that this was a fundamental part of the piece that people inhabited those chairs. I had put them there for a reason and I felt in the same way that you don't put chairs there you leave them in a theatre space because that's the experience that is valuable you feel as an artist that I might have needed like a host or something that would really have walked around and said would you like a seat. Here is a seat for you and we actually have a host that would kind of facilitate that.

EM: That's an interesting concept.

Mary: Yes that actually it feels like the audience in that moment of trying to figure out with you, you have rushed in the door probably and you have kind of got your ticket and then you are kind of on your own or something or you don't know anybody but there is so much to negotiate you know. When you arrive into those..

EM: Or all part of it.

Steve: I have actually used a guide before.

Mary: Yes. Yes.

- Steve: You know kind of, I devised a piece which involved a perambulation before the audience actually got the space to the performance space but not only did I want them to take a very very particular path but I actually wanted them to, I needed the guide to set a tempo for the walk.
- Mary: Oh right.
- Steve: So they started to get deeper into themselves as a result of it, so it was very very important and also there were along the way there were things that the guide needed to bring to their attention. The guide couldn't speak. One of the instructions was silence on the walk but certain things needed to be brought to their attention as well as the experience and it worked really well.
- Mary: Right.
- Steve: It worked really I have to say. So are we saying then that we can dispense with those, that enquiry if you like as far as those sort of enquiries of moving people around.
- Mary: Moving people is a question really of whether people stay in one seat or whether we encourage them to take different angles.
- Steve: Well I suppose in a sense we can offer the elements of choice not in terms of movement but in terms of where people sit by offering different views of the piece. So it could be that we have clusters in various parts of the space rather than them all being roughly here. And then people can make some decision knowing that where they choose to sit will in a sense crucial accept their experience.
- EM:
seat People can be quite discerning anyway when they come in looking for the best relative to what they analyse the space and say.
- Steve: And we do, we ...
- EM: Unless you are trying to get out quickly they would be down there.
- Mary: Exactly.
- EM: If they are a comfortable they will be up here.
- Steve: Yes but ...so I suppose straight away that would suggest that in effect we are offering a kind of a...this is something that we can fix at some stage, we need to fix but it's, it could be an in the round kind of experience.
- Mary: Yes, you mean in the seating circle?
- Steve: Yes, so, so actually when you, when you go into that kind of a space. If it is a theatre space for example and it's you know, it's in the round you kind of get the fact that it's....
- EM: That it's alternative to the normal.

Steve: Absolutely so, so, so that the relational lines are a little bit negotiable aren't they. So, so in effect what you are saying is that it's not, the engagement that the focus does not go that way but it kind of goes that way around the space you know. You are expecting that what's going to happen will occupy the whole of that space and that you'll probably be scanning it rather than simply doing that you know. So I am not suggesting that we put you know kind of an unbroken circle of chairs around us but....

Mary: But we could...

Steve: We could have clusters.

EM: That create that.

Steve: Around that kind of parameter of the circle if you like.

Mary: Yes, yes I mean the one thing that's in that context of a circle because I also thought what if we feel that the dispersion of chairs at some point doesn't work. Like let's say we get to the end of May and we are like ok, this doesn't work for whatever reason but once we throw that out and of course the circle can you know, we can reorganise a circle. The one challenge of a circle for me pre-empting again is that any screen object placed in the space with a circle is automatically giving people, automatically get the back end with nothing on it. In a circle so that would immediately say ok is there, is there maybe has to be projected onto the floor or you know it does raise that question, the circle with the flat surface of the screen...

Steve: It does.

Mary: It's perfect with a piano because you get all and with the performers you get all dimensions but the minute you have a screen you have one flat surface that is being utilised and it never changes or else we have a mobile thing but so but again it's just a ...it's a pre-empt.

Steve: That's an important issue. That's an important issue actually.

Mary: Or you could say ok will we project the same thing onto two sides.

Steve: Well that was that was one way around it isn't it.

Mary: But, yes it is a way around it I guess but yes.

Steve: So how then do we start the blocking?

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Is there anything that we can fix at this point? Can we in terms of for example where the piano or pianos might go, can wecan we gain any sense at this point of where we might, where we might fix something then that becomes a fulcrum.

Mary: Yes I think it's good. I mean if we are thinking about the theatre space. That is the theatre there right. I mean it's relatively. The doors enter, no they are further back aren't they. They are quite, the entrance door to the back of the theatre are further down but the end of the theatre, the doors are...

EM: The same?

Mary: Are kind of roughly the same.

Steve: Yes it is yes.

Mary: It is kind of roughly the same size.

EM: Like it's not that big you know.

Mary: It's not that big no but it's a bit bigger than here but it's probably not that much wider is it?

EM: It is because that has the round because it's square it does create a...

Mary: But basically the width inside the space because when the chairs go back inside they still a wall a depth. So you are probably looking at nothing. Something kind of similar in terms of width and it's definitely longer in there isn't it.

Steve: Yes. It is. It is. Yes it is.

Mary:

EM: Well if it is one piano it will be easier.

Steve: Yes. That will then....

EM: We did havea visual issue in the last performance was where to put the piano so the piano didn't look like an accompanist.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: We were talking about expectations.

EM: So it wasn't like I was coming in.

Steve: Piano, voice it's a recital.

Mary: It's a recital.

Steve: You know the piano will effectively support the voice.

Mary: Of course. Yes.

Steve: So the voice is the main thing and the piano is the secondary, it's ancillary in a sense.

Mary: Exactly.

Steve: Which is not what we want. We know that's not the way it is.

Mary: Exactly yes.

Steve: Or the way we would want it to be so, so yes we were quite careful about that weren't we and

EM: And then where would the block go in relation to and let's say there were two pianos and that's this other physical screen.

Mary: Screen...yes.

EM: To go in place.

Steve: Can we look at this kind of theatrically then?

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Because I think in that, in that more traditional concert setting it was clear that people were seeing and hearingSteve Boyland and Eugene Murphyand kind of part of the deal there is that they should be able to see us to you know to recognise our individuality our ...they should recognise us in a sense. Here I think we are looking for something different to that. I in a sense, I don't feel as if. I don't want to be visible in that way. I don't want them to be looking at Steve Boyland I want them to be, in fact not quite sure where my, where the voice is coming from even. Is that coming from him, I don't know but in a sense I don't want to make that completely obvious because I don't think that's important. We are not in a sense playing ourselves, we play ourselves in concert situations but here I think it's my feeling is that it is important that we carry some of the enigma physically. The enigma of the piece.

EM: How do you create that?

Steve: The fluid nature of it. Well we will have to do it with lighting for example. Wont' it and in regard to our relationship with each other and whatever is in the space. So that would impact on the way that we, the way that we situate the piano for example. So do we want people to look at the piano and see it as that classical instrument that we all know or do we want it to be a piece of for them to view it as almost as a piece of sculpture. Something that they know is contributing to what they are hearing. All I am saying is traditionally you know we kind of we'd like the piano in a very particular way so that people could see it. I am not suggesting that it's totally obscured but I am suggesting that it might be more interesting if the audience had a little bit more work to do there in terms of. We are talking about experience. How they experience it. We can set out an installation but we can still end up with a relatively traditional performance where it might be expressing traditional performance relationships.

Mary: Yes, yes.

Steve: And personas.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: And so I would quite like to move away from that I am just kind of much more interested if they are going to be concentrating on images, I'd be much more interested in them concentrating on the experience of the lighting and the words that are moving around them and you know kind of dissolving and becoming and so I think that in a sense there is something theatrical about this. It's installation but it's also if it's going ...there is performance. There is an element of performance but it's performance but it's not concert and I think here we are talking about offering a kind of a theatrical performance within the installation.

Mary: I think it's interesting to think about it in terms of theatre alright and I completely agree you know we do have to be, we are on that line of being able to remove it from the concert setting or just really stay within that realm but move the chairs around but it could and I think that's a really, important one.

EM: So in a way we are subverting the live sonic heart to the visual because one way you could do it. I am just talking as I am thinking here. We could have the two pianos, they might be there as an installation rather than as a ...as instruments.

Steve: Absolutely.

EM: So you could have this one facing this one and the keyboard facing the other way on the other one and the plinth could be in front of them you know so they are not central but you can see they are pianos.

Steve: Yes absolutely.

EM: You might see people, I might move from one piano to the other as part of the theatre of it. You might, we might whatever. I am saying that if we are doing that then we are taking it another step even visually aren't we.

Steve: But I, I would be all in favour of a situation in which we intensify the enigma of the, of the piece

EM: It's funny even Karan Casey's performance that I saw which was a traditional performance of sync but it had some interesting novel elements in it but it took place in very low lighting throughout. Now you could see Caren doing all the things but the lighting was very low and it was only at the very end that the lighting came on her but it was quite effective that for 45 minutes I thought this subdued lighting as well and it did force you to listen more by ...

Steve: But I think you enter into something don't you. You enter into a different, a different space in establishing that relationship. You in a sense having to dispense with your expectations and simply deal with what's emerging.

- Mary: Yes, yes.
- Steve: And deal with what's in front of you and around you. So that would certainly be part of my vision for this. For the piece. There is absolutely no need for them to have the voice given you know more or less in front of them and they can see you know, they can see every type of movement and articulation very, very, clearly. I more and more in my own solo work I am wanting to, to take the, the very literal nature of that interaction away. I am wanting in a sense to kind of de-personalise myself as presence so I might be representing something but I am not representing Steve Boyland at that point in time. I don't think that's important. I really don't.
- Mary: Yes absolutely.
- Steve: And I think in a sense Mary's presence in the space is already mediated.
- Mary: Yes, yes. Yes exactly.
- Steve: That's one of the things I love about that. You know nobody is going to know that they will if they see your name attached to the project but nobody would know that, that's you but they still wouldn't necessarily know that it was you. You're an element, kind of an abstraction andin the way that those elements of nature that you are including in the video are also just elements they are de-contextualised and we are doing that with the text as well. Generally people encounter the text when they see text they encounter it on a page generally and it's static and they have total control of how they interact with it you know but here well it's all around them. It's an element. It's another element and I think we should be elements within the space and we should in a sense mirror the, you know the ...you know thethe
- EM: The mediations.
- Steve: Absolutely the mediated presence ...
- EM: Of everything else.
- Steve: The film absolutely. Everything is mediated in some way. Everything is being or becoming or dissolving isn't it in some way and that was why in a sense I thought it would be very interesting. I don't know if this is possible but it would be really interesting if the text could be projected onto us as well. At various points just you know scanning in a sense. So that you know we are another iteration of the text just ideas.
- Mary: I mean I think you know once you kind of walk in front of the projector it goes on you.
- EM: Scans you anyway.
- Steve: Absolutely.

Mary: And it might be as straight forward as that butyes. I think but does that happen. Do we construct that I guess is that the question. Or do we, or do people get to rest on reading something on you for a while or is it just passing through.

Steve: I think it moves.

Mary: It moves through...yes

Steve: It's just this element.

EM: You just hope it's a nice word.

Mary: Yes exactly.

EM: Bare bones.

Steve: Harrowed hovel, wow thank you.

EM: Yes.

Mary: A literal.

Steve: If I am honest occasionally. I'll hold my hands up to that.

EM: How did that relate, say if its theatrical. I am just thinking now from a sonic point of view right where some of the things we do are very delicate and minute almost and then other things are symphonic almost they are huge some of the things that we have done you know. How do we connect that with this subdued environment.

Steve: Yes but I don't think in a sense I don't think it is subdued.

EM: Ok.

Steve: I don't think it is. I actually feel.

EM: I actually feel as if it's, as if it's a very charged space that we are creating.

Steve: I am not thinking about, I am not equating the immersive with the meditative necessarily. Not in formal terms.

EM: Yes.

Steve: I would like this to be kind of challenging and energising for audience as well for them to feel kind of the visceral nature of this as well you know.

EM: I get that.

Steve: That would be part of the flow. That's what we are doing. That's our process isn't it. You know kind of unfolds. It swells there is a shift of gravity of tone

of volume and then it becomes something else you know. That's the kind of immersiveness that I have in my mind.

Mary: Yes, absolutely, I think it's important not to tie immersive with something that might be quiet or delicate or something like that which makes me think also the video materials. Of course the video materials that you saw yesterday have that kind of very sustained kind of quality but of course there is also really fast editing or other qualities which may be relevant or may not I don't know.

**Appendix
12**

DISCOURSE May 5th

EM: Eugene Murphy
Mary: Mary
Oscar: Oscar
Alan: Alan
Steve: Steve

Mary: Again knowing that there is a whole expertise in this that I don't have but I don't..anyway I am only saying that we could still in a very simple way do it but it's just good to put it on the table that we kind of know, I know I am not an expert in text art and there are amazing video people who do extraordinary ...

EM: We need one thing for this project is that the timing is perfect because there is nobody here so Alan can gather ever projector he can find. Every technician. I know we don't have open access and that is a bit delicate but it's around. We are in a better position where something will be missing because somebody else has a performance or the MA's are doing something. So we think we have.

Mary: So that's really good.

EM: I would be confident from a technical point of view that we would be able to deliver you know whatever you have produced and what your words and then Roisin and Lucy and they are going to use multiple videos probably.

Mary: Yes potentially yes. That's what I was saying Eugene in the email that it is really to if we even have the option tomorrow of one or two projectors that we can render.

EM: We are trying to get one.

Mary: Just so we can put it on the ground and just experiment because the cinema screen one is just so disconcerting.

EM: Oh yes huge.

Mary: Because it's very unlikely. Not that we have to rule it out but it's unlikely going to be the option in terms of trying to make things more intimate in that kind of setting. It might be or we could certainly look at it. I think but..

EM: We should look at everything.

Mary: We should look at everything but it would strike me as having an option of having a floating projector that we could experiment tomorrow would be great because that would be our chance won't it to say then ok. We need three video files of different kinds and tomorrow would be our kind of our chance to experiment.

Steve: Yes absolutelywell it's almost as if we were in the same room the last couple of weeks.

EM: What you have just said.

Mary: Yes.

EM: ...is so perfectly aligned to what we were saying ourselves.

Mary: Yes.

EM: And what was great we didn't forget or we have been faithful to the conversation we had before.

Mary: Well that's key.

EM: And brought it on another stage and just it was brilliant because Alan happened to be here this morning and we had about forty five minutes of can we have this, can we have that, can we have the other. We mightn't get everything but there is a strong chance we are going to get most of what we are asking you know.

Steve: We will certainly we will end up with the key elements and in some form or another.

Mary: Yes.

EM: Well we have three projectors for that week. They are going to spend a whole day and a half setting up.

Mary: Ok.

EM: From Monday and Tuesday morning and then we will be in from then on. Whatever way we do it.

Steve: So if the video goes according to plan we can step in on Wednesday because I arrive late on Tuesday night. We should step in to the space already made. I mean it might need some tinkering of course, probably and that's fine but certainly from that point on. Eugene and I have a score and a kind of a deep and kind of rich environment of experience to delve into, to respond to.

EM: It would be great as well if you were able for parts of it I know you are participating that is key, it just ..you are advising of your discipline in this space.

Mary: For sure.

EM: That would be really key.

Mary: Yes totally. No that all sounds ideal. Actually what we are really working towards tomorrow evening is to map out what that technical setup is due to be on the Monday and Tuesday.

Steve: Yes.

Mary: I mean kind of, I mean not fixing it because you want fluidity of course.

Steve: Absolutely.

Mary: But for Wednesday and you probably want to be setting it and locking it down or Thursday or whatever day but ultimately if we had, clear instructions around how we feel the space is going to be, then we can hand over to Alan and say ok, put this in place but don't lock it down but have this as a version and then maybe we tweak.

EM: And you input there would be pretty vital.

Mary: Yes, yes.

EM: I would be blind now I think that would obstruct anything or...you know.

Mary: I think that would be a great conversation if we can, if we can have the space. The theatre space tomorrow that we can just inhabit. I say if we can try things out and see what the relationship between the screen there and that there and standing there and that's kind of what I feel...

Steve: I feel what the audience should ///

Mary: Should be.

EM: Now we are in Theatre 2.

Steve: And how...

EM: I thought we would be in Theatre 1.

Mary: Oh right, oh I see.

EM: But still it will still give us the vibe.

Mary: We can map it in ...

Steve: It can translate.

Mary: We can translate. We can be kind of ...

EM: We can when nobody is in there we can have a look.

Steve: You want to don't you.

Mary: And we can actually map the dimensions and translate the space and ...

Steve: Of course.

Mary: And just really try and work with the dimensions in Theatre 2.

Steve: Ah the dancers input you see.

EM: That will be all over my thesis.

Mary: And then she talked about dimensions.

EM: Her two by fours but it is true. I would never have thought of mapping anything you know so, I know it sounds moronic but you'd be surprised. I am a musician I am not sensitised to space. The way I should but I am learning.

Mary: That's true but once you start thinking about you know the performance space particularly in a dance context but in an installation context. You know you are really are making a kind of very big choices around the space. So that's why definitely being able to have a rough map you know so that we know roughly how much space you know would be really useful and yes so just so do we imagine that back to the text again. I'm just like holy shit how are we going to do the text bit.

EM: The text is sorted, sort of.

Mary: So the text is it that the text gets typed up in paper and then Alan or Roisin want to take that or do we have to put it on video.

EM: Very good question.

Steve: Alan is going to get back to us.

EM: What the best way.

Steve: He was going to have a discussion and then...

Mary: And then get back.

Steve: Get back to us.

Mary: We will try and keep on that discussion for tomorrow as well because again the time will slip along. It's May it's really only three weeks to have all the materials in place so ...because when I was having my moment of like ahhhhh text again. The desire and the complete challenge in terms of knowing what's a really good font. I thought, I wonder oh maybe if they were ours if Lucy is available I could talk to Lucy and say, hang on, how are you fixed with kind of tech. Would you be interested in maybe doing the tech side and I stayed at the image side but that was ever before I had the conversation with you guys. To say yes we are interested in tech sounds. Just because you know it might be that the text just gets put on video and then it's obviously it has to be on video to be projected so then it's projected or where its projected then is open.

Steve: Well we yes, and I think their our aim although obviously we are not being terribly specific at this point but our aim is to make this a really very, very,

immersive experience. So I like the idea of text having an almost kind of corporeal experience.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Literally so all of a sudden the audience can ...

EM: Up the walls.

Steve: Absolutely but also you know there is, there is actual contact between audience and the text at some point even if it is just as they come in to, as they come in to find their seat. I just love the almost the kind of the subversion of audience having to make a decision about whether or not they stand the text.

Mary: The text.

EM: Or jump over it.

Steve: Do you know what I mean and I can't help feeling you know that we will be asking quite a lot of the audience certainly sonically we will use the text in all kinds of ways but the, if you like the big images will not always be made very, very explicit through a kind of a literal pronouncement of the text. So what we have there is kind of reinforcement of the power of these images. The central images of these but also then a mirroring of our kind of ...more deconstructive methodologies with the words. So, so that you will have this kind of mirroring or correspondence with not synchronised necessarily, not synchronised but you know kind of providing echoes perhaps andand kind of recycling moments that have happened previously in the piece and you know just pulling them back into our attention into our, into the gaze and them being kind of textured in various ways.

So...and I am sure you have encountered this before. There are software programmes that will actually you know that will make the text kind of dissolve in certain ways and you know that would be interesting. That would be interesting. So it's an exact analogue for the deconstruction that we are using. But I think right now we are not in a, I don't think we are in a position certainly to know exactly how that is going to work. Where the projectors will need to be and you know and we had a brief conversation with Alan about those, there was technical issues well you know actually if you have audience moving through then you run the risk of the text being, the projection being blocked. So then you know for example we could put a projector under the piano so they couldn't get in front of it. Stuff like that but in a sense that is detail isn't it.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: It's connected to the vision of course.

Mary: Exactly because sometimes these conversations are interesting because they are separate and yet they overlap and there is never really any answers are there. You know but yet they have to be kind of talked about because like you said

Eugene everything we are discussing now is so deeply connected to the dialogues we had the last time we met. It's not like we are starting from ground zero. We are really kind of everything is really, really folding in on top of the conversations that we had. In a really interesting way and I guess what I was thinking of, yes when sometimes these ideas you know and the text and sometimes we think that, oh it's loads of material or it's loads of text and that is something that I find really interesting. Sometimes it just might be one segment of text that does it all.

Steve: Absolutely.

Mary: Or it might be only arriving at one section. Dramaturgically. Let's say that this kind of relationship with image and sound has been happening for fifteen minutes and then all of a sudden like all this new relationship with words and font and that carries another arc for audience you know and then that arc dies and maybe this one folds in from the beginning again and there is a little overlap with text and ...

Steve: Absolutely you have an overlay which could be very, very interesting. When you started to talk about the element of over layering your images.

Mary: Oh yes.

Steve: And of course there is again....

Mary: It ties.

Steve: There is a correspondence.

Mary: So we won't know. These are the interesting things like at what point do you know how much material you need. Like if I was to go off. Like it was the same with the video but like it didn't matter with the video because I could be as playful, their ideas they are exploring maybe none of it is right. Maybe one minute is right and that's all that's needed anyway because they have been on minute of that and four minutes of text and then you know the rest is sound. Who knows. You know so it's all.

EM: We probably need more than we need at the beginning so we can edit it.

Mary: We can play with it and try and I guess you know in the context of working this way where we won't be together again until the week of the thing happening and at that point there will be a semi technical set up already in place, right. Then we are probably looking at aiming towards having palettes of different things. Having a palette of things on video with software. Having a palette of video things ready and you will obviously have your palette of things in terms of sound and then the decisions get made probably. You know that would feel in terms of like what's our method of getting there. In this context. You know...

EM: In a way I feel it's all the discussion will bring it because we are now talking about overlay as a concept for the work so that will come into play in terms of

you know that we find it. We will import it into the text dynamic as it occurs in the video.

Steve: And also into the abstract sound. That was one of the things we were working on this morning. We were looking at developing a kind of relatively small cells of, of music and melody....notes and....then you know kind of approaching them kind of very, very dynamically. So we had started out with kind of quite a lot of stuff basically. More or less a complete composition. Eugene played this beautifully lyrical piece but it was quite clear that there was loads of kind of little cells in there, little units that could be abstracted. You could almost see that I don't know two or three minute piece that you improvised. You could see that as the corresponding to the whole arc of the sound composition in the sense but then within that we would mine these kind of smaller units you know if you like.

EM: That would fall away.

Steve: Absolutely so but that over layering was already present there but that was one of the things that we looked at you know. It was kind of harmonic, it was tonal and we could save a great deal without using very much material without giving too much away. That's, there is always that temptation I think certainly to use more than you need and perhaps too soon.

Mary: Yes absolutely and yes the overall area is kind of is really interesting that it's coming in and conceptual way. Otherwise it's just making me think of that kind of exciting conversation we had the last time the other day about the potential of live choosing of maybe the text or the video images that come up you know and maybe that's I mean, that's not so complex to do in terms of programme work and maybe Roisin has that capacity and maybe we do work with a palette of you know I give ten segments of video. Maybe they are all three minutes long or something and then I work with Roisin. Maybe on the night to say ok, this one now this one of this one. I don't know.

EM: That would be amazing.

Mary: You know and actually.

EM: Because that would be improvising.

Mary: It would be improvising as opposed to fixing say ok these are the texts and these are the places they come.

EM: Well that would be the cherry on top now because that would be amazing.

Mary: Yes it might be, I mean I don't I know the programmes that do it. I don't do it myself. I have never actually worked the programme so I wouldn't be reliable in that way but...

EM: But you could direct it.

Mary: But I could direct it and if I worked with Roisin that day to kind of say ok this image comes now and then I would kind of that would be interesting.

Steve: Oh it could indeed.

EM: Oh that would be very experimental.

Steve: So all of a sudden there is a live ness about your contribution. I know I guess maybe in a way for you Mary that would allow you to feel more spontaneously involved in the making of the piece.

Mary: Yes and I mean for sure we absolutely being there and making those choices is very exciting because you really get to respond to what is happening. It's not what... but I don't ultimately, I don't have a desire that it's a necessity at all you know because I am aware that it might not be realistic but I am just putting it there that it also probably offers another kind of spontaneity in your performing where you are not dealing with something that's fixed in the image saying ok these images are all going to be there when the people come in and then you get familiar with that or you know that those things are up for grabs for you guys performing but we can also know that that was kind of the ideal but maybe we don't get there but, if Alan and were Roisin were talking about potential software that does text then I think they, the software to do the live VJ'ing is probably the same or similar.

Steve: You would think so wouldn't you.

Mary: It would probably be a no brainer to Roisin.

Steve: Wow.

Mary: But we can you know.

EM: I'd say Roisin might be up for this you know because they are always looking for things that expand their technical.

Mary: Totally.

EM: Some other technical challenge. They just love it, I think they are loving this you know because it's.

Mary: I mean it would be more, it would be worth asking Alan or Roisin via Alan however it works just is it within their skill set to do that because you would want it to be reliable because you know that it wouldn't be a technical mess on the night.

EM: Yes.

Mary: Video please. You know but I mean that would be easy to just pre-empt. Is it in the skill set or is it so far out that it would require a lot of training.

Steve: You could imagine kind of something on the PA to the audience could audience just kind of hold onto, suspend that immersion that you are feeling right now. If you could just hold that up for a little while. We will be right back to you.

Mary: Technical...

Steve: Commence immersion. Commence re immersion.

Mary: Exactly, we are in way over our depth here.

EM: Oh God, don't say that.

Mary: No I am only saying that I think it's a simple thing to pre-empt. We will sound out is that, is that looking anyway potential.

EM: Alan is coming here this afternoon.

Mary: Is he?

EM: So you can ask him yourself.

Mary: I'll ask Alan. Hey Alan come on now.

EM: He's come here to see you.

Mary: Is he ok good.

EM: To see what your sense of the technical requirements are.

Mary: Oh fantastic, good on Alan.

EM: He said he would be here at three.

Mary: Because at this point you just really want things that are realistic when you are three weeks out and only, not in the same country or you know I mean but yes...

EM: Well thank God it's improvising or not or whatever.

Mary: Or not. You can think that's a get out of but it's not Eugene. Its far harder to pull it off when ...

Steve: Are you allowed to think or not is really.....

EM: Have you footage with you. I would just be curious.

Mary: Yes I have footage, do you want to see it.

EM: Oh I'd love to. 100%

Mary: Now it's always kind of Oh God...oh is this a tv screen.

EM: Do you know how to fit that up?

Mary: It can't be that complex can it?

EM: Well they took the computer but I am not sure....

Mary: If the screen works, oh is the computer gone?

EM: It doesn't need a computer does it?

Mary: To work a USB key? No probably not. We can see it on this but its tinshy. The screen is damaged. We can watch it on this it's no big deal you just have to visualise. There is the tele on. Where does it plug into the power. Now is that on.

EM: It needs a remote control.

Mary: Oh yes that's done something. There we go now. Sometimes these are a kind of pain to try and get going. TV Guide look. Make sure the tv is plugged in and the socket is switched on the left hand side there is a row of buttons, turn on here, volume buttons, press hold to bring up the source video. Well...why is this flashing orange. Ok great so.

EM: We are operating off mac here.

Mary: I have a USB stick so, is there a USB port in it. There is isn't there. There usually is in these screens. There is a USB on this side. So let me just put it in.....they are just explorations and I have not attachments. It really was experimenting with trying to bring this other footage to life in the context of the conversations that's all. We were given footage that I was digging out of very old but I was ...I think I was kind of I was working with this idea of how things come into being or becoming but also these other things which connect I think in terms of what we'd been talking about but also they are kind of questions that are going on with some of my other work to do with how things are erased. How things are so that they become. So this idea they are erasing things that I am interested in and what else is relevant to say.

Nothing really other than in some ways I kind of improvised as well because I was kind of digging into old footage. The thing that I was going to say what I was trying not to, what I was trying not to do or what I was trying to do was also work with the idea of things not feeling fixed. Yes so there is kind of fluidity in its identity because we constructed the material for this, there is this kind of fluidity around those things. So conceptually trying to make sense of these things you know.

Steve: We have been talking about fixity as well.

Mary: Oh right.

Steve: And no fixity and you know these kind of very different spaces and iterations aren't they. I was trying to describe to you Eugene the problematics for me of fixing text which I never set out to fix. It was never my intention. Part of the reason for that is because it is about, it is itself the text and iteration and particular iteration of becoming. So.....so there is a bloody great contradiction to come

over there in artistic and conceptual terms you know so we have had this. We have been kind of laughing at this process this kind of non-process and Eugene has said well can you send me that text and yes I have kind of like too but I am not quite sure what it is. I understand what its constituent elements are, I understand that but how I configure this in such a way as to suggest that its fixed would do us all a great disservice. So here we have that kind of fluidity again that you know, that I have been carrying with me in terms of the manifestation and various manifestations. The iterations of the text in the space.

Mary: Yes, that's really interesting and I think in what I was working with I think I was, I think I was working with trying to find the materials relationship to the kind of fluid piece in a way and also but so that's why I think we saw the images first. When I went back into the studio with the footage that I had from Lucy that I had from the other thing. It felt too fixed. It was a very solid mass of something that felt like ...it didn't have enough dissolve in it or something.

Steve: Funnily enough I was thinking of the term dissolve. That's really interesting and that's certainly that we want to have present in the text but the way that we treat it sonically but also in the way that it appears as image.

Mary: So anyway, they are kind of some of the things but again it's not, it's not definitely not fixed. Their explorations of ideas and it kind of, it's kind of exploration that is kind of repeated in a way but I haven't found anything else so this is kind of the thing. So you can just keep those kind of things in mind. I am doing the wrong thing because I am playing it off the USB stick and it's probably not good to do that because it's probably going to jump is it. Will that transfer it let's just see if it takes. Will see if that transfers quickly. Like there is loads of footage. There are loads of potential ways to go well what do you do when you start looking at archive material in relationship to this.

Steve: How do I start not fixing something.

Mary: Really these are the first ideas, there was so many. I was kind of like oh God where do I even begin with this idea but anyway.

EM: But you did.

Mary: It's eight minutes so you will see yes. Of course like I said it's not complete and always bear in mind that there has got to be space for all the other elements so.

Steve: I love your soundtrack. Here is a suggestion don't fix it.

Mary: That's it.

EM: More, more.

Mary: That's eight minutes. God that music is just. Is somebody trying to do Dave Rubeck or something.

EM: It's awful isn't it.

Mary: They teach you that here now.

EM: I was actually agitated in the first five minutes because will he stop and so random like. Anyway it's wonderful Mary. Oh my God isn't it.

Mary: So you can see it cycling around the same kind of idea of layering and it's kind of repeating the idea with different kind of textures.

EM: Well the flux element as well is just so potent in the visuals you know when the sky deeps dreaming across. It's endless and the horizon and the water it just gives you this sense of never ending infinite of things you know. They are not literal they don't catch it literally but you are seeing it you know and then the delicacy of the opening bit is just phenomenal, phenomenal. The movement of whatever it is and then the dance behind it is just so experimental and so aesthetically satisfying to watch and it just has its own and actually it has its own rhythm because it's moving. It's all this lovely movement.

Steve: Absolutely.

EM: I was enthralled Mary, I couldn't.

Mary: I have a question about the landscape stuff and that is sort of coming in for me. I had different things and I had another idea that is unexplored that's why I didn't bring it of images kind of in different places on the screen but....

Alan: Were we cool oh do you want me?

EM: Oh no we want you.

Mary: Hi Alan.

Alan: Hi Mary.

Mary: Howsit going?

Alan: Good, good and you?

Mary: You just missed the cinema screening.

Alan: Did I, ok, ok...

Mary: You just get to come for all the....

EM: The hard bits. We gave a summary to Mary what you said this morning but.

Steve: All of those things you promised us.

Alan: It was you said, I just said ok.

EM: He moves fast but he moves twice as fast. So I think the main thing then was how is Mary represented here. How was the video, film was that fair, that was the comment yes?

Mary: Yes we were kind of I don't know yes, we were kind of looking at the video and obviously as these are guys are telling you multiple projections potentially. We don't know how many is too many some options because it still is in the screen. We think we will try it but it will probably just too overpowering.

Alan: Yes, absolutely I fully agree with you.

Mary: It will probably just not work even though we don't like to rule anything out.

Alan: No I don't think it's an option.

Mary: It's probably not an option but listen we did have, we had one thought because this came up the last time as well because we are trying to think about this kind of relationship with my presence. Not that I am being attached to being there. This is not about how can I get myself there now. It's not about that but actually conceptually. The idea of having the video but making live choices about what elements of the video gets played through a programme. Like VJ.

Alan: Like what?

Mary: Now that is not in my skill set.

Alan: Like VJ'ing. I don't know what that is.

Mary: It's like you know.

Alan: Are we talking about audience making choices.

Mary: Like video so...

EM: Like a DJ but with video.

Alan: So this is what Netflix for shows that are on Netflix they have brought in. So I'd have seen about they did a play recently where they hadis that what you are talking about?

Mary: Kind of yes. So I think so I don't know what I am talking about but I know like as in I have never done it but I know, do you remember the night moves. Do you remember the performers, the tap dancer. You know the opening night two years ago. The tap dancer the guy doing the video.

Alan: Ok.

Mary: So they have palliative video footage and they are just choosing it on the fly so improvising. So depending on what's happening in this performance space. The artist is choosing what video to put in any given time.

Alan: Ok.

Mary: It was an idea right to kind of tie in with the connection to the improvisation on the video. You can also of course be fixed but is Roisin.

Alan: This is like so, this is pretty big you know to be honest. I am happy to support that because to be honest from my end all it is, is a HD cable and a piece of software deciding what is going to happen there. I will have a conversation. Straight away I am thinking now you are talking about multiple files, multiple choices to be made do I need a 5 grand computer to handle this, all these files. These are just in my head so ...

Mary: Totally.

Alan: I am not going to say much on that except that I am going to have a quick look because it has happened interestingly it has happened to come up in conversation a couple of times over the last couple of days. Similar choices being made by viewers things like that. If I remember right. We had students a couple of years ago had a very similar project where it was a demo but literally there was multiple choices to be made over a period of at least and the user person, one two, one two.

EM: And it would just be Mary or Roisin.

Alan: Making the decision?

Mary: Yes.

EM: It wouldn't be the audience.

Alan: Oh sorry, oh sorry ok. Ok.

Mary: No no it's not the audience.

Alan: Oh relevant and you know put in the files and then not an issue, fine.

Mary: Not an issue fine.

Alan: Sorry I thought it was an audience linking decision. It's you making the decision on what you ...

Mary: It's me up in the background watching the performance saying, ok this piece of video would be really good now.

Alan: A couple of things we have to consider which go back to when I came into the room. What are, as in you can't be going giving me a portrait and landscape and you know so we need to make sure everything is so the rules are fixed and the parameters and conditions are fixed and once we are within those we can do it.

Mary: Do what we want.

Alan: Yes.

Mary: So it's that straight forward. I am very happy to make.

Alan: It's straight forward. You could quite literally use a to make a decision. Once there is no, I thought what was happening was. Oh no we are letting everyone go yes, no....Where did this come from.

Mary: She's only here ten minutes and the place has turned upside down.

Alan: So my main concern is so, let me look at that. Not an issue I am don't think any way whatsoever. Obviously what it does it puts more work on you guys because then you have to make decisions on how many video files etc. This is nothing to me.

Mary: The reason we were opening the door to it really Alan was do we go with fixed video which is straight forward. We can do that we can make choices and then these guys can just, here is a fixed piece, make it work or do we leave it a little bit more fluid where the decisions about the video happen live.

Alan: It's a performance it just happens to be a video is the mould. There is an element of, of improvisation and performance within this except that we are using a video. As opposed to. Yes ...Cool. Not an issue.

Mary: So it's potentially.

Alan: Yes I don't see it as an issue, what I will do is I will have a look over the next couple of days and immediately going oh here is the issue but what I want to highlight is again, this is a fixed format it's a screen. You can put whatever you want on that. It's just you know that it's going to be on that screen. So that's where I am getting at. You're the comments on the screen. Absolutely I am in full agreement. In the performance a while ago, looking at the space myself for your performance. Yes no you weren't at the....

Mary: No.

Alan: Yes lovely. So yes for me where I am getting at, that is ok. What I want to know is what are we using for Mary so. Does that make sense. Because we have kind of decided like I thinking you guys can discuss it that we are going to use other projectors for the text and they are going to be independent and now we are, that's all done. We think it needs to be tech'd out and looked at and now are we using a big plinth. If we are, is the plinth I have ok. If not I need to get that plinth somewhere. They are the decisions.

Mary: Perfect. That's all clear on ...will we see that plinth tomorrow.

Alan: You can see it now it's down the back of the stairs. It's...

Mary: It's the one we built for Michelle Mulcahy was it?

Alan: Who is Michelle Mulcahy?

Mary: Do you not remember Michelle Mulcahy maybe it was before your time.

Alan: Maybe but is she the sound artist?

Mary: No she is the harp player. I did a video piece with her.

Alan: There was some plinth.

Mary: A big white plinth like in the gallery.

Alan: Yes but it's so high and six foot long and we used it a number of times in performances.

EM: And it just sits on the ground.

Alan: It's twelve inches wider and it just sits, it's like the screen in T2 accept it's smaller.

Mary: I got that built for Michelle Mulcahy. Video prediction.

Alan: That's exactly what we used for Kathleen. We had it sitting behind her and we just projected and just cut the image onto it and just projected these beautiful images. That was it.

Mary: Perfect.

Alan: Like that's what above what we have discussed this morning then is do we need two and if so where do we get that like even I think there is something sitting over that Jurgen had that ceases but it's a wall above a wall and I was even going to myself I wonder is the back of that flat as I was driving over earlier.

Mary: Oh jeez. Yes good point.

Alan: Basically if it's a plinth we know what a plinth is. You can't get one find one somewhere there is a cost to making a plinth. That is the cost. It's a sheet of 8x4 that we can project on to and I don't know if that suits you guys if that is what you are happy with for that to be the, the screen that takes the performance of your material.

Mary: I think it very well likely might be you know because it's just I think the cinema screen probably not or maybe at times or something. We haven't tried it but...

Alan: When you say the cinema screen, you are talking about the ...

Mary: I am talking about the screen at the back.

Alan: So immediately the screen at the back that's fine you want to project on but what it does, it needs an extra four metres of white because all the blankets come off. Absolutely I would 100% go against it if you really wanted to project onto that space.. Do you know the fold them up the pop up screens that you do and hang

it off the bar myself and I will just take it from Sean. I'd rather not go there, I'd rather use something else. I would advise at all costs. Is using that screen. I just think it would have a bad impact on the overall.

Mary: Right, ok totally. So yes, so we like I get it. We will decide where if there is fixed video where is that going and if there is unfixed video where is that going and then those things get fixed.

Alan: Yes I was saying to the lads earlier, I think it has become a little bit more defined from my perspective and there is nothing that is too major. It is just a little bit of experimentation but yes from yours yes. I wasn't even too resistant to like you know.

Mary: Yes fair play!

Steve: I was agreeing to those.

Alan: Again once you are not turning up with sixteen, nine and a twenty one that's the only thing we need to consider. So you are just projecting on the same space or whatever.

Mary: And look I mean if it's somebody that is doing the kind of, running the programme of it because I

Alan: No you can..

Mary: But I have to be working with somebody that would rehearse with me so that we could rehearse the choosing and just to fluidly recommunicate what my choices are because it would be happening in the live performance. That would need a bit of rehearsal with the programme runner, whoever that might be.

Alan: I will just have to look at that.

Mary: You might have to have a think about it.

Alan: Yes because I need to have a full scope and figure out what that other person is going to actually, I don't want to bring in an extra person onto this now because I am caught then for two. It's not.

Mary: Whoever you have on it Alan just see if they can run a programme that would do that for you.

Alan: I just need to be very careful that, that's all fine but what if anything goes wrong over here and that person then needs to do that, if you know what I mean. So ideally at the minute I am pretty sure I have given her the dates. It's Roisin I am bringing in to handle the basic lighting, the projection stuff she has done an awful lot of projection stuff. So she is perfect for that. I also have another, yes look.

Mary: We will sort it. Sure look if Roisin is there and she has to go over and fix a light over there, its improvisation so nobody will notice. That that piece of video didn't come on.

Alan: And the way I would like to do this anyway is that just say Roisin or somebody is working with you and they are the ones triggering but also the fact that if they were to get shot or something that you actually know what to do.

Mary: Yes.

Alan: You are not doing it but if it all collapses around us you know how to.

Mary: And look to be fair Alan hands up I could probably totally do it, I am always just a bit tentative I never want to say that I can do it.

Alan: No, you are right. No I understand.

Mary: I always play safe.

Alan: And it's better to be separated.

Mary: It's very likely that I can do it no problem but.

Alan: No this is going to be literally, oh that's some technical. However, or whatever programme we use for this is it's essentially we are going to have a playlist, fifty videos, twenty videos whatever it is and we will just deciding in real time what you want.

Mary: Yes.

Alan: Are we cool?

Mary: It will be fun.

Alan: We are good with that then I can get out of here.

EM: Could you make an app....

Steve: Wow.

Mary: Ok they are all just options.

EM: At least it's an option.

Mary: Yes, exactly.

EM: At this stage.

Steve: So far we have been refused nothing.

Mary: Which is amazing.

Steve: I know.

Mary: It must be the magic powers.

EM: No, not it's not magic powers it's just.

Steve: I think it might be money changing hands.

EM: I wish. Kit-kats. Lots of kit-kats. It's just the timing is just wonderful because everything now is depleted. They are just running from one performance to the next. So you know borrowing and grant has the projector over somewhere else and they have to bring it back. You know there is all of that going on and then suddenly they have nothing to do that week is totally free.

Steve: All we need is an audience now.

EM: I know yes.

Mary: I know it's harder with audience because it's off season but look.

EM: We will be chipping away with that for a ...

Mary: That will happen alright.

Steve: 00:59:55 (whispers inaudible)

Mary: Oh yes what was it, I was saying before Alan came in, one of the things when the landscape kind of came in and the video stuff I was kind of like I was a bit unsure. I was kind of saying oh I don't know, I don't know so I still don't know. I don't know what landscape does when you see it. I mean.

Steve: My feeling in regard to the landscape is that, the more abstract it appears the better. So if there is even uncertainty about whether it is not landscape.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: So the water for example as just an element I think would be very very effective. So if, if landscaped could be sort of decontextualised if you like.

Mary: Yes if you like, exactly. Which was totally, was also part of my thinking because in a way, you know this was, not that narrative was a problem because people always attach narrative to things.

Steve: They do of course.

EM: I know yes.

Mary: Always.

Steve: Whatever we do.

Mary: Whatever we do they always attach that but then we don't, it's not our job I think to necessarily lead it probably. So, that was the thing with landscape sometimes

you know there is lot of landscape but I think what I was using it for, I think why it was coming in was that it was offering space. Just as in space between things or something you know.

Steve: Yes.

Mary: And I think that was why it was kind of coming in but I don't know. I mean I am more putting it out there because if there was a feeling that, let's try and keep landscape out of it for some reason and then we could, that's clear. Let's do that.

Steve: No I certainly don't have that instinct. I don't know about you Eugene.

EM: I felt the same way as you were commenting on my ...my pairing back that there was some sort of hypnotic thing about that movement at the beginning. Not to be afraid to make it much longer.

Mary: Right. Okay.

EM: Because it feeds into you know, it's lovely and then certainly something appears it's a dancer but it's almost like, you are waiting and waiting and then you realise oh, do you remember the opening.

Steve: Yes but I wonder whether we can, the whole thing is about becoming the process of becoming. I wonder whether we couldn't experiment with, with textures that thenpresent themselves as a thing.

Mary: Aha.

Steve: Do you see what I mean.

EM: Well that sort of happened.

Mary: It did.

Steve: Definitely.

EM: Not suddenly but after a long period then there was Mary, eventually and it was very nice.

Steve: Yes but I think that's what we are trying to do sonically certainly that is what we were working on this morning.

EM: Having a sort of, call it a melody.

Steve: Before the reveal if you like.

EM: If it's a nice melody before something becomes recognisable as a thing.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Or even as a body.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: There is just the, there is the kind of the subtle kind of gradual emergence of form.

EM: And that's the highest point.

Steve: And then it's maybe it's slow dissolve perhaps.

EM: Maybe it goes down as slowly as it came in.

Steve: Yes.

Mary: Yes.

EM: Almost.

Mary: Yes and that makes sense it actually. I mean it makes sense in that I think, I mean I think some of these things I was lightly exploring them and as things get more clear in terms of what's kind of aligning or what's needed then I can draw out things a bit more and make things a bit more full because I think the idea of, I was working with the idea of layers and then things some things coming a little more to the foreground and it becoming the thing but then that gets erased.

EM; That's perfect isn't it yes.

Mary: That sort of idea was but they are not fully explored you know, so it's going to take a little more work but that is kind of direction.

EM: I thought that came across very strongly.

Mary: Did it.

EM: Oh yes.

Steve: There is that kind of, that arc of becoming and then and then...decaying you know the Japanese talk so much about the Yo Ha Qu where every energy consists of kind of emergence then representation then ...

Mary: Dissolution.

Steve: Dissolution. It's like a characteristic of so much Japanese art and so many, so many Buta artists for example. It's present. It's a concept I think that was developed by Zigami in I think the 16th century but it has been at the core of the understanding of transition emergence of Japanese art.

Mary: Yes, lovely.

Steve: So. Yes wow.

EM: There is a lot there.

Steve: Yes but already some very beautiful moments and ...

Mary: Yes, yes I mean I think there is definitely, there is definitely something I think that can be pulled out and then it's a question of, are these live, when I go back to work on them now, will this question be kind of live choosing in the moments. Do I sort of make this selection of kind of Hycuse, to go back to the Japanese.

That kind of selection of kind of Hycuse or you know maybe certain things of different durations. Some might be quite short or I don't know. I meanI mean I haven't done the live choosing of video you know so maybemyself. So I am just trying to think gosh you know what is that and what's needed in terms of material and maybe we work towards that and maybe on the Tuesday or the Wednesday on a rehearsal it's just not working and we fix it. It's pretty easy to fix as in if we have segments then it can be fixed and they can be big black or five minutes left between each video piece you know. Or the others, the other option is to say actually there is one segment of the performance that videos necessary.

It's in the last section or it's in the middle section of if we break it into sections like that.

Steve: If it's possible to do so with a piece like this.

Mary: Probably not.

Steve: Probably not I guess.

Mary: But then do we prepare for the, do we prepare again to say ok no we need to have the impulsive video somehow throughout the arc. Doesn't mean it has to be there all the time on the screen but there is...

EM: Elements along the way...

Mary: Elements that kind of...along the way so it's part of.

EM: But even that requires a judgement.

Mary: Yes it does.

EM: Doesn't it yes?

Mary: And preparation either if we fix that and we say ok, let's say the performance is going to be forty minutes. Then we have forty minutes of video time and you know first there is nothing in the first five minutes of that but it's just plain on the projector black you know as in nothing and then five minutes in you know three minutes of video footage comes up and then nothing for ten minutes and then five minutes of video footage comes up and that goes on in blocks for forty minutes.

EM: That would be a good way of doing it wouldn't it.

Mary: I think that would probably be the only fixed way to do it.

Steve: I am sure that's true.

Mary: But then we are probably just scoring that based on time.

EM: Yes but that's ok.

Mary: Ok every five minutes, three minutes come up or we do it much more randomly and say ok, every seven minutes. For the first seven minutes and then there is three minutes of footage and the next seven minutes there is ten minutes of footage I don't know how we make those decisions but I guess that would be a score that I would put into the video editing and just score it out and play the file which is fine.

Steve: Yes.

EM: That is fine as well you know what is interesting is all of this flux for want of a better way of saying it with this transitioning. The idea that we had from a sonic or music point of view was that eventually that something would be revealed from the bits and pieces of fragments of sound that were along the way and interestingly
Enough what you have described in the first video you showed us, there is a block that it was too strong but maybe that block could be revealed as one of the elements you know eventually. That all of this transparency becomes a point of that is fulfilled.

Steve: Fullness.

EM: Fullness that people see, could be one minute they get to see from behind you know and it's like revealing Vivaldi, the dance. Revealing the...I don't know it's just a thought.

Mary: No, yes totally. Yes.

EM: To have a...

Mary: Yes. Yes.

EM: It's obviously affecting you. I am now numb.

Mary: Stop.

Steve: The problem for me as soon as I hear that I...

EM: You want to play it.

Steve: I am automatically ...I move towards it and I think ooh what should I be doing there. Counterpoint.

EM: I suppose the other thing to say is Mary. It's an experiment because it's PhD it's not a paid performance because like the biggest risk is to do the VJ in one way if that's possible and it's not stressful and it's an interesting experiment. No one is going to know if you press the wrong one, do it the way you wanted but it's the experience of the experiment that is core to what we are doing. So that's another element you know we can you know in the process that we have improvised and that's very exciting because that is quite cutting edge. To be doing something like that and obviously you have spent ten years in the art of visuals and film.

Mary: Absolutely.

EM: And everything, it's like it is in your artistic ...

Mary: Totally, totally.

EM: Your experience you know.

Steve: But also you know for a composition which is, which is kind of sonic and visual and kind of felt and every single element is improvised. Every single element is improvised as a single composition. We had a very interesting conceptual conversation with Oscar earlier on about what the composition is because of course previously Eugene and I had a very clear idea what the composition was.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: But you know we asked the question and of course it's very relevant in terms of you know the assessment of the, of the work as part of your PhD Eugene isn't it and we asked the question well, ok but this is a performance of forty minutes. Does that mean according to the criteria laid down in the regulations does that mean that we have to be sounding for the whole of that. Surely we are in a situation in which we are kind of composing in the non-sonic way as well. So we have composed text which is unfixed and which will configure itself in an improvised way and we will be responding to that but you know a valid response for us is not to sound in any particular point.

Mary: Absolutely, yes.

Steve: It's like for you. Not to move is a choice but it's still part of a composition.

Mary: It's a compositional choice. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes absolutely.

EM: And it could be very interesting just to have the visuals without sound as part of it, to give it a break.

Mary: Yes.

EM: ...from the...

Mary: Yes, well that's the interesting thing isn't it about how to find the kind of balance in the relationship between the materials that happen.

EM: That's the hard bit isn't it.

Steve: Yes.

Mary: Yes and that's what takes a little bit of rehearsal. I mean not a rehearsal to fix but just to kind of know the dimensions of what happens in different ways and certainly with the video because it has obviously like all the elements as a new element in for you guys as well. I think you know having time to see how it works and being ready to say actually no it's just ok. When is it too much or is it too much or whatever I think that would be, but I think, I mean it's....I mean for me it doesn't feel a challenge in terms of that side of things because that would be just the same way I would be performing and I would have the same discussions. How much is needed here or so it would be the same questions. It's just that of course sometimes with a visual and if we are thinking in terms of lighting that maybe the performers that were in the space would be sort of kind of through lighting not so present that people do kind of get drawn to image you know in a particular kind of way.

Steve: Yes. Yes they do.

Mary: We all do it and anytime we see the screen. You know it's the thing that really sucks us and that's also been something that I have been really interested in, in terms of you know this relationship between screen and dance like sometimes it can't really work because it becomes overpowering all the time. You always want to look at the screen. That would be an interesting conversation I think but we might not know that until we get into the room with the lighting and the balance of elements. But, it can be at and not a distraction but it can lead things kind of in a particular way, video image and how can we make sure that it doesn't you know and that's choosing when it comes and when it goes and it's also about what the material is of course because sometimes you create the material enough that it can disappear.

Steve: Yes.

EM: Yes.

Mary: For people but that it kind of feeds in, in this way comes a part of the atmosphere but it doesn't suck people's attention.

Steve: Yes.

Mary: And that sometimes depends on what kind of material, what they are you know and I think material like that it's kind of out of focus enough both in focus sometimes but also in terms of its texture that it's not like HD kind of look at me, look at my pristine nature. I am for oogling.

Steve: Yes exactly.

EM: I found it very relaxing. That you didn't have to work at it.

Mary: Yes. Good.

EM: When I was looking at the visuals I was very relaxed, it was getting me into a very nice space you know that it wasn't so attentive necessarily to the precision of the activity more than mood.

Mary: Ok, good.

EM: That it was creating and it's the mood that will be important as well you know.

Mary: Yes, yes totally. It's what it constructs in the atmosphere of the piece as a contribution to the overall experience definitely is what's essential as opposed to be something that you can be sucked into as an element.

Steve: Yes, yes.

Mary: Of course it's an element but it's more, I mean everything in a way is more atmosphere because it is about constructing the world of the piece.

Steve: Absolutely.

Mary: And sometimes yes anyway these things are hard to...

Steve: It will be interesting won't it what kind of decisions we will make the particular weighting of particular elements in relation to each other and there of course where we...the choices that we make about where we put audience will be crucial.

Mary: Yes. Very crucial.

Steve: So that....

EM: Do you see, because you had a good sense of this. Do you see them in clusters?

Steve: I would like very much to avoid somehow replicating the seating system that we have just wanted to disrupt you know.

EM: Of course and you don't know until we get in I suppose.

Steve: No, that to me is going to be one of the most difficult things about making the piece and making the performance space and because it's a viewing space and experiential space and so I know we talked at some length about this the last time we were together didn't we.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Actually we can't know what people are experiencing we can only make judgements based on our own experience.

Mary: Exactly.

Steve: But our experiences as artists is no doubt different to their experience you know and in that regard sometimes we would perhaps need to answer more questions on behalf of audience that we might want to set ideally. So I just at this point a very general idea about what I wouldn't want.

EM: Yes. That's what we were saying.

Steve: It would be interesting to whether we couldn't find a way of achieving another level of correspondence. So we have talked about various correspondences. It would be interesting to find a configuration of audience who somehow mirrored the nature of the piece somehow. It's kind of fluidity. So why, why not configure a line of chairs like so, rather than an angle of some sort but obviously sight lines are going to be important and where we place them in relation to us as generators of sound.

Mary: Absolutely.

Steve: How close do we want to have them you know.

EM: Not too close.

Steve: Yes that's another issue, if we close down the space between them and ourselves then how does that impact on our experience of what we are doing. Do we feel that we need to have more room to kind of breathe and create it. Who are we addressing or what are we addressing and do we, do we rather than having us a straight relational line between ourselves and audience are very, very conventional so we play to them are we then more inclined to play into the space or play over them? Well that might work in a very interesting way and I certainly when I am doing solo improvisations in kind of big spaces. I don't aim for audience I kind of aim into the space so then I am, I am mapping the space you know so they are kind of listening to that rather than, so it's not a direct conversation.

EM: It's a different type of projection.

Steve: Yes absolutely. So there will be big decisions to be made.

Mary: They are big choices alright. They are actually yes. That will definitely take time anyway. The impact of course. When we do choose where the objects go, let's say the screen, the piano and any other objects that might be necessary first. Do we place those.

Steve: Exactly.

Mary: Where we place the seating or...I guess, yes because you kind of you have to make a decision do all the audience see everything.

Steve: Exactly.

Mary: And generally an audience....

Steve:do they need to and yes?

Mary: Or an audience might feel disappointed if they are missing out like if they are facing here and the screen is back there the majority can see the screen but some can't or do people like to watch the piano player when they are playing or....

Steve: There you are exactly. Exactly.

Mary: These questions you know, you know and you know people generally don't want to move around. They don't want to change space you know unless they are really instructed. Especially in kind of a something that feels like a concert performance or something. People aren't going to change space.

Steve: Not willingly.

Mary: No as we know or do people get different pieces. Depending on where they sit.

Steve: Maybe that's also interesting isn't it.

EM: Yes there will be practicalities to deal within the space you know.

Mary: Which will hopefully help guide some things but it also comes down to numbers doesn't it.

Steve: Also.

Mary: I mean how many can you...

Steve: Not going to have any idea are we.

Mary: Yes.

Steve: Do you have any sense of how many people are likely to come over from Dublin this time Eugene?

EM: I don't really at the moment but let's say twenty.

Steve: How many came over last time?

EM: 20 -ish.

Steve: Twenty ish yes, yes.

EM: Because different people can't come and there is always a floating.

Mary: But I wonder like how many, how many can that space accommodate when it's....

EM: Maximised.

Mary: Yes and when it's dismantled. We know how many seats it has I guess when the seats are down but when we dismantle it and actually push the space back and push the chairs back, what's possible in relationship to you being there, you being there, screen being there and people need a bit of space from stuff or do they?

EM: To capture it all.

Mary: So if you, you might quickly down to 30 seats. I don't know. I mean you only fit 30 free sitting seats in that space and then do you do two performances. Or do you try and fit in forty and cap it but then you'd want that well-advertised because if people turn up and can't get in.

Steve: Yes.

Mary: They are practical things again but sometimes these are the things that get thrown up when you want to work in a different configuration.

Steve: It is true. Absolutely.

Mary: This drove me totally crazy on that last piece that I did in the galleries. I never knew how many were going to come because the galleries didn't want to put a cap on it because they thought well our spaces are big enough. The gallery's business and I won't go into that now and then you put the seating out in the middle and then people don't want to sit in the middle and...

Steve: This is very familiar.

Mary: Anyway it's, it's one of the big challenges in wanting to kind of disrupt the usual performance space is trying to figure out the people and where to put them and how many can you fit in the room.

Steve: Do you have an instinct about I suppose, maybe you have already answered it Eugene. Did I hear you say earlier on that you don't want me to close to you or is it the audience.

EM: Ah no I was just joking like you know I am open to anything but in another way we have to be practical as well because what I think what Mary said like if we have a big vista and we happened to have two piano's, two artists and visual screen then all the surround text going on. People will need to be able to see that.

Steve: They will absolutely. They will need perspective won't they.

EM: That's the thing with that.

Mary: Because you'd ...

EM: It isn't a small, it's not an intimate project in that sense. It's big. You know so, even the sound would be big sometimes.

- Steve: That could be something verypersuasive shall we say about being close to a big sound. When it happens but also it means that you can explore the other end of the ...and an audience get it.
- EM: Yes, no I am open to everything. I just think that things will lockdown very fast when we are in the space. As to what's possible you know.
- Steve: I am sure that's true.
- EM: It will dictate its limitations will suddenly start dictating lots of stuff.
- Mary: Then we need to kind of, but then we need to be oh you mean tomorrow Eugene or a little later in May?
- EM: We might even look at the space tomorrow if we can just to get a read on it.
- Mary: I think we should map out about how many chairs we think we will fit in because ultimately for people you need to know pretty early. That week of the performance that numbers are limited or maybe it's already at capacity. Do people book not really for these things. There is not a booking thing so.
- EM: I think you know I don't think we will be over subscribed. I think because of when it is. Not from randomers who might come in from UL because they will be gone.
- Mary: They will be gone but then there will be a lot of the fellow PhD students and faculty and you know, you will clunk up numbers easily enough I am sure even at that time of the year... Anyway I guess all I am saying is that you don't want to arrive at, at the end of May is that you know you are trying to configure this alternative seating arrangement and it's kind of pushing against the piece.
- Steve: It disrupts the piece, exactly.
- Mary: I mean I suppose, you know we had this conversation myself where do the audience like it. You know..do audience themselves can they, if they are this close to the piano player. I don't know if they want to sit that close. You'll probably move around so there will be slight relief.
- Steve: Push the piano around.
- EM: You don't like what you are looking at.
- Mary: So all those things I guess is just trying figure Oscar, we are just talking about the question of when you make the choice of dismantling the performance space in its traditional sense, what you have to deal with how many numbers can you fit. How comfortable are the audience kind of sitting here like this with the piano player and the screen is over there, do we turn or do we try and facilitate everybody to have the same view.
- Oscar: Those questions are actually ...our ..get confused very quickly.

Steve: What am I supposed to do.

Mary: They are a nightmare.

Oscar: I mean when you have a normal position in forms you know what you are supposed to do. Look at the stage and listen and then that's it but here it's confused and it contributes to a sometimes a feeling of, I am uncomfortable here. What the fuck is this.

Steve: It is collective grumpiness.

Mary: Yes and discomfort. They are always causing trouble.

Steve: Some of them mightn't like it so let's get rid of them.

Mary: It might take them ten minutes of the whole piece to try and get the ...God I got the worst seat.

Oscar: How are these things going on and they missed things.

Steve: Well at least we'd have get out in the Q&A. Oh you know the problem was all the good stuff was happening behind you, it was wonderful back there. Did anyone else see that.

EM: Oh there will be a Q&A.

Mary: You picked the wrong seat.

Steve: You picked the wrong gig.

Mary: Oscar what do you think would fit in the theatre when you pushed that back you know bearing in mind that there is potentially two pianos. There is a screen.

Oscar: If you think of the tower that it's also free sitting, it's for about eighty.

Mary: That's for 80 like that.

Oscar: But the tower is half the space of the entire but say the actual useful space or usable space of the tower is probably let's say not half but maybe you can fit 1.5 tower in there so if it's 80 seats altogether and you say 40 comfortably. So maybe between forty and sixty.

Mary: Yes.

Oscar: Which is a lot I think.

EM: That would be enough.

Oscar: That would be plenty. I would say to set up for between 30 and 50.

Steve: Yes, yes.

Oscar: That would be comfortable. You can have them like this if you wanted and space in between the chairs. Because it's quite big ...

Mary: When that goes back yes.

Oscar: It's a lot of space.

EM: So you can still have.

Oscar: It's a good half the space more or less of the theatre.

Mary: But then there will be big elements in it as well.

Oscar: There would be, there will be I mean the piano or the two pianosscreens.

EM: Projection.

Oscar: How many did we have the last time?

EM: About 35.

Oscar: So you are more less...it's going to be a similar crowd.

EM: I'd say. Some can't come you know the usual then someone else can come.

Oscar: So average is 35-40 really. 30 to 40. That is the thing for contemporary. So that's a crowd.

Mary: It's a great crowd.

Oscar: It's a great crowd so and I would say you can easily fit chairs like 30 or 40 chairs.

Mary: In some kind of configuration.

Oscar: Yes, I mean maybe with the option of, of...because there will always be the, the weird ones that are ok sitting beside the piano. You never know because you can actually have the piano there. Maybe no one will take it.

Steve: That would be interesting.

Oscar: But those the kinds of people that are unexpectedly they go and sit there and then they are five minutes after, why the fuck did I sit here because you know you are problematic but eh for the late comers they ...when I say latecomers you know obviously nobody will arrive there late but, but people may arrive earlier.

Mary: Earlier.

Oscar: Unless actually the space is open at the same time for everyone who is gathering in the foyer. You could think also of a ...I know people won't' do it but as a second performance I know that someone is going to do that in the exam.

Deirdre. They are going to do a little prosecco or something like that in between the first and second part of her performance.

EM: Really?

Oscar: And she said they ok'd that. She said that to Uni. So it means that because normally don't have it for exams. We have it for...

Mary: Yes that makes sense though.

Oscar: For exactly we normally have it for anything else, any other performance.

Steve: Can you make sure the examiner has a few.

Mary: At least three.

Oscar: Well it be me.

EM Go on you will, you will.

Oscar: Well I don't think I will need any drink anyway but yes all I am saying the way of keeping the wall outside and they all enter the space at the same time so there is none of the kind of.

EM: I think that will be better.

Steve: Drips and drips. I think that will be more effective actually.

Oscar: Even if it is tea and coffee if you serve outside but to keep them waiting and kind of without being like, so you can say, call for 6:30 and or 6:40 and doors open at 7 o'clock or 6:55 so everyone comes in and then at 7 nobody else gets in.

EM: God I am nervous now the way...

Mary: The piece is finished with we are just tidying up.

Oscar: Well you don't want the whole thing starting and then people coming in and kind of not so much interrupting but also.

Mary: No, doors closed.

Oscar: Doors closed and that's that. It happened in the tower. People still can come in like. So the need to hire someone. To ask someone as a favour to be at the door.

EM: That's a good idea.

Mary: A host.

Steve: A bouncer.

Mary: A bouncer yes.

Oscar: For the entire duration of the performance. You don't want anyone coming in. Like people if they have to go out that's a different thing.

Mary: Yes yes....

Oscar: But because it's an exam, the second exam and another thing sorry I need to talk about because it would be important at this stage to discuss is, is recording it. It has be recorded on video and audio for the external examiner to see it. Now the external examiner will know that this is a record of it but it has to be. So there needs to be at least two cameras.

EM: We did discuss that with Alan. I asked him because of the nature of it. He said yes there should be two to three cameras and then when they are editing it they might actually video some of us doing it in rehearsal to get some shots that they can import but they will do a live edit.

Oscar: Yes that's the one we send to the examiner you see. I don't think we can send edited stuff because I know it's good for the look but this is not a broadcasting quality thing. It's for the sake of a record of it.

Mary: To see it from the beginning to the end, yes.

Oscar: I know it's not the same as being there but there is nothing we can do, the examiner is not available so.

Mary: I am sure they will have one fixed camera anyway.

Oscar: Exactly. One fixed camera and then another two or three and which just to get angles and then everything recorded through to the desk. So there is no sound being recorded, live sound into the camera mike.

EM: Ok so that is separate.

Oscar: Yes and also to have a very good sound check.

EM: I remember you saying that.

Oscar: You remember me telling you that, because engineers normally put a limiter or a gate to compress and remember the quality of the first recording because obviously given the improvisational character you don't know how but just bang the pianos as loud as you would bang it or as loud and then sing as loud as you can sing and that's the limit. The rest you know if something is very very quiet well that's the risk but what you do don't want is the thing to be compressed or limited or gated.

Steve: That's a good point.

Oscar: It sounds horrible, People tend to do that automatically they are going to struggle you know and the desks unless good artificial intelligence is developed. Do it

on the spot in a very good way. Sorry these are things, practical things are very important.

Steve: No they are.

EM: We will be so engrossed.

Steve: We had just started to go down that path.

Oscar: Because they can actually be a good reality check in the end there can be an ideal way for something and then there is the practical one. Just as much as the space presents limitations. The recording of it presents limitations and let's not forget it will be assessed by the external examiner who is the one that normally who has the leadership in assessing things or in assessing the thesis. Basically he can't come but Mel being there that's an advantage because the time when they confer whatever the other person couldn't see Mel experienced it and then that's a good thing. I mean Mel obviously he experienced the first performance through a sound check for a rehearsal and so he has an idea of what that was plus he had the recording so in a way he is being, he would be at the two things which is good because he is the only person. I have nothing to say. Well I have lots to say.

EM: I was just going to say I would correct you on that.

Oscar: I have a lot to say but I can't say anything. All I can support this poor man but yes anyway, that's that. It's a good thing. There will be a lot of tech actually involved.

Mary: There will.

EM: That's what's emerging.

Oscar: I mean a lot of tech apart of that then the recording and the lighting and the lighting is very important for the video as well.

Mary: They go hand in hand in terms of yes.

Oscar: And then catching projections on a video is also very difficult isn't it. In order to to do justice or as much justice as is possible.

Steve: Yes indeed.

Mary; The only thing you can do also is I guess submit the video footage if they want it.

Oscar: That's another thing to.

Mary: To cross check it or something.

Oscar: Yes exactly. I mean obviously we picked someone that for me anyway is a very open minded guy who has worked inter disciplinary as well.

Appendix

13

DISCOURSE May 30th

Comments on Day of second performance

EE: Eugene
SE: Steve
MY: Mary
OR: Oscar

MY: Absolutely. And so similarly, Steve, it's kind of the meaning becomes so... Something else. New meaning comes into play when you change to bring the voice to another place. The relationship is different.

SE: It's the nature of that journey.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, what is -

MY: Yes.

SE: - its purpose?

MY: Yes. What is its purpose?

SE: What is it trying to say?

MY: Yes.

SE: What is it trying to suggest? I mean Oscar and I started to talk about finding a locus for me or a number of different locations. Also in relation to the issue of where we perform this.

MY: Yes.

SE: And then that took us into a slightly kind of deeper conversation about certain types of theatre, so we start to talk about that, the term, we start to talk about the interactivity and then, you know, it occurred to me that if I wanted to personify this voice, it kind of takes me actually into the realm of a toe in the contemporary sense, but also Greek theatre. And if you look at what these are all about, obviously they're about becoming different manifestations of, you know, of that process that we are all given as human beings. That is our journey, you know. And it seems to me that that's a kind of a very particular kind of, if you like, existential predicament. The sort of thing that, you know, that is so characteristic of Greek theatre, ancient Greek theatre, you know.

So then I'm thinking to myself well, ok then, so there's a certain level of personification starting to come through there for me. I can feel the power of that because obviously I have words, so we have abstract sound, but I have words, so having intention is really, really important. I mean I can, you know, I can generalise, but for me, intention gives kind of real power. It's extra dimension. It's an extra resource to draw on and the nature of the expression has changed from that. So then if I personify this voice in that way, then why not see audience as chorus, as a silent Greek chorus, if you like? So there could be a kind of both a sculptural aspect to that and choreography. Just you know, you can keep interrogating this, but for myself, I'm trying to -

EE: Anchor it in some, yes.

SE: Absolutely.

EE: Yes. Yes.

SE: Absolutely.

EE: That makes sense in the line, yes.

SE: Absolutely. You know, what is the function of this?

EE: Yes.

MY: How do you think, Steve, thinking about the audience as chorus might impact how you navigate the space?

SE: Well -

MY: Do you have any kind of sense of?

SE: - I can imagine myself.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: I'm thinking myself into that and I can just imagine, in a sense, it's... It might have something to do with the way that you cluster and it might be that I move through the piece and I place myself physically. I journey through each of those clusters, not establishing that kind of a relationship -

MY: No, no, no, no, no.

SE: - with them of course.

MY: Yes.

SE: But feeling their presence.

MY: Yes.

SE: And feeling my relation -

MY: Yes.

SE: - to them.

MY: Would it be useful to...? I mean I don't know whether we have a layer of time for this or not, but would it be useful -

SE: Well, that's the other issue, isn't it?

MY: - to think about, would it be useful to kind of think about that question in relationship to scoring it somehow?

SE: This was something -

MY: Yes.

SE: - that we started to -

MY: Yes.

SE: - get to. Absolutely. And you know, this idea of, if you like, perambulating or journeying through the space, if you look at what we are now calling the fifth stanza, there it is, you know. Measuring myself in pitched orbits of rich obedience, you know. So I'm measuring myself and my journey. You know, it's not just in those pitches orbits that, you know, that you're hearing, but there's an analogue to that in terms of -

MY: Yes.

SE: - movement through the space. As I say, just to find ways of kind of enriching this.

MY: Yes.

SE: Of intensifying it because I know I did a series of performances recently in which I became a character based on that, a different kind of existential predicament. And from the moment that I acknowledged that this was a character, I called him Ish, it changed everything. The process.

EE: I can imagine, yes.

SE: It deepened -

EE: Yes.

SE: - so dramatically and it changed the whole piece.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, so there was an improvised scene, instrumental assemblage as part of that as well. They were all, you know, deeply enriched by that, by that discussion, that flame just kind of took off in all kinds of amazing ways. So I'm just wondering whether or not there can't be that kind of intensification so.

EE: Well, these are like universal truths, aren't they?

SE: Exactly.

EE: Which are part of that Greek tragedy play-out -

SE: Absolutely. Absolutely.

EE: - you know, announcement.

SE: Yes. But I can already, as soon as we start to, as soon as I start to articulate that and kind of hearing it coming back from you just there intensifies it still further, I think. People feel a certain type of embodiment.

EE: Yes.

SE: To establish its origin, you know. It's powering that.

MY: Yes. Totally, yes, totally, I mean.

EE: Like that makes sense to me as well. Yes. Yes.

MY: And if it feels like that's kind of -

EE: Yes.

MY: - taking form.

EE: Yes.

SE: It just feels as if it needs to somehow.

MY: Yes.

SE: But then how can we acknowledge that?

MY: Yes.

SE: How? Then what is the choreography?

MY: Yes.

SE: How can we kind of do that?

MY: Yes. Yes. Because then it becomes a spatial question. How do you travel that character -

SE: Exactly. Exactly.

MY: - through the space so that it dramaturgically interacts, not with the audience, but you know, with the objects, you know?

SE: Absolutely.

MY: You know, or and with the audience.

SE: Well, that was something I said well, we got to this point just before we arrived in, you know. We were wondering whether or not the journey could function as an interception with kind of a direct interception with the different elements.

MY: Yes.

SE: With your piece.

MY: Yes.

SE: You know, so one stanza, you know, is delivered to here.

MY: Yes.

SE: And then there's a process of movement, of judging -

MY: Yes.

SE: - how I move and when I move to the next station.

MY: Yes.

SE: Which is then delivered, you know, the next stanza being delivered there, you know.

MY: Yes.

SE: It just...

MY: Yes, totally. I mean what I feel in response to that, Steve, is that in some ways, I think I could really facilitate a response, a feedback on that.

SE: Yes.

MY: As I'm watching it. But of course we have to recognise that it's not like we're in rehearsals where we'll see it six times over.

SE: No.

MY: So we'll be able to kind of map it. So it might be just a case of seeing it once in the afternoon and I'll respond to how -

SE: Yes.

MY: - we interact.

SE: Yes.

MY: Organically with the space.

SE: Yes.

MY: And then maybe that feedback can build into what you do if we get to do it a second time.

EE: Yes. Yes. Yes.

MY: And it would be a spatial feedback.

SE: It was the sort of thing though that we can literally walk through.

MY: We can walk through.

SE: Can we walk through it?

MY: Yes. We can walk through it, yes. Yes.

SE: So we could actually end up doing it, you know -

MY: Yes.

SE: - multiple times.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: Just getting a sense of it, so you know -

MY: Yes. We can talk. Unless the fixing of that might feel counter to what actually happens in the performance.

SE: Well -

MY: But you can manage that.

SE: - but you know, I think -

MY: You could make a decision -

SE: Absolutely.

MY: - to let it go.

SE: You know, as long as there's a general structure, if you like.

MY: Ok.

SE: Then of course, you know, we -

MY: Perfect.

SE: - will definitely find ways.

MY: Ok. Then that's clear.

SE: Yes.

MY: Then I think definitely, that's exciting to work on. For me, that sounds fun.

SE: Well, but I mean having you here.

EE: Yes.

MY: Like I was saying earlier on.

EE: Yes.

SE: Having you here -

EE: Yes.

SE: - I mean who better?

MY: Yes.

SE: Who better, you know?

MY: Totally, that's brilliant.

SE: So you know.

MY: Yes. Because it's interesting because I had always thought about it as that you guys were moving through the space. I didn't realise for ages that actually in the last performance that you stood. I assumed that you changed space. It's funny, isn't it?

SE: Yes. Yes. It's interesting.

MY: And so when you asked me, I assumed that my physicality as a mover would be in relationship to you guys moving. It's so funny, isn't it?

SE: Yes. Yes.

MY: Yes. So that -

OR: We are talking about precondition in fact, in a way.

MY: Yes.

OR: It's the precondition and I'm sure, I don't know if you mentioned this, but one of the things we discussed on the way here was how audiences are preconditioned to -

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes.

OR: - in the context of piano and voice -

MY: Yes.

OR: - the vocalist is the soloist and the pianist is accompaniment to the singer.

EE: Is accompaniment, yes.

OR: The singer is always -

MY: Yes.

OR: - the principal.

SE: Always the principal. The pianist, however accomplished, is always the accompaniment.

MY: Accompaniment.

OR: And however accomplished -

EE: Yes, yes.

MY: Yes.

OR: You know, there are pieces of music where the piano has more tough -

EE: Yes.

OR: - job than the soloist.

MY: Yes.

OR: Be it a violinist or a singer.

SE: See, it gets to hold the tuba.

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: The pianist is like this.

OR: Yes. Then sometimes it's a reduced orchestra.

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes.

OR: So yes, so unfortunately the audiences are pre-exposed to these codes and so I said to Steve how does it need to be done in order to break that?

MY: Yes.

OR: From the outset.

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes.

OR: So that -

MY: Yes.

OR: - it doesn't create a false...

MY: Yes.

OR: It doesn't confuse them more.

MY: Yes.

OR: Now, it's ok to confuse and I think it's fine, you know, but if it's going to break it, it probably would be better to break it -

MY: Completely.

OR: - completely and from the beginning.

MY: Yes.

OR: As opposed to slowly.

MY: Yes.

OR: And then suddenly they end up with the wrong... They will spend more time trying to figure out what it is than experiencing the thing.

MY: Exactly. Yes. Exactly.

OR: And we don't really want that.

EE: No.

MY: Yes.

SE: But if we give any suggestion to audience, if there is any hint of that old relationship.

MY: Yes.

SE: That old codified relationship.

MY: Yes.

SE: They'll snap it back into place.

MY: Yes.

EE: Yes.

MY: Exactly. Yes. Yes.

SE: They absolutely are going with that.

MY: Great. It's there.

SE: That's what it is.

EE: Yes.

SE: It's a concert with a little bit of extra.

EE: Yes, oh my god.

MY: Yes, defendant.

OR: Exactly.

EE: Oh my god.

SE: Oh Jesus, it's a recital, isn't it? There he is. There's a singer. Well, I'm not going to be singing -

MY: Yes. Yes.

SE: - in that way. And where is the stand? It's over there.

EE: Yes.

OR: Where is the music?

SE: Where is the music stand?

MY: Yes.

SE: I don't see any notes in there.

OR: No, sorry, on a practical because it's approaching to half 10.

MY: Yes.

OR: On a practical level, because I have to leave and come back, I was just saying to Steve this morning trying to find the best time for me to be at the dress rehearsal.

MY: Yes.

OR: And be able to give feedback what I would like.

SE: Yes.

Appendix

14

Live impression May 31st

Sarah Declan Impression After First Performance

EE: Eugene
SH: Sarah
DN: Declan

EE: Now it's recording.

DN: Lucy.

SH: Yes. Well, just to thank you because I really –

DN: Yes. Yes.

SH: - felt that, you know, you brought us on a real, I suppose, I don't know. I think somebody said that for the, I don't know whether we'd call the audience or what they were called, but -

EE: Yes, yes.

SH: - it's very individual to each person, that I felt at the beginning just that the real necessity of just letting go completely of anything that I thought what a performance -

EE: Should be.

SH: - musical or whatever -

EE: Yes, yes.

SH: - performance it would be, you know. And once I'd, you know, allowed myself to let go or made the, that it really, I think it really brought me and everyone there, I'm sure, on a very, oh, I don't know, it was like something dragged out of myself from a very deep -

EE: Yes.

SH: - you know, and it was like, I don't know, experiencing something very creative, but creation.

EE: Yes.

SH: You know, and the way that I would have seen that in my own, you know.

EE: It's quite extraordinary, the experience, and even the language people try to use to articulate what's going on.

SH: Yes.

EE: Because it's that type of language that we know starts -

DN: Yes.

EE: - appearing.

SH: Yes.

EE: In different ways.

SH: Yes.

EE: And even that phrase like consecrated -

DN: Yes.

EE: - of the instant.

DN: Yes.

EE: You know.

SH: Yes. Yes.

EE: That this is like people trying to articulate the, I suppose, the deep parts of you that you reach when you're doing it and when you're hearing it.

SH: When you're hearing it too, yes.

EE: And also because like, you know, even lots of music is very conditioned. You know, like you expect the melody to go like this and it to change here and come back there. So when that doesn't happen and it's all not anything, that it's all -

SH: Yes.

EE: - raw. But that's fantastic that you thought that or you experienced that.

SH: Yes.

EE: Because like I didn't know what anybody was going to hear.

DN: Yes, yes, yes.

EE: I was nearly putting warning signs up.

DN: Oh, I know.

SH: Yes.

EE: You know, like this is research, you know, like.

DN: Yes.

SH: Yes.

EE: So I'm very pleased that, you know, people aren't running out saying oh my god, like that was traumatising.

DN: Yes, yes.

EE: You know.

SH: Yes.

EE: Because it is dramatic and it does demand your ear to be open to something.

DN: Yes.

SH: Yes, and your heart, your soul.

EE: Yes.

SH: Your full, your being to be open really.

EE: Well, because you leave different from the person you came, don't you?

SH: Yes. Yes. Yes.

EE: Even though we weren't from a bad place coming.

DN: Yes.

EE: But you do leave in a better place.

SH: Yes.

DN: Yes.

SH: You're part of something creative.

EE: And I say this is Steven, like I keep repeating these things, like that I'm interested in touching the deepest part of people.

SH: Yes.

EE: When -

SH: That's what I felt that you did. Yes.

EE: So I'm not afraid for it to be lyrical. So sometimes it is very lyrical.

DN: Yes, it was, yes.

EE: He was singing -

DN: Yes.

EE: - very openly.

DN: Yes.

SH: Yes.

EE: But then it could be very dissonant as well. So why not be able to have both in it, you know?

SH: Yes. Yes.

EE: And nearly when it's dissonant, that the stuff that's lyrical sounds even nicer because it's coming off the back -

DN: Yes.

EE: - of something that's -

SH: Yes.

DN: Yes, yes.

EE: - chaotic.

SH: Yes. Yes.

EE: And then also you're using the piano with your body, not with your techniques, so sometimes there's -

DN: Yes.

SH: Yes, yes. I loved it. Yes.

DN: Yes.

EE: You know, so it's an embodiment.

DN: Yes.

EE: It's like you're using things you've learned or even I was doing runs of the piano, but I wasn't playing particular notes.

SH: Yes. Yes.

EE: Like I'd normally do when I was playing. I was using the momentum of it to create the sound.

SH: Yes. Yes.

EE: Than the actual sound.

SH: Yes.

DN: Great.

SH: Wonderful.

EE: Fantastic.

EE: Eugene, interviewer
 PL: Paul Johnson, interviewee

EE: So this is my interview with Paul Johnson, the CEO of Dance Ireland. And I just want to start by asking Paul to tell us something about your career as a dancer and how you were inspired to become a dancer and choreographer and your biography to date, I suppose.

PL: Ok. I suppose maybe I can't really remember what the inspiration for it was, but I suppose my career as a dancer or as a dance artist I suppose is the only career I've had, other than this working, currently working for Dance Ireland. So I started with evening classes and weekend workshops in the late '70s and just developed an interest in movement. I think it was an antidote to school or to other things that were... I could see other kids being involved in and I liked it because it was unique and different and it made perfect sense. But quite quickly out of that, I went and trained quite formally in London at the London Centre and stayed there for five years and progressed. So did a foundation course there, did a vocational course and then did an advanced performance course, which was quite intensive and very informative and very important. And the reason why I've mentioned it and highlighted it is because obviously the London Centre was, even in the early '80s, was a centre for creativity and has a strong focus on composition and choreography, less on performance. So it wasn't churning out dancers, sorry, it wasn't churning out conventionally highly trained dancers, but it was wanting to churn out creative independent practitioners who yes, would dance, but also will make, would write about dance and so on. At the time, maybe to flavour it at the time, I suppose you had an option to train very formally in terms of a conservative art training at the place or the Royal Ballet or Rambert, where the focus would be on technique, whereas at the London, the focus was while we did technique of course, that was really important, the primary focus was on creating creative dance practitioners.

Immediately after that, I was very lucky that I was able to come back to Ireland, to Dublin and to work for Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre for a couple of years. Again, that was very important because at that time, Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre was a full-time company, a small ensemble of, when I joined, it was six people and I stayed with them for a number of years, about three years or so. And then subsequently, from the mid-'80s onwards, I then worked independently as a freelance dancer, choreographer, teacher. I was very lucky in that throughout all that period, so from training in the mid-'80s, finishing training in mid-'80s all the way through to when I retired in 2002/3, you know, I never did anything other than work in dance. So in a way, I suppose that is quite unique now because now, it's not necessarily as an independent practitioner, it's not necessarily possible to do that anymore. You have to do lots of other things. So that's another, I suppose, it would contribute quite significantly I think to our discussion because during that time, during those

periods, I would have worked in dance, in theatre, some film, worked with other visual art/multidisciplinary artists. So I was constantly being exposed to new ways of working and new ideas, I think, and especially in terms of performance and performance practices.

After a while, like a lot of jobbing dancers, I wanted to choreograph. I wanted to make my own work. I had a few ideas, but up to that point, before I started the Mandance thing, I would have made a few pieces for companies and for schools and stuff like that, but none of that was very satisfactory. And I realised that in order to make something that was going to be of interest to me, even if it wasn't necessarily successful in terms of on the stage or lucrative or true to the world, it had to be satisfying to me first and foremost. And the early '90s, it was interesting in that there were a few, there was a sister organisation to Dance Ireland then called the Dance Council of Ireland who encouraged collaboration between composers and dancers and matched people with, I suppose matched, as I said, choreographers and composers and created the conditions for people, for artists to come together and experiment and play. Obviously, the end result was a series of performances, and I suppose that was... The product was as important as the process at that particular time and I would have entered into that at some point and I suppose enjoyed making work and presenting it.

I can't really remember now what the impetus for the Mandance work was, but at that particular time, I started to make a duet with a guy called Jeffrey Fox and that piece was called *A Curious Misunderstanding*. And that was with the music composed by Eugene Murphy and it was an interesting duet in that it was a piece that was evolved over a period of time and we presented it in various different stages, in various different contexts and each time adding to the duet. And I suppose it was an interesting piece in that maybe thematically, it was I suppose two male figures working together and it didn't really... It wasn't... Other than that, it was two men on stage dancing together and at that stage, I was very interested in the whole physicality, energy and performance and because I was in the piece as well as making it or leading on it, I suppose that was challenging.

So really, it was all about the steps. It was all about energy. It was all about creating connections between the two of us and then the two of us with an audience. It was about using very particular masculine tropes, I suppose, and playing with them. So I remember there was a lot of jumping. There was a lot of lifting work. There was a lot of high energy movement and that was matched by a very driving score. Out of that then, other work obviously evolved and I think because I was also determined, not determined, I suppose out of necessity, I worked for a lot of other people. My own work was always developed in parallel with other jobs and that then became a pattern for the next 10 years. So the work that was developed over that time was, as I mentioned, the duet of *A Curious Misunderstanding* and then it led onto this piece called *Sweat* which was a solo work. I'll talk about that in a moment. And that led onto a trio called *Beautiful Tomorrow* and that finally led onto a large group work *Without Hope or Fear*.

So that's over a 10-year period is, that's the canon. They're the pieces that were made. They were all made quite, for me, they were all made quite organically. They obviously had different emphasis and priorities, but the collaborations that

evolved out of *A Curious Misunderstanding* were the ones that remained constant throughout this whole creative process, i.e. I was the choreographer and sometimes I was also a performer. Eugene was the composer and Paul Keogan was the lighting designer that we worked with. Costume didn't really figure that much in it because I remember, you know, I suppose we were into showing off the body a lot of the time, so the costume really was secondary. It wasn't really a primary focus of our interest, which in retrospect, it's quite interesting to note because, you know, if maybe there were other resources available, I don't know whether it still would have been a priority because I think the big priority was I suppose that collaborative trio, i.e. the dance, the music and the lighting. That was very, very key.

So working with those artists and then also working then with a range of different male and later female dancers on these various different projects was exciting and interesting and challenging and there was no set pattern, but I suppose I can talk a little bit about the collaborative process because that was actually quite unique, I think, or unique to us anyway. I think for any of these pieces, there was a lot of initial discussion and sharing of ideas and thoughts about what it could be. I remember that we would do various R&D moments where I would create something and I would show it to you and you would come back with a draft score or piece of music and then we would riff on that and then it would just evolve and evolve. It was interesting that I remember that collaboratively, I have a memory of important things like being asked, well, how long is it? What does this actually mean? You know, and they were interesting questions because they were good training because basically, you know, if I said a section was going to be three minutes long, I'll have this flavour, you know, it had to be three minutes long. I'll have to have a flavour because we weren't necessarily working in the studio together at the same time.

So in order I think to progress the piece, you know, if you like, the conversations were important because we needed to stick to what was said, if that makes sense, meaning that, you know, it wasn't improvisatory in the sense or responsive in the sense that, you know, it could change all the time. And I liked that. I suppose maybe specifically, maybe I should talk about *Sweat* a little bit because I think that encapsulates everything because the final piece which ended up being 60 minutes, but it was created over I think nearly a two-year period, and it started, as I said earlier, through a number of bespoke performances where I would present sections of it. And as the piece grew, I suppose it evolved into an evening and our 60-minute piece, but it had the solo performer, it had text, it had music, it had set, it had costume and design and lighting to finally create this piece that dealt with the whole notion of... I suppose from a very personal perspective, it dealt with the notion of HIV and AIDS and how that affected or impacted I think on an individual and then maybe one of those maybe resonate with an audience.

But I suppose it was a very satisfying piece to make because in my head, it was genuinely collaborative, but I also understand that my definition of collaborative for that particular piece probably could be interrogated because in a way, it was, you know, I was in fact the lynchpin, but it wasn't until we came to the latter parts of the performance where actually all of the participants would be in the room together or on stage together. Up to that point, you know, I would have worked with Eugene on the music and separately from working with Paul on the

lighting, separately to devising the choreography. So it is interesting that still in my head, it still is collaborative.

EE: **Yes, I was going to say that. Yes.**

PL: In a way, but then I also would... I suppose it would then be important to note that it was at the very latter stages of when this thing was being presented that, you know, final like genuinely collaborative elements emerge where people contributed thoughts and ideas to what it was they were seeing as they were seeing it, which you know, I suppose in a way, possibly couldn't have been possible unless we had done all the other individual.

EE: **Exactly, yes.**

PL: The interesting... I think I was aware that by the time that Sweat was going to be premiered at Project Arts Centre, I was aware that it had to be a theatrically compelling piece in order to satisfy an audience. But I also was aware that thematically, it had to be treated very seriously, but yet it also had to privilege the body and by that, I mean that there were sections in it where, and like it seemed to go on for hours, but it was probably only minutes really where the performer is facing upstage and it's just their back is dancing and I think I used to think that that was fascinating. I'm sure if I was to look at that again, you know, I probably wouldn't be that... But there were... And that was to do with trying to communicate very clearly through the body and with sound or with music and with lighting. You know, there was no face involved in any of that. And you know, for me, looking back on it, I suppose it's exciting to remember it because it was very satisfying and I suppose and the responses from audiences were very, I suppose confirmed that maybe or articulated a very, you know, that this is very interesting and they were looking at a male body in a very, but not from a... They were just looking at a male body working through a lot of different emotions.

Yes, there is things about the piece, where that... You know, the text, you know, was important and that was a short story that had been evolved as the piece was being made. The use of the score was almost cinematic in the sense that it not only informed what was going on, but I have a memory that it framed the piece and it ebbed and flowed, and it was very dynamic and vibrant. So dynamic in the sense that it was very flavoured. It did use I suppose a range of different sounds and techniques, you know, to create this piece that hopefully would speak to people.

EE: **Like over that 10-year period, my ow memory of it as well is that when we started and you came up with this concept of A Curious Misunderstanding, I remember being very involved, more involved in that than maybe the last piece, Without Hope or Fear, where with the last piece when we were coming to the end of our collaboration together as a choreographer and composer, I remember that we had quite a lot of discussions about what this was about and what was taking place. And then I went off to create something with that and probably created a lot of the music almost to the finished stages before the dancers heard it and that was also interesting as a way of collaborating, that you gave me the freedom in this collaborative**

process to go off and use the communication of what we had, I suppose, developed over that period of time working with other pieces throughout that, to actually be able to use our own creative sense of what it is and then come back to the table with that. And I suppose that was very liberating as a composer and was a different way to working where sometimes choreographers, they can be very prescriptive in telling you exactly what they want from it, you know. But I felt that was more, as we matured with this, it became more organic, which I think was a different way of collaborating than when we had started off, maybe when we were younger and trying to find our way. But I don't know what your response is to that, but it's all about, you know, how you see collaboration and how you compare that to working on your own, for example.

PL: Yes. No. I think you summed it up quite succinctly and very nicely. Because in this instance, collaboration for me meant dialogue. It meant a constant dialogue. It meant a constant sharing of thoughts and ideas so that... And trust was built up and that was really important because I suppose while it was never, we never signed an agreement, I think through the dialogues, understanding and trust were almost organically formed so that, yes, I wouldn't be flippant to say that yes, if at the end of a conversation, it was agreed, ok, this section is going to be seven and a half minutes long. You know, I would trust that the conversation about the seven and a half minute piece, you know, would be right. You know, that it wouldn't be that... It would be right because collaborative, we had this interesting conversation about what it was. You probably would have, I suppose, given me some idea of what it would sound like. I probably would have given you some idea of what the movement would be like or, you know, some of the choreography in terms of how the space would be arranged and so I was never surprised in terms of oh, that's not what we talked about. I was always pleasantly surprised of course, but there was a bit of... We were in tune, but I don't know why because it wasn't...

Sorry, I think the being in tune and trusting each other and trusting the process, and that's to put a name on it now, but at that time, I don't think we thought about it like that. It was just a way of working and it came out of necessity and it wasn't that that was either the preferred way of working or the best way of working. It just was the way that it was working. But in a way, as it's wide terminology now, in retrospect, it's quite hard because yes, we now talk about it being very collaborative, but we had to talk about it, it was collaborative of course, but it was collaborative on particular terms rather than maybe how it's understood -

EE: **Now.**

PL: - now.

EE: **Where it's a different perspective maybe put on it or a different frame -**

PL: Yes.

EE: **- I should say put on it. Yes. I suppose if you're working with another discipline, you know, obviously it's a while since you've worked like that,**

but did you ever see it as integrating that discipline into your work or did you see it as, you know, the music comes with X and the dance comes with Y and the lighting comes with Z and you just point them altogether? I suppose that was really the *modus operandi* or that was how the process was developed with you as the lead, as the choreographer.

PL: Yes. No, yes, absolutely, yes. But if you like, rather than using the word ‘lead’, it would be more like that I suppose the interesting thing about our process was I think that the choreography was the lynchpin as opposed to a very personal aesthetic, if that makes sense. So that it wasn’t about that, you know, I as the choreographer wanted to control and manipulate and inform or tweak all the other elements, but I was interested in what those other elements would bring to the whole picture. And I suppose maybe it’s back to what I said earlier is that it wasn’t that I wanted, you know, I suppose while I would have been aware of the terminology of interdisciplinary, I suppose I would have been aware of interdiscipline. No, I would have been aware of multidisciplinary approaches, cross-disciplinary approaches and I probably would have had a nod of an understanding of what interdisciplinary practice meant, but none of those terminologies ever informed what it was that I was doing because for me, it was collaborative in a sense that I was happy to work with another artist, like equal to equal and that to, if you like, combine our joint efforts to create something new or something to say. And that it wasn’t about...

So yes, so in any of those pieces, I think you can genuinely extract the choreography from the music, from the design, if you like. And in a way, what was exciting or it is exciting now to think of it, was that maybe each, well, each of those elements could possibly all stand on their own and, you know, I suppose now, I would understand those works were collaborative in the sense that they were developed through a series of encounters, of dialogues, of times in the studio, of sharing thoughts, sorry, sharing material, commenting on that material and you know, working towards creating this end product, the end product being a performance piece. But they weren’t... And that organically developed rather than... Because the collaborators had the confidence and the expertise I suppose to come to that table with, you know, with that way of working. And you know, I certainly wasn’t interested, as a choreographer, I certainly wasn’t interested in rewriting the music or redesigning the lighting or making a costume, but I was interested in working with people that were, you know, brought something additional to this piece or to this. Yes. Because I would accept that, you know, on its own, a lot of that choreography over that 10-year period on its own wasn’t that exciting, meaning, you know, that it only lived or it only made sense when it was enveloped by the music and it was framed by that lighting.

EE: **Yes, that’s very interesting.**

PL: And yes, it didn’t make sense to me otherwise, but also it wasn’t about, and I think I do remember that from us, that, you know, yes, I suppose maybe just to mention it. I suppose the relationship with Paul Keogan, the lighting designer, was very, like it was quite distant in a way that yes, so it was based on an interest, a mutual interest and a trust, but you know, from the beginning of the process to the very end of the process in making any of these pieces, we probably would have only met two or three times. So it wasn’t...

EE: **It wasn't from concept to... You weren't bringing the lighting designer with you on the...**

PL: No, but I was open.

EE: **It's more than...**

PL: No, but I suppose it is just a signal that I suppose it was about having developed a relationship and then trusting that relationship and that was it, like the beginning and the end of it. And then what happened was, you know, these wonderful pieces. You know, but that is not to say that, you know, that was one way of working and of course there are many, many other ways of working, but it's just occurred to me to also say that I suppose I was interested as well and I think you and Paul and any other people that I worked with were interested in being challenged or being open to new ideas. So yes, I do remember, you know, for example, that you would have worked with, even experimented, I suppose, with one or two vocalists, and you'd come back and say oh, I tried this out with... And you know, so I was excited about that, rather than thinking oh no, that wasn't what we agreed or you know. Or I suppose when you might have gone in a slightly different direction that you had mentioned that you were thinking about, you know, in a way, because of the relationship, it all made sense. So it was never -

EE: **A conflict.**

PL: A conflict, yes. But I'm sure there were conflicts. I'm sure there were or -

EE: **Differences.**

PL: - differences and of course, you know, there must have been, but I suppose the primary point to make is the one I made right at the beginning, is that I think the collaboration developed through these dialogues, through an element, and these dialogues, for me, or these conversations created trust and I suppose in a way it would be to say that now to acknowledge, well, I probably didn't have a clue about what I was doing, but also I was clear that I didn't have the ambition to... I didn't want it to become a company, you know. And I think it does speak to what you did say earlier. Yes, I suppose in a way, I was very selfish or stubborn and very fixed. You know, this is what I wanted to do. I didn't care about anyone else. This is what I wanted to do. This is what I want to do and this is what I wanted to do.

You know, in saying it now, I suppose it is to acknowledge that, you know, I benefitted from other people's tolerance and expertise and talent and interest. And hopefully mutually, it was satisfying, but I suppose in a way, when I look back on it now, I suppose it's slightly traumatic because I do realise I think, well, what if I'd done it this way, you know? But when I look back on, particularly on those pieces, you know, I'm very proud of them of course, first and foremost, but secondly, I am really aware that they were of their time and they were about... And they worked I think precisely because we created a unique collaborative way of working.

EE: I think in Ireland especially, at the beginning, like in the '80s and the early '90s, there was very much a sort of a very top-down approach where the choreographer had the concept and maybe applied for a grant with the Arts Council and they had the, what would I say? The narrative for what was going to happen in the dance and it was a formula that worked, I suppose. But what was interesting was that you were fairly open to the collaboration not being so fixed or you were open to how the music might go or the dance, you know, the choreography I mean, or the lighting as well. And in allowing that to open probably in the process, there was a lot more creativity because there was a lot more freedom for each element to express itself. And do you think it's different now when you observe? Obviously you're not in the process, but as you know, you are still I suppose a guardian of dance in some ways, do you see the artists working differently or is it the same, in your opinion from a collaborative point of view?

PL: No, I think it's similar, but it has greatly evolved because I think now the understanding of collaboration, I think there's a better understanding about the whole nature of creative collaboration and I think that that is to be welcomed. And you know, I can see with a lot of dance artists today, even very established ones, and I don't know whether this is a pressure that, you know, because we are, if you like, you know, as you know, there's a pressure on people to collaborate, but within that, there still are no guidelines and yes, there are successful collaborations and then there are maybe less successful collaborations. But I can see that there is a huge desire for dance artists or for choreographers to collaborate, but to do it in a way that I suppose pushes boundaries and, you know, contributes to creating something new, fresh, interesting. But I do see that it's also greatly informed by, I suppose, contemporary arts practice full stop.

You know, the context now for making and presenting work are very different than when I was doing it, meaning that, you know, in terms of other opportunities, museums are very interested in exploring how visual art and performance practices, you know, connect. And you know, so that's... And they encourage, I suppose, a more interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to making work and export it and I can see choreographers today responding to that, but I cannot think of any piece that I might have seen that originated out of Ireland in the last year that is not collaborative to a lesser or greater extent. And of course, you know, that is not to say that internationally, I imagine there are people who are working very singularly or you know, are very focused, but I suppose in Ireland at the moment, what I can see around me is a huge amount of engaged collaborative work being made.

EE: This is just a comment that was made, which you may have read where Bart said in 1981 that when working collaboratively and he also mentions it in an interdisciplinary perspective as well, that the work belongs to no one because it's a shared artistic creation. Does this resonate with you in any way or what's your impression when you think about what he might have said?

PL: No, no, it doesn't resonate with me at all because I do think that, you know, while I suppose coming from a background in improvisation or being informed

by group improvisatory collaborations where, yes, the aim is that there is no single author, but people are working towards a theme or an idea and they're contributing all their bits to make this new greater piece, you know, yes, I do accept that that, you know, does happen and can happen. But for me, no, it doesn't because it doesn't actually make sense because in the end, we are aiming to make a piece of work that speaks to an audience and you know, in order for that piece of work to speak to an audience, it actually has to... There has to be an author. Whether they have worked, you know, so regardless of whether they have worked collaboratively with -

EE: **That's very interesting, yes, yes.**

PL: - someone, you know, still, you know, otherwise, you know, I think it becomes very dissipated and yes, there are all these wonderful elements, but I think there has to be some sort of mediation that happens. In other words maybe a sense of control or leadership. But no, well, I think the most successful collaborations for me still are the ones that have I suppose a true line or not necessarily a single authorship, but certainly are led by one person and that others are fitting in. And I think it's the job of that particular person, whether it is the choreographer or whether it's the composer or director, you know, is actually to find, you know, I suppose to exploit the tools in order to make sure that collaboratively, everyone is contributing and feels that they're valued and you know, they're all, I suppose, they're all working towards that bigger goal. I mean it's an interpretation of that. It's not too... But I suppose in response to it, to the question, yes, no, it doesn't resonate with me in the sense that it doesn't make sense to me, but I do accept that, you know, it is a way of working and I do accept that in a truly, that's not to contradict, but I suppose in a very interesting, sorry, in a truly interdisciplinary practice, I suppose maybe that is actually the aim, is that there is no sole author and -

EE: **And maybe that's just a different approach to the collaboration.**

PL: Sure, no, absolutely, yes, yes,

EE: **Just you probably have answered this because you eloquently have talked now about collaboration and our collaboration as well. To what degree is the creative relationship important to the process? Well, obviously it's very important from what you've said, but if you just want to comment on that because that was one of the questions.**

PL: Sorry, how do you mean? The...?

EE: **To what degree is the creative relationship important to the process? Just like you know, you used interesting words, value words like in ours, there was trust and openness that allowed, you know, that developed over a period of time. And creative relationships are different and you have observed and commented as well on ones that worked better collaborative and ones that didn't work as well as others.**

PL: Oh.

EE: So I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on that and just in general?

PL: Oh well, I think that there can't be a hierarchy and I think that is a failure, and that's a failure among young artists where they believe that, you know, I suppose they believe that they're the choreographer and they know everything and other people are working to them.

EE: That's interesting.

PL: And I don't think -

EE: That works at all.

PL: - that works at all. So I think what is important is there has to be parity and not lip service and that I think that I as a choreographer working with a composer would, you know, would want that composer to be autonomous in the sense of an experienced and credible, trained with all the other amazing life histories and that's what they bring. And you know, I would accept that. I would want that. Maybe that's where, you know, if I didn't, parity, what do I mean? Peer-to-peer. And I don't mean that I want to work with geniuses all the time or collaboration is about genius to genius, but respect as well comes into this.

EE: Absolutely.

PL: But the respect, trust only come from an acceptance that, you know, that your collaborator is a skilled artist in their own right. I suppose maybe we should clarify, of course. I'm using the terminology today, but obviously it wasn't necessarily applied to the '90s, you know, when we were working, where we didn't talk about ourselves as artists.

EE: No.

PL: You know, I was a dancer, a choreographer. You were a composer, you know.

EE: A musician.

PL: Or a musician. And Paul was, you know, a lighting -

EE: Technician.

PL: - technician, you know. I suppose now, but the skills. So it was important, I think it's important in any successful collaboration that everyone accepts and understands that people have very particular skills and talents that they're bringing and that it is -

EE: Do you think it's a spectrum? You know, like collaborations are different. We have a particular type of collaboration that you have to find or described at length and yet we look at other people like you worked with other dance companies and it mightn't have been the same, the collaboration, as you observed or experienced. You know, do you think that there are people like when we're using terms like multidisciplinary and

interdisciplinary, that you know, there's a spectrum in collaboration from, you know, the very hands off to actually trying to absorb the techniques of the dancer to let that influence how you might write the music, etc?

PL: Oh yes, no, no, yes, it is a spectrum and that's what, maybe I didn't say it clearly enough at the very beginning, but I suppose my performing career or my working, separate to work that I made myself, that other career gave me an opportunity to see collaboration at first hand. Yes, and it's just as you just described it. You know, some artists, some choreographers, they're like dictators and in a way, you know, they pretend that they're collaborating, but actually they're not. They're controlling what, you know, and you know, I understood that and I accepted that and as a dancer, as a performer, you know, that's in my DNA. You know, you're just a body in space and you're being manipulated by someone else and I was happy, I am happy to let that happen. But I would have seen that extended then to the collaborative creative partners and I would have thought that doesn't make sense to me. I mean you know, the choreographer wants to or the director who wants to rearrange the music, you know, completely change the colour codes, you know, wants the costume higher or lower, you know. It's like...

So I've experienced that, but also I would have experienced artists and choreographers who were genuinely collaborative and genuinely multidisciplinary in how they created a work. And so I would have, you know, experienced, yes, so I would have experience of both. And for me, the more satisfying were, although sometimes, you know, it was fine to work for an autocrat and a dictator because sometimes it's nice just to be told what to do, when to do it.

EE: That's grand, yes.

PL: You know, and to get the cheque, you know. I mean yes, but then other times, it's really interesting to be in that creative process with someone who is comfortable enough to share their thoughts, both the challenges and the highs and lows and are willing to discuss it publicly, like in the rehearsal process, and willing to make mistakes, willing to listen to someone else and then to accept that this is what the other person is bringing and not feel at all compromised.

EE: It's a very powerful phrase you use, willing to make mistakes, you know, that it embraces the trust of the person.

PL: Yes, yes.

EE: You can actually, you know.

PL: But you know, in my experience, that is what true collaboration is all about, is it is maybe, it's about lack of fear or it's about -

EE: That's an interesting phrase.

PL: - you know, lack of fear, trust. You know, but also an awareness that, and this is really key, is that I as a choreographer have any particular talent, skills and

possibly even real interests, that a composer has other skills, talents, experiences, interests, you know, but I wouldn't feel at all, you know, hopefully I never felt challenged by that. Sorry, I would have felt challenged by it, of course, you know, and excited and uplifted by it, but I wouldn't have felt challenged or undermined.

EE: **Inhibited, yes.**

PL: Or inhibited. But you know, I would have experiences where, yes, and I think that comes up from lack of, sorry, in my experience, it's observing others with a little bit of lack of confidence about what it is that they want to do anyway and I suppose, yes, we can think of dancers and dance works that are created by people who have control of every element and it becomes this homogenous mess. Like you know, and there's no nuance. There's no subtlety because absolutely every element has been controlled by them and you know, so in a way, what, you know, works well has a number of collaborators. You know, it's not collaborative. It's not in the making. It's not the coming together and the making of something new.

EE: **That's very interesting. Very good yes. I suppose because my project is about interdisciplinarity, I'm just asking this question, but like the work that we did, as you have articulated so wonderfully, was very multidisciplinary, how we brought different elements together and it was still new because we were, you know, experimenting at the time with what was available in our concepts of how we did it and probably some of it was interdisciplinary without knowing. Ok? But it seems now that the output, what is produced in an interdisciplinary process can be quite different to the multidisciplinary. Have you come across that at all?**

PL: Yes.

EE: **You may not have.**

PL: No, no, absolutely, no, and first of all, I intellectually understand the difference, but I do also think that it's very nuanced and that I think sometimes a lot of really good multidisciplinary work is disguised as interdisciplinary practice because I think that people value one over the other and -

EE: **You mean the music or the dance in this case or is that what you mean?**

PL: Well, I think people try to make what they think is an interdisciplinary piece, but it's not. It's just multidisciplinary in the sense that it was cross-disciplinary in the sense that it's just combining movement with music with text with, you know, some sort of a visual element with costume, but they're all extant. They're all separate entities and they just happen to be brought together and a little bit of mixing, but there's no fusing. There's no new coming out of this. For me, real or genuine interdisciplinary work is about creating something really new. It's about blurring the lines between those practices and, yes, that's that.

But it is also to robustly, absolutely robustly defend multidisciplinary practice. You know, it's like I think actually it's bigger and I think my own practice was

multidisciplinary in that sense, but you know, but I was never aspiring to something else. But my frustration nowadays is that this terminology, sorry, these terms, sorry, these terminologies -

EE: **The terminology, yes.**

PL: You know, it's like it's bandied around to an extent where it's almost become meaningless and I think that the idea of, you know, I wrote it down here, you know, yes, there is a genuine interdisciplinary practice. You know, equally, there is a strong multidisciplinary practice, but then, you know, this other cross-disciplinary way of making work is also equally valid. And I know there's a myriad of other definitions, but I suppose just to speak very generally, that I think that there's a pressure on people, on artists to be interdisciplinary at the expense of really interrogating what it is that they want to say because, you know, you can take a view that a lot of contemporary dance that is being made and presented in Ireland today is attempting to be interdisciplinary, but it's failing at every level.

EE: **Why do you think that's so?**

PL: Well, because I think there's a huge pressure. You know, in terms of if we're talking about the subsidised arts sector, there's a huge pressure from the Arts Council as the primary funder of work, of subsidised work in Ireland where they have expressed a priority, sorry, they have expressed the desire to see more multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary work, but without really explaining why. I think I understand why myself and I think it's to do with the idea of trying to push the boundaries and encourage experimentation.

EE: **Of course.**

PL: Yes. Yes. So, you know, probably self-evident, but well, along the way, I think there's a lot of bland work being made where a choreographer will throw in a bit of text, will have some sort of visual design element, will have a film, will have both live, recorded -

EE: **Some other things going on, yes.**

PL: Yes. Elements and you know, and will present it in, you know, a warehouse, you know. But to what end? You know, it's not that it's even they want to create some sort of a sensory immersive experience because they don't because basically they still want people sitting on seats and they still want it to happen at eight o'clock, you know.

EE: **It's true, it's true. Well, listen, Paul, thank you -**

PL: Yes.

EE: **- very much for all of your experience historically and your expertise and your reflections and they're very pertinent to the work that I'm doing. And certainly you've touched on things that I will have to think about a lot more as I read on, etc. So thank you very much indeed.**

PL: No, thank you. Hopefully that was ok.

EE: It's fantastic.

EE: Eugene, interviewer
SE: Steve Boyland, interviewee

EE: **So this interview is November 14th with Steve Boyland. So to start off, can you just tell us something about your own career as a voice artist, singer, composer?**

SE: Ok. Well, where to start really, Eugene? Right, so in the early years of my career, I was concerned much more with composed music. Largely kind of popular music, rock and blues and jazz. Worked for the BBC as a session singer for a period of about 10 or 12 years during that period. I started to focus much more on improvised music. I'd already had some contact with free improvised voice and extended vocal technique through my contacts with Maggie Nicols. I met Maggie Nicols late '70s, early '80s and you know, we kind of carried on a dialogue about practice of our voice, about the possibilities of voice and I actually moved to London in the early '80s to be closer to Maggie's work and practice and also to the free improv sessions that she was running in London. And I also at the same time attended some of John Stevens's Search and Reflect sessions, which were attempts really to kind of consolidate approaches to free improvised session. So ok, yes, the most adept of its professional practitioners can do this. They have a facility for it, but what is it they do? What is that built on and how can we bring others into this? And in fact, the kind of the theories that underpinned those sessions with John Stevens were later put into the form of the book Search and Reflect in which he'd kind of outlined principles, but also outlined some kind of very, very general scores as well. Coincidentally Maggie Nicols in a recent reprint of that was invited to provide a foreword in which of course amongst other things, she talked about the importance of John Stevens very kind of pioneering thinking about the practice of free improvisation, how that had influenced her own practice and that of others clearly.

So yes, you know, starting then towards the end of that early period in my career to become more and more interested in jazz. I was still kind of connected to York University. I'd graduated there, but was still living there in York, that is. And I was invited by successive jazz composers in residence there to become part of what they were doing, so to become part of the kind of improv workshops and such and also then to perform with them. So the first of those composing residences was a saxophone player, Bobby Wellins and the second of them was the trombonist and composer/arranger Rick Taylor. And it was those contacts really that brought me in touch with the BBC. I kind of reached a stage having been in that place of kind of working with improvised voice and I think to an extent this impulse was kind of consolidated by my contact with Rick Taylor, I reached a point at which so many of the BBC sessions that I was involved in required me to sing standards, you know, largely kind of the American songbook, you know.

And I started to tire of that. I really did. And I started to kind of question to what extent I was being kind of properly fully creative, if you like. And that kind of culminated. So there were a series of discussions with Rick Taylor in which we talked about the idea of composing modern standards, if you like, standard songs, that is. But I think what was really crucial was a discussion with a producer at the BBC and I kind of outlined, he kind of picked up on the fact that I was feeling kind of less satisfied with what I was doing there. And so you know, he kind of, he approached me and he said look, you know, you seem a little kind of disgruntled about what you're doing. And I said well, no, you know, I'm still engaged by it, but I feel as if, you know, I need something more. So I started to talk then about, at that point, kind of relatively vague plans to kind of liberate myself from the constraints of simply, you know, kind of banging out one session after another and in each these sessions not only having to sing jazz standards, but also being invited to sing them in the style of certain well-known vocalists, you know. So it could be Mel Tormé or, you know, Tony Bennett or, you know, Mark Murphy, Al Jarreau, you know.

And relatively early on in that process, I was kind of quite keen to respond to that, if you like, to respond positively to that, to kind of see where that might lead, but it started to kind of weigh heavily. And so this BBC producer said to me, well, look, Steve, you know, if in kind of 30 years' time, if the best that could be said of Steve Boyland as a singer is that he was able to sound a little bit like Mel Tormé or Al Jarreau, etc. etc., you know, what would that say about you, you know? Well, of course, that was, you know, that resonated very, very strongly with me and so I decided to kind of pick up that longstanding relationship with Maggie Nicols and I started to experiment with kind of freer, more liberated approaches to creative voice, if you like.

In recent years, so I ask where has that led me? In recent years, my work has consisted of kind of two main strands, I would say. So one of them has been concerned with creating pieces for gallery spaces in the UK and beyond. So these are live freely improvised responses to those gallery spaces, to their acoustical properties, to what you might call the poetic or allusive qualities that they might suggest and also of course the curators who offer the commission. So obviously I'm very concerned with this, but also with the artwork that they contain. So that's been one strand, so largely kind of solo work. The other strand of course has been concerned with collaboration of one sort or another and in that, it's led to a series of collaborations with improvising dances, with visual artists, sound artists, poets. An awful lot of work with poets, an awful lot of work around the possibilities of integrating text and abstract sounding with drama too. Drama has always played a very kind of important part in my thinking and, you know, how we stage, how we kind of intensify the experience for audience, but also as an artist who relies on sensation to create response in voice, intensifying the moment for myself as well. So that second strand has been something which has existed and has developed alongside the solo practice, if you like, and obviously -

EE: **And that second strand, you've a third strand?**

SE: Well, it's just occurred to me of course that I teach.

EE: Yes. Yes. Yes.

SE: Of course, of course.

EE: But that second strand I suppose is what interests me because my first question was what you find are the differences when working on your own and then working collaboratively because you do work on your own as well.

SE: Yes, I do.

EE: So what experiences come to mind regarding that?

SE: Well, first of all, I would say that I would find it hard to do without either of those two strands. There is engagement between them, no question about that. I see them as kind of nourishing each other. Well, when I'm working by myself, of course I'm free to, you know, to make all of the decisions about, you know, how I present the work, what its content is. Although having said that, obviously there is still collaboration with curators, for example. So it's never -

EE: Never fully.

SE: - fully independent, if you like, but that's fine. But I do like the feeling of kind of solitude that goes with that. There's something very nice about having your own space, you know, kind of clearing away all of the kind of the clutter associated with, you know, with being a creative artist and being able to approach creating a piece of work in a very kind of singular way. As far as collaboration is concerned, that's the nourishment of working with other people. So other people have other disciplines that they draw on, but they also of course have their own kind of personal qualities as well that they bring to their work. I'm always intrigued about how the creativity starts with the creation of relationship and how, you know, the foundations that are laid there become crucial to the process of the collaboration itself.

So there's an awful lot of kind of informal making hidden, veiled making, if you like, that takes place in and around, you know, the kind of the more formal business of, you know, of direct discussion about how, when, etc.

EE: And just as an add-on to that, do you ever reflect on the type of collaborations that you do or is it just you're in the process and that's it?

SE: Do I reflect within each project on the process?

EE: Yes.

SE: Yes, I'm sure I do. I suppose, you know, one of the big questions that we ask ourselves of course in a collaboration is well, you know, is this working? Do I feel as if this is working for us? Is this working for me? What do I believe? How do I believe I am benefitting from this? I'm always looking for enrichment from this, you know, from these collaborations.

EE: Yes. I suppose leading on, this was more about my second question because much of what I am reflecting on about collaboration is about interdisciplinarity and the idea that like in any of the work that you do, do you set out ever to integrate it or does everything happen accidentally with other disciplines when you work with other disciplines?

SE: Well, that would certainly depend on the project. That would depend on the project. So sometimes they're commissioned and so in a sense, parameters are very, very, very clear and then we simply find ways of delivering what's being asked of us as collaborators. But of course I also found myself, in fact, I make room for this also, I attach huge value to simply creating a space with other people. You know, sometimes it might just be one other artist. More often than not, it would be somebody from, you know, from a different but related discipline. So a lot of my work, certainly over the last kind of 10 or 15 years, has had its origins in ideas or moments that have arisen at the Bluecoat Arts Centre in Liverpool. So I've been associated with Liverpool Improvisation Collective for much of that period now. LIC is primarily a collective of improvising dancers, many contact improvisers. But artists from other practices are also associated and in fact, in recent years, we've even had, you know, resident philosophers involved in those dialogues, those discourses.

But I think, you know, the kind of the visceral excitement of exchanging practice in a studio space, you know, the live act of collaboration is one thing. I love it, but the discourse is also kind of really fascinating, you know. I'm talking again about kind of enrichment here, you know, kind of personal artistic enrichment, if you like. But also I suppose kind of developing a kind of a body of knowledge which can be accessed by others. I found this just as exciting, I have to say, and those exchanges have led I think to kind of quite significant changes in the way that I approach my work. It's hard to know how it would have progressed without it, but I suspect, you know, given kind of the articulacy of many of the artists that I'm in contact with, I'm pretty sure that they would have had a profound effect on what I do.

EE: Ok, and the output in those type of very deep, if we can call it that, collaborations, do you think that the output is different by virtue of the interdisciplinary exchange that takes place among the different artists that you work with?

SE: Well, it would be hard to, I suppose, picking up on something that I've just said, I think it would be hard to know how they will progress without it. But I mean one thing that occurs to me straight away is that I consider my own practice to be interdisciplinary insofar as I've been exposed, you know, to theories of theatre, progressive theories of theatre and its practice, you know, the contact with dance and with somatic kind of embodied approaches to creating work through voice or on movement and gesture. You know, my reading around, you know, my contact with poetry, my interest in, you know, certain types of philosophy. So my practice in a sense already has kind of quite broad references, which go way beyond the relatively narrow confines of music, if you like.

EE: And I suppose what I'm getting towards there is that sometimes different disciplines work alongside each other and cohabitate a space quite

successfully, but almost independently where they share to an extent their discipline to create a new work of art, but they don't really integrate it. And I'm wondering that that type of model, what it produces and the other type of model, you know, how you can describe that as you've experienced both, I imagine.

SE: Well, you know, the thing, the great kind of unifying element for me, something which has served at least for me to bind together, to affect the binding, if you like, within these collaborations that I've talked about has been, you know, somatic practice. So you know, these are kind of ideas and practices around performance which have kind of originated in contemporary dance, contemporary and improvised dance, but which, you know, which translate to readily into other performance disciplines, not least voice and improvised voice. So in a sense when I'm working with improvising dances, we kind of share a language. We see a performance as something which flows out of kind of sensation and embodiment and which comes alive, if you like, in the kind of the theatre of sensation.

EE: **Ok, that's an interesting phrase and something which I've been speaking about because I'm interested in is when Bart said, you know, that the work, especially when you're working in an interdisciplinary way, in a very shared space or perspective, that you know, the work, of course I'm editing what he said, but that the work belongs to no one, and in other words, it belongs to everybody, I suppose, who are participating in it.**

SE: Yes. Yes. Yes. Well, I mean I'd like to think that I'm not kind of proprietorial in terms of my own work. I mean, you know, I do, I have to say, I do occasionally run into artists who in a collaborative process will start to withdraw if they feel that compromising their ownership, shall we say, of ideas or practice. That happens and in that situation, I'd feel that, you know, proper fulfilling worthwhile collaboration is hardly likely to take place, I think. You know, there has to be, in a sense, there has to be an acceptance amongst all parties involved in the collaboration that we give something of ourselves up and that we create shared work in a shared space.

EE: **Well, you've a wealth of experience in this area, so it's interesting to hear what you have to say about a philosophical comment like that.**

SE: I think it's vital. I think, you know, I think this notion of kind of sharing, this commitment to sharing has to be there in order for a collaboration to grow. I think we sense very, very quickly, you know, if goodwill or good faith is being withdrawn, if you like. I can't see that, for myself, I can't see ways in which a collaboration can grow fully, can mature into something, you know, that's worth sharing and with audience, for example, you know, if there's kind of an imbalance of engagement in that way.

EE: **Most of my questions overlap in some way, so forgive me if they appear repetitive, but sometimes I'm trying to draw out something else.**

SE: Sure. Sure.

EE: But you know, in terms of output then, you know, is there something about the creative relationship with another artist or group of artists that influences the process of a new work? In other words, to what degree do you think is the creative relationship important to the process, the relationship, I suppose?

SE: Oh, the relationship is fundamental, isn't it? I mean, you know, you can more or less take it as read at a certain level that people will have a lot to bring, that the individual artists will have a lot to bring to the process. There is then a choice, as I said earlier, there is a choice that has to be made about how much of that we share and we share willingly, giving up ownership. I the quality of the relationship is central to the quality of the work, if you like.

EE: **Relationships.**

SE: Absolutely. For myself, you know, well, how can I put this? These days, I don't even consider working with people, with artists, that is, who don't seem to kind of share that kind of perspective on collaboration and its rules of engagement, if you like.

EE: I asked this of other people as well and it's sort of an interim question. It's sort of self-evident, but I'm more interested in hearing what you have to say from your lengthy experience of working with other people and that is that do you think there are degrees of collaboration that are on a spectrum of integration which influences the type of output that there is? That, you know, collaborations can be very loose, very intense?

SE: Oh, there's no doubt about that. I think here, it's hard to... It's difficult to start with a model, if you like. You know, so for example, a model of the ideal collaboration, but speaking just from experience, again, I think that the level of integration, so the level of acceptance of... Acceptance that, you know, we might, if you like, for the greater good of the work, the individuals involved might just have to sacrifice a little bit of their entitlement, if you like. I think that's, again, that's kind of that's crucial.

EE: **A central thing.**

SE: That's crucial.

EE: **And have you ever worked with anyone in quite an integrated way, but didn't really get on with them, for example?**

SE: Well, it happens. It does happen.

EE: **But you continued on with the work?**

SE: Yes. I mean I suppose, you know, there's a living to be made and, you know, if a commission needs to be fulfilled, then you know, I suppose we find ways of muddling through. I mean you might even say that, I mean and it is said, isn't it? That you know, that sometimes good work comes out of, you know, kind of bad practice, if you like. Ironically, you know, in a situation in which, you know,

human beings, because artists are human too of course, a situation in which they kind of, you know, bump up against each other and sparks fly, it's possible to conceive of that turning into something that could be deemed productive in some way. Talking about personal preference, I don't look for that kind of conflictual engagement. It might suit others, not me.

EE: I come from like historically, from a background where I worked mostly collaboratively with choreographers and much of the work was multidisciplinary, you know, where I had my composition and the choreographer had his design for dancers.

SE: Yes.

EE: And in some way, we cobbled it together.

SE: Yes.

EE: Sometimes there was no sympathy between those two elements, but they were manufactured or created in some fashion that worked. And I'm trying to understand is there something different, you know, in the way the output arrives? Well, in the process, obviously, the output, when you're working in a very integrated way where there's a very good relationship and also communication, that you arrive at a point where your output could be surprisingly different to the output of just putting it together in a much looser way. And what I'm trying to understand is without it being scientific or evidence, you know, is there more satisfaction in what is produced or more artistic value?

SE: Again, I think it would be hard to establish that objectively. I mean I think, you know, I think we can only really talk subjectively here. You know, I mean, again, I would say that, well, in a sense, I suppose it depends on motivation. I think that, you know, you can make a case for being kind of instrumental, so there is, you know, there's a target, if you like, that target or goal being the piece and you could argue that as long as the piece is well-received, whatever the quality of the process, then, you know, it's justified, if you like, you know, the end justifying the means, in basic terms. For myself, the process is really, really very, very important. The fulfilment of the work does not for me consist purely in the object that it becomes, but in the processes that lead to its creation, so speaking from a purely personal point of view.

EE: So do you think it might be said, without putting words in your mouth, that from an interdisciplinary perspective, the process becomes the key or the core of the engagement?

SE: I think that's where we need the quality, if you like, and for myself, an awful lot of the collaborative work that I engage with will often come out of discourses established some time earlier. So I found myself in a situation in which, and not surprisingly, I'm kind of drawn to artists whose ideas interest me, but kind of whose values, you know, I feel a compatibility with. So the process there is crucial. I mean, you know, we're talking about sharing a space, creating a space

in which the piece, you know, can emerge. And I think the quality of the space becomes hugely important. I mean you know, we're not talking about -

EE: When you quality of space, what do you mean?

SE: Well, I'm talking about... I guess I'm talking about the quality of the engagement between the artists, you know. I think... You know, without... I think without... I think we withhold, in a situation in which we feel that, you know, that there's not, if you like, an honest engagement taking place, I feel as if we withhold something from the process of making, something kind of personal. Now, you know, in my own work, you know, we're looking at issues of sensation and embodiment. I can imagine the kind of tightening up, the closing down of the receptors, if you like, the body's, the mind's receptors, which would block an awful lot of kind of important signals that, you know, that need to flow into the process. So I can't imagine anything, for me at least, anything kind of very productive taking place in that kind of a space. But you know, I acknowledge, as I said earlier, that it would still be possible to, you know, to fulfil the brief and create something that people might like, but for myself, the process there is key. I very seldom, for example, I very seldom come away from a project which, I don't know, audience and critics have deemed to be successful whilst I myself have felt the process was unsuccessful and wanted to collaborate with that same artist or artists again.

EE: Interesting. And I suppose one of the last things I want to say is that what I understand in interdisciplinarity is the intersection of disciplines, that in that intersection, that's where the work arises from.

SE: Yes.

EE: And often, not always, but often it's about, you know, really entering into understanding the discipline of the other.

SE: Yes.

EE: To inform and influence what you do and shape what you do. Would that be how you would think of somewhat?

SE: Yes, so certainly, you know, that is certainly one definition that we could run with, but I mean I can, you know, that definition presupposes the existence within the project of individuals, of actual individuals representing different disciplines. I consider my own work, as I said earlier, I consider it to, you know, to have an interdisciplinarity, largely because of the references, because, you know, simply by virtue of the fact that I've been making collaborations with artists, you know, from other disciplines for such a long time -

EE: That you have absorbed.

SE: - there has been a flow of those ideas into my own creative space, you know.

EE: Because what you're actually saying is that interdisciplinarity is not dependent on two people?

SE: No, absolutely.

EE: That an individual can go through a process of an interdisciplinary work by virtue of their own lengthy experience working.

SE: Absolutely, no, you know, I can honestly say that it's rare for me today when I'm creating a piece of work to, if you like, to start out from the relatively narrow prism of music making, you know. I can't remember the last time I did that. I would no longer really consider myself to be a singer. I sing of course. That's one of the elements, but even within the realm of voice, you know, I go far beyond singing. You know, using, you know, kind of deconstructed techniques, you know, from performance and sound, poetry and -

EE: Technology.

SE: Absolutely, but also, you know, focusing my work, delivering the voice in particular ways with the influences of certain skills of kind of radical theatre or even including eastern theatre, you know. Kind of the vocal stylings of, you know, of Japanese theatre, of, you know, Kabuki, so there are, you know, I constantly, when I'm creating a free improvisation, you know, I'm thinking in terms of spatial appreciation, if you like, you know, of moving the voices as a dancer might so that, you know, it kind of intersects and bisects the space in particular ways. I might also be referencing, I don't know, kind of action painting, you know, as I move the voice round in those spaces. So my own references now are to an extent, you know, confused by collaboration, if you like, confused in a positive way, I would think, by interdisciplinarity.

EE: This is certainly different to what I have heard before, but it's very interesting.

SE: Right.

EE: My last question is a little bit facile at this stage because you have talked extensively.

SE: Yes.

EE: Which was what advice would you offer an artist embarking on an interdisciplinary process in artistic practice? You know, someone setting out to do a new work.

SE: Yes.

EE: You know.

SE: So working with other artists from other disciplines?

EE: Yes. What would alert in your?

SE: Ok. Well, I mean I would emphasise the importance of the process from the outset. Be aware of the crucial nature of that, personal as well as artistic. Philosophical engagement. Even spiritual engagement between yourself and, you know, your collaborator or collaborators. I think that's where the real kind of richness is and kind of the generosity of those transactions, I think can often lead to the construction of kind of a very fertile space of production, if you like. And so yes, that would be the first thing I would offer as advice. I think the other thing is, particularly for a younger artist, don't be afraid to fail. I would say that to myself too, to be honest. Sometimes collaborations don't work and it's nobody's fault, but somehow they don't fuse together in a way.

EE: And have you ever reflected on why they don't work?

SE: Well, sometimes it will have to do, as I was saying earlier, you know, with -

EE: Different expectations.

SE: - different values, which are clashing here, you know. An imbalance between, you know, an artist or artists who are wanting to kind of privatise knowledge and practice. And you know, against somebody who has entered very, very freely into, you know, a transaction of, you know, full generosity, if you like. So yes, you know, one has those reflections. I think though that overall, I'm prepared myself to be philosophical enough to say well, you know, none of this is lost. None of this is wasted, you know. I will go into my next collaboration, you know, with an eye to these sorts of issues, but without in a sense kind of tightening up and losing that desire to enter fully into what it might become. And I suppose there's something else for the, you know, for the young artist. Don't take too many hard preconceptions. Don't try to close down. Try to open up.

EE: And on that note, we'll end on those very high notes. Thank you.

SE: Thanks, Eugene.

Extract from discussion with Steve Boyland September 2020

There is something from that gathering, at that point of place and time, that creates its charge. But it doesn't come from one person or two people. It's not just a performance because it's that charge that we feel in that room that is part of the sensation that creates the piece...it articulates itself in a Q & A situation.

That's where the wonder of it is for me. That's where the truth of it is. I don't have access to that. I don't start out with that...every collaboration that I make seems to have its own character, its own nature...there was something very specific about this collaboration [*Beginnings in the Dark*].

...the piece comes out of the response of being in that frame and it also then creates experience for audience which they will make sense of in their own way. I see my own work as essentially experiential. I create frames which create various sensations for me which I make sense of in terms of my physicality and the sound, and that then leads to experience for audience. And something interesting happens in the interface of those two experiences which happen at the same time but which are crucially different because of our inherent subjectivity which we experience. Every single member of the audience, for example, they see the performance as one performance but they see the performance subjectively. Each and every one of them has their own experience and that's why Q and A's become constructive. You also become aware of the fact that you don't own the piece. You generate an experience for others and you cannot forecast its extent or duration.

Appendix 18 DISCOURSE December 1st 2020

EM: Eugene Murphy
Steve: STEVE:

STEVE: Yes, so the Philosophy of Improvisation by Gary Peters and one of the things that he, that he sets out to me in the book. He kind of interrogates it from, from his own position not just as a philosopher himself but also as an improvising musician of some repute. So he mentions for example in the preface he mentions a couple of guys Varian Westin and Simon Pickard who I have worked with before. So he was very much a part of that London free improvisation scene during the 70's and 80's so he you know he approaches things from that perspective but also from his perspective as a philosopher and an academic but the issue that he presents right at the beginning of the book is the fact that. Very, very, senior philosophers have historically questioned whether or not absolute agency and therefore the capacity to, to improvise in any meaningful sense. That is in the sense of creating something completely new it is not possible. That in actual fact we are in a sense doomed to repeat. So I know that Cage is, Cage's reservation about improvisation were based pretty much on that philosophical position.

EM: **Ok, I didn't know that.**

STEVE: So....

EM: **That's a more refined version of what I was reading.**

STEVE: **Right I do recommend the Gary Peters book. I know it's kind of probably pretty late on for you now.**

EM: No but it's like the way I am reading now is I have got my antennae up all the time. So I am not reading page one to page 344. I am dabbling in and out because I know what I am looking for all the time.

STEVE: **So this is...I mean it's a dense text I have to say but it's not, not so long I mean I think it's only about 180 pages long itself.**

EM: Ok.

STEVE: **But it's I would say that it's an essential text.**

EM: Ok for what I am doing anyway.

STEVE: **I would say so. I would say so. It is certainly addresses those sort of issues that you have raised about indeterminacy and ...**

EM: Yes, so I suppose that's one facet of the theory you know is the fact that it was improvised. The performances, the process was all about improvisation and indeterminacy. So that is one element of it. The other element is I suppose is

how you put flesh on that or how you put some sort of meaning on it. So, like I had got the first route was interdisciplinarity. I never want to hear that word again because I got like I could write a thesis on how I get myself snookered in a corner for too long because it's such what would I say. It's such an overrated concept in the Arts I think really to be honest because it's not how people approach how they work.

STEVE: No, that's very true.

EM: And it fits ably into scientific patterns of behaviour because they are binary or whatever ours is so much ephemeral than that. That it is difficult to make it work like that and yet it still has a place you know. Like I still don't know to be honest with you and I don't want to talk about this now. If you don't mind. We will have a conversation about Chapter 4 when I start writing it. It's about how what we did with Mary Wycherley was inter disciplinary.

STEVE: Right.

EM: To what extent was it actually inter disciplinary you know. That is sort of a question that breaks me out in spots every so often.

STEVE: Well I suppose and I am very, very happy to discuss this at a later time.

EM: I am leaving that little caveat there.

STEVE: But very, very, briefly I think it was actually a multi-disciplinary piece that came out of a collaboration between inter disciplinary artists.

EM: Yes, probably. Yes. There is probably you can you feed something because the discourse itself is probably inter disciplinary by nature. So that has some influence on what ensued afterwards so. Through the lens of something improvised really it was. You know. Yes but it does actually concern me that you know.

STEVE: As I say I am quite happy to have that...

EM: So we will leave that there. So that's there is the inter disciplinary part, there is the indeterminate improvisory part and then there is you know how you do you make sense of all of these

Appendix 19 DISCOURSE November 18th 2020

EM: Eugene Murphy
Steve: STEVE:

STEVE: Not just performing a piece but you are also being transformed by the making of it. So, there was such to me such richness in that sort of that extension of the vision for the second piece. I became so excited by the idea of you know of what it could become and of course you know you start through those discussions. Which have to be to an extent they while it's about imagination and it's about aspiration it also of course has to be founded on what is possible.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: You know andand in a sense ...here is another difference amongst those that make and those that witness. An audience which consists of those very subjective objects that we were talking about earlier on. They have no sense of, they can have no real sense of ...what might occur within a performance space. Particularly a performance space which is kind of lit and laid out in ways which suggest an expansion of that space so that they can't really establish its clear parameters and that was why it was so important to come into the space which was already set up and for them to dwell in it for a while because we are making those judgements. Ok, I am in this place. I know that you know that there are walls over here and I know that there is a ceiling there but actually it feels like I don't know where this space ends.

EM: Well they can't fix it when they come in.

STEVE: They can't fix it absolutely.

EM: So they are already in an indeterminate moment.

STEVE: Absolutely, they are ready to buy into it, to engage with the idea of possibility. Not a fixity. We were offering something very, very different to a night watching Shakespeare for example in theatre. This was very, very different. Although clearly it's possible to stage Shakespeare in a classical theatre in ways which would use some of those more kind of ambiguous devices if you like.

EM: That's very interesting anyway.

STEVE: But for us so here is that difference then with those who witness and those who make, the audience gets to suspend its disbelief. If you give them the right cues they will suspend their disbelief and we are all intrigued by the idea of you know the infinite for example and the ineffable. I mean particularly a very educated and literary audience, philosophical audience like the one we had you know and that much was clear you know they took their cues and they kind of ran with it you know and the conversations after

it, not just in the formal Q & A but much more afterwards in the reception. The quality of the conversation and the dialogue was amazing.

EM: I was thinking, I was sorry I didn't take any photos because it was part of the you know extended experience which was interesting.

STEVE: Absolutely. It seemed to me as if the performance was resonating in that space as well we brought it in with us. We were all still charged, we were all still trying to make sense of you know for us of the process of making for the audience you know, the process of witnessing of experiencing you know. It was so charged and so kind of beautiful you know. I was engaged in remarkable conversation in that, in that ...little space and ...so, so they get to ..to suspend their disbelief and that enables them to inhabit the space kind of ...and most actively and creatively so they are making work themselves in the space.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: For us. We are not in a position to be able to suspend our disbelief really. Not in the initial linking because we know what the parameters truly are and we know what kind of effect we are hoping that will have. When we do suspend our disbelief in our performance space and we have to. So for myself as I looked at the video I could feel myself back in that space and here I am mentally kind of reading the space again you know. Thinking about where my gaze was, what I was being drawn to. You know. What was I referencing in that space and you'd have been doing the exactly the same thing of course because that was the material. That was the material. The space was the material with all of its different textures. With all of its different queues and structures. You know with those pathways that we'd create and classic in gold colour. You know...there it was you know, enacted being lived and it became for us it became a process not just of and this is where the transformation if you like the personal transformation. The deeper transformation takes place so utterly.

In those moments we are not playing anything. We are in a process of being and of becoming and we are fully open to it. This ...that this type of composition doesn't work without it. There has to be that full engagement with, with thewith the kind of the metaphysical possibilities of being in that space. We'd open ourselves up to the possibility of change. This is why we do this. This is why I have taken this path rather than you know going down a more conventional path because.

EM: That becomes flat otherwise doesn't you know ...

STEVE: ...Absolutely. Absolutely, it's already in a sense we are talking about if we can judge performances as an artefact. We are looking at two different categories of artefacts here. On the one hand there is the artefact of object which has become fixed and whose energy only consists in mimetics. This artefact the improvised artefact is always in a state of becoming so it keeps its full charge It is an enquiry. It is an enquiry into what can be made, it is an enquiry what can be experienced. It is an enquiry into, into those

moments who I might and who and what I might become as a result of that, that inaccurament.

EM: Wow.

STEVE: Now these are beautifully profound experiences for us you know and I ..you know if it were to stop for me right now today. I would be able to live on the richness of the reflections on that you know and on the wonderful intersections with places and with artists and other artists and thinkers along the way. The richness of it is immense.

EM: On that note you have given everything. Absolutely.

STEVE: I hope at least some of these responses are of use to you.

EM: They are immensely useful. I think when I listen back to them or whatever I am able to them some of them strike a deep chord or I can use them to develop some of the or bring forward. I am not developing anything. I am bringing forward what has happened if you know what I mean. I am just making it explicit what has been implicit on that lovely journey and road that we travelled together.

STEVE: Well, wonderful Eugene and you know and I sincerely hope that we will be able to create work together again.

EM: Well it's so formed now that I feel do you know what I mean because we have talked about it the discourse has been I suppose like five miles of discourse.

STEVE: Absolutely.

EM: It's like sitting down again would be second nature to...

STEVE: Absolutely.

EM: It would be very interesting to sit down. I would actually be dying to sit down again because so much more maturity has come.

STEVE: Yes.

EM: ...into my process of what I know it is. I understand it now completely.

STEVE: Do you know one of the things that struck me in looking at the video was the extent to which you're playing changed as a result. It evolved.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: One of the things that struck me was how much less you played.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: How acutely aware you were of the space of the possibilities of sounding into a space.

EM: That is true, yes.

STEVE: And you ...the playing was textured. It was lyrical when it needed to be but it was always economical. You never wasted a note. That was the thing that struck me and it was so kind of, it was so kind of crystalised and intensely beautiful. Sonically very beautiful.

EM: I remember thinking at one point during the performance and looking at it afterwards. I remember that I thought I mightn't play anymore if it is not necessary.

STEVE: Wow.

EM: I might actually....I could actually maybe walk out if I feel that I have done enough. That was a feeling I had and I had in the second performance. That was a big shift for me that I waited. I wasn't in a hurry to manufacture something artificial. I waited. Where in the first one I have to say and I have written a little bit about this you know I was less interested in the discourse or more impetuous and more interested in the sonic development and experimentation that we were doing. Which is a certain type of vanity as a musician/composer. How you find the new note and...

STEVE: We are all subject to that.

EM: Yes we are all subject to that but you obviously areare so mature in this sort of, in improvising in this way you know, you don't succumb to that as easily as a novice would.

STEVE: I try not to but I have to remind myself.

EM: Ah yes of course so like I feel like the performance for me, for myself. Not all the time but in part had a tinge of self-expression off it where the second performance had a feeling of self-alteration.

STEVE: My goodness me what an evolution that represents.

EM: So there is that sort of you know where I was still at a stage in the first performance where I wanted the prowess of the instrument somewhere in the improvisory, improvisation.

STEVE: It's interesting that becomes much less important doesn't it that ...

EM: Than the right note.

STEVE: The strong impulse that we're given as young musicians I think toto enter into a form of display.

EM: Yes, so it wasn't display per se but it was still a good bit of me in it where in the second one there was a lot less of me.

STEVE: What really struck me again watching the second performance was how utterly responsive you were to the elements around you.

EM: Yes I am only speaking, like I am talking all about me and you as protagonist in that had a wonderful outing of, of all the expressions vocally that came about. It doesn't go without saying but I suppose because I am a novice I am still interested in....you know but I did...I was very aware of the visuals of you of the space of the environment but it was obviously more complex setup....well I suppose I would be sensitive to that naturally. That was interesting.

STEVE: You know I thought the judgements you made were, you know, were impeccable and you know this...there is a lot of courage kind of standing back and let, let the space kind of beckon you on if you like.

EM: Yes absolutely.

STEVE: That's difficult you know, there is that feeling you know my God that's silence isn't it and now that's a long silence.

EM: And it's getting longer.

STEVE: People have come to hear some music to experience a performance so we should be doing something but what we don't realise is that those spaces that we leave, they work compositionally but they also work for audience as experience because they are, they project themselves and ideas into those spaces.

EM: Yes, yes exactly which is interesting as well.

STEVE: It really is terribly important I think....I know that I mentioned this when we spoke the other day but I would dearly love to be able to at some point and I realise that this is kind of time sensitive in terms of when your PhD is delivered and such you know and assessed but I would dearly love to be able to feature at least a kind of a shorter edited trailer if you like from that performance if not the whole piece on my website.

EM: Absolutely yes.

STEVE: I think that would you know...

EM: It's as much yours as it is mine. That's the bottom line.

STEVE: It would be interesting then to think about how we might reconfigure the way that we would present it. Obviously you can't change the material but we can change how we frame it.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: So that's a conversation that we can have another time but there are some very, very beautiful moments and arresting moments along the way with just in terms of the you know the sonic properties of what's happening in

the space. It was beguiling and bewitching. So I look forward to that. The other thing I really would like to be able to do and I don't know how we can do this and I know we have had a conversation about it before that first piece that we recorded. That very first piece that improvisation that we recorded. If we could find a way of just balancing voice and piano just a little bit more I would really love to be able to use that too.

EM: Well that's a challenge. It's not an insurmountable challenge. It's just one to, that's one that needs Oscar.

STEVE: Yes I mean, it would be...

EM: Did I send that to you?

STEVE: You did send that to me yes, yes you did.

EM: Well I guess that's the height of the digital knowledge or information on it. So maybe we could send that to Oscar and see if he could in the fullness of time obviously.

STEVE: That would be great. Have you, have you heard from him by the way in the....

EM: No I had, well I sent him a couple of texts and he responded and then I saw that email he wrote to everybody which you are copied obviously so that is all. How is he have you been talking to him?

STEVE: Yes, yes well you know he is, God he has been through it hasn't he. I mean they were just ...

EM: Traumatized.

STEVE: That phone call on the Sunday evening before he left. To say that there had been a rapid deterioration in Ruben's condition was the start of it. It wasn't a date, he had kind of got used to the idea and then had a few months and that in itself was hard enough to deal with. It had come right out of the blue but for that to be you know condensed even more dramatically to you better come straight away.

Appendix 20 DISCOURSE March 3rd 2021

EM: Eugene Murphy
Steve: STEVE

STEVE: I have been very, very, grateful for the opportunity to focus my thinking sufficiently to be able to teach the class.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: At the time it seems like you know a little bit of an imposition because you are wanting to get with other things but clearly you know we have to be grateful for those opportunities and one of the things you know that I have been asked to talk about of course was like not surprisingly was my composition and methodology such as it may be. Well it's one thing actually doing it particularly doing it in an improvisational context and as we know, so many of those processes are kind of fugitive when it comes to you know tying them down and to describing them....but...there I was I was in that situation of having to do so and as I said very, very, instructive and for me I hope for the students too but really as part of that process I really started to think again of the importance of space. The elements here, what do I have to work with in this, you know in this somatic improvisational space. What...what are the tools. What are the references and when I look at that understanding of you know a sense of location. So location primarily in oneself and the acknowledgement therefore ...a description of self. The need of description of self as some kind of space.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: As a very permeable space obviously that allows you know kind of influx and exflux. So that was one of the first things that I, that I thought about. Then there were moments of performance of...of encounter with the other if you like. So with all surroundings literally ones surroundings but also the metaphysical aspects and phenomenological aspects of those encounters of those relations all of these of course go into making of ...of .of the work. So you know I started to just try to kind of systematise my thinking a little bit more here and I ended up with three/four and I will discuss /four as well if that's comfortable.

EM: That's great.

STEVE: But I ended up with three notions of space and dimensions of space as I understand it in relation to the making of my own work and of course this would apply to the process that you and I engage on and I will talk about collaborative the discursive space in a little while but the ones that I ended up with. Those those dimensions that I ended up with. They are actually very straight forward but it just occurred to me actually as I was formulating them and as I was articulated them or tried to in the context of the class and it did generate a lot of discussion which I was really kind of pleased about. It did occur to me that just even at that point still be of some use to you.

- EM: Well it is still uncooked.
- STEVE: That's it, well I thought well you know if I am too late then no problem but you know maybe this could actually influence of the making of the writing if you like. So shall I just take you through these?
- EM: Absolutely. I am very curious to see what ...because I also wrote, try to systematise mine so I am trying to see what you said.
- STEVE: Fine, that's interesting. Now I am not suggestingat all that is in anyway exhaustive even within the context of the work but anyway this is something that I, you know might just be of some use to both of us. So the first one of course, so let's acknowledge the primary space which is the self. The ...the making body if you like. So let's acknowledge that but we then put that making body. That making space, that permeable space and waiting for encounter in order for the process of making so we don't put that, that space. That that...space of the body. The embodied space into an environment, ok and so the first environment that I feel that I encounter in the process of making is physical space. The acoustical of a sonic space. Each with its own very specific particular properties and that was one of the reasons why when you and I got together for the very first time I wanted to draw your attention to the physical place first of all and we know this don't we that too often and this was certainly something that the MA composers were very, very, interested in. We often as musicians.
- EM: Ignore.
- STEVE: No discussion of space in our training. No or little or no. It's not, certainly it's not considered to be a major element. In terms of composition of course the relationship conventionally is between you know the space of the self and the space of the page so there is something special at work there but it is not acknowledged. So that's one space in itself but here we are in the physical, sonic acoustical space and it's not just sonic space and it's not just acoustical space so it's not just a space in the sounding it's also its architecture and it's physicality. It's materiality of space and how we respond to that so as soon as I go into that space one of the first things I do is I try to, I find myself judging it you know what is this, what is this space that I am in you know. How does that make me feel. So I can kind of maybe judge it, it's acoustical properties so that will lead me into a way of knowing of judging and what might be possible sonically as I start to put the voice into it but there are also therestrong sensations attached to being inin....in spaces physical spaces of particular dimensions and particular configurations. That then leads me straight into the second dimension of space that I encounter and that is what I would call allusive or phenomenal space and that is, that space having established ourselves in location that's where we in effect encounter what is in the room. Now in my case that can be a gallery space and I might have been responded, the brief might be, the commission might be to respond to the works that are in the space. So, I'll already have that first encounter of judging the physicality of the space and its potential as a sonic space but here it is much more about what I then encounter. What is encountered in the space. What's in the room and what is suggested by it and here we go into the realm of kind of association and reference as well and that becomes very,

very, important of the making of the piece. The third dimension of space that I believe operate within in the process of making the composing is what I would call metaphysical space. So and this might crucially depend on those first two dimensions that we have already talked about so how am I made to feel in that space by that space and...and what have I encountered there and what is suggested to me by that. So I find myself quite often being dumped literally dumped into these vast caverns of space you know. It wouldn't be surprising in that, in that environment if I didn't, my first reactions was Oh my God I am so small in this space you know. This is almost like a cosmos of space, a universe of space ...who the hell am I in this space and you know and what do I belong to and what am I connected with you know all of a sudden we start to flow into those into the big questions you know the philosophical the existential questions.

Who am I? Who or what am I related to ...why am I here? Now, given the, the focus of our making the very particular of our making as improvisers as spontaneous composers the question of why I am here is actually both a practical one in terms of the making but it also begs philosophical existential questions as well at the same time ..so you know I might find myself encountering in those moments as I start to make the pieces. You know I start to feel the impulse to sound. I might, what is...what is projected what is emitted in shape might be ...you know might be ...directed by motions of you know my...our impermanence. The issue of mortality if you like and a whole host of related issues beyond the sound but are still references philosophically, metaphysically like you know notions of you know of ...a creatorinter related universethe sublime, notions of the sublime of infinity of infinite space for example and my place within that not just my physical location but my connectedness with it and therefore my reason for being.

And then there was another space that I started to consider as well and this was much more in relation to collaboration but it also, it also...applies toto my subalar work and the relation with audience. This is what we might call discursive space. Space of kind of co authorship. As we know in collaboration we kind of, we create a new discursive space together with the collaborator with the other and this becomes extended in performance to accommodate audience and a new broader space that's defined by...by us all. The other thing is of course the collaboration particularly one based on improvisation is profoundly and essentially discursive. You and I were constantly in reference throughout our performances but we were, we had learned to do that by learning how to reference each other in discourse in that other kind of discourse that, that proceeded the performance utterance if you like. The performative iteration. And so that was more or less.

EM: Fantastic.

STEVE: That was more or less where I got to with my thinking and that was you know what I delivered to the ...

EM: Wonderful I mean, the articulation you see where I would be lean rather than fat is on the articulation of self because a) I didn't have somatic practice. I don't have that experience and really I am coming at it from a different vantage point. So I am using the laboratory of the two performances to articulate my experience

which is obviously not as historically profound and as developed as yours. So what the takeaways from this which are interesting like in the first one you start talking about space and the physicality and the periodicity of space. A very interesting aside to that is I remember I got a tax rebate it was about €7,000. I said to Cathy I just want to buy a grand piano. I just want my grand piano. So she gave in. So we went off anyway to Piano Plus it was called and I played every grand piano in the showroom and it was a big showroom. There were about fifteen grand pianos.

STEVE: Wow.

EM: And my reaction to each one materially, physically, environmentally was different.

STEVE: Absolutely.

EM: Even how I pressed the keys, how they responded to me. It was absolutely amazing. Then I had a like and dislike. Of course the one I liked was €35,000 and the one I bought was €7,000. So ...do you know what I mean but it's interesting when you talk about space and I am sure like I know because I also you know I played in one place I remember once and it was a Petrov upright piano. Like they are good pianos. They are very fast and sensitive action mainly for young players but it was, in a church and the acoustic in the church spatially were so amazing that my creativity was surging to respond to what I was hearing and I am sure you vocally have had the same experience. You can be in a dry little room with people who don't want to be there and suddenly you have got this obstructive combination of environment and audience. So they are just asides but they are, they are actually what struck was when you said the composers don't consider space I mean if you are sitting left of someone in the orchestra or right it could make a big difference to how they are when they play and how you play. It's a stupid thing but it does make sense of and it was one of the most propound things that happened in our discourse was how we walked that space at the beginning and that was the start of something new.

It was alien and weird to me I hastened to add at the start but I got more comfortable with it but it was, it was a seminal moment in addressing my stylistic contrived approach to how you would proceed with something. It just atomised it completely which was wonderful. Just explain like the. When you mentioned the discourse. The discourse is probably the most interesting one from an innovative point of view because of how our process proceeded so for example you know I would be calling about myself and Oscar have been ...toying over what word to use but I talk about the and I said this during the recordings that we made at the time as well. I talked about, I had to divide the space up in a different way to you so I talk about you know the collaborative space just to give an example, an example of a performance space..

STEVE: ...yes.

EM:the indeterminate space now that's a bit naff in one way and I will be pulling things out of that to show how problematic they are as well as how well they fit but they give insights into different ways of how we looked at the discourse and

the performance discourse if you want to call it that. What I describe as pre disciplinary I remember Mary saying and you said in a different way at the very beginning said. You know the only way to proceed with this is to leave our disciplines outside the room. To pair back the discourse to the philosophical questions like it's the most profound thing in the whole thesis is that comment because it alludes to everything before and after that takes place. So that what we were actually doing was getting back to those existential questions so to speak.

STEVE: Yes, yes.

EM: Proceeding into our artistic utterances and needs so to speak to arrive when you start to make.

STEVE: Absolutely.

EM: And that to me is a key thing in this because I think that this is the missing link for a lot of collaborative experiences. They either have it and don't realise it or they are not making enough of it.

STEVE: I would agree with that.

EM: Yes so that is sort of, so I am talking about how conversation becomes discourse and you know how that discourse you know translates you know into those fundamental questions that those then I suppose become and that is the collaborative space. The beginning, creating the collaborative space which..

STEVE: Yes but it's also, but it's also of course and I think we have already acknowledged this. It's also a necessary prequel to the ...to the performative space.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: Was you know being an essentially an interactive process. A sharing of a process of sharing. It's also a kind of a, it's also a kind of measuring there and there is mapping as well that takes place.

EM: And that's a good word.

STEVE: We are already starting to, to kind of to meet the template that becomes you know the performative methodology if you like and remember it, those collaborations those discourses take place in sound.

EM: Yes that's the bit I have to add on now is the discourse in performance.

STEVE: Absolutely and I think that's where, in a sense we are already starting to, we are already starting to explore our possibilities because in a sense we are what's possible and we are already kind ofwe are already kind of mapping that in those moments that we, that we put our voices which are conveying ideas. Discursive ideas of course. We put them into a space and it could well be the space that we end up performing in but even if it's not we are already kind of

mapping and measuring some of those not just the discursive elements but also their sonic possibilities.

EM: Absolutely.

STEVE: The compositional possibilities. Already composing something. We are composing a discourse at that point and that discourse then flows into performance but it carries many of the same values and values that we have constructed together. We have identified that we have forged together into the performative space to.

EM: Yes.

STEVE: Just one further thing going back to that you know your reference to indeterminacy and you know the interdeterminate spaceit's that for me that gives the space a performance or even the space of discourse very very early on. It's that that gives it it's charge because indeterminacy is uncertainty is kind of anxiety but it's a kind of anxiety that, that we use to charge what we are doing. You know. What the hell can this be you know well we make trajectory together out of that uncertainty. It is that indeterminacy is both something and nothing but it contains, it will contain all of the possibilities that you know ...that mightn't occur to us that we, that we then sculpt into composition.

EM: And I suppose it's to try and...try and connect that with the initial discourse. Isn't it. You know to say that all these potential sonic what's the word.....materialisation for want of a better word. Sounds that arrive.

STEVE: Yes, yes trajectories and...

EM: Are products of that initial discourse somehow. You can't prove it but they are it because they are the interrelation of the persons as well.

STEVE: Absolutely.

EM: And the difficulty I suppose with this I guess you could start talking about interpersonal relations. Inter penetration of sounds and things and like there is so many things you can talk about it's just you know. So I suppose I am trying to put...I also have to put theory on the back of it as well soyes that's really or at least reference what other...some people have said some really beautiful things about live performance indeterminate improvisation in the most outstanding ways about presence you know and the evolving appearances and dissolving disappearances. You know just lovely images that you know give credence to what we did and what the output was. Yes so I have literally hooked my coat on space literally because it's the one thing we talk most about. It's the one thing that sort of threads through the whole thing you know and then for choreography it's all about space as well for film so there is all that it's conjoined but I suppose because I didn't really have any interaction with Mary other than the times for the performance and the preparation for it. With you it's been a dialogue for a long time. Three years so...

STEVE: It has.

EM: It's...yes that in itself is interesting as well. You know because like I have the unique opportunity through your generosity to engage with this all the way through right to the end you know so ...pitching my ideas, you generously scoping out what other things that can be put in the fray but you can see now that I can see now that you now have in somehow ordered if that is the right word your experience that you can see how then that examination brings more things out.

STEVE: Absolutely.

EM: You know and you begin to see more unique things related to how you do perform solo or in collaborative space.

STEVE: Absolutely ...

EM: Yes and I was going to say that...yes..

STEVE: It seems to me there is kind of there is extra richness, extra reward and value in that, in those reflections....definitely and a sense because I have not been travelling all the time I have not been able to travel. Not physically travel anyway it has actually given me much more time. Much more opportunity to reflect on my practice and it has enabled me actually toto....at least in my thinking, sharpen my understanding of the way that it relates. My decision to engage in this kind of making....can relate toto ..to other aspects of my life. You know of my being if you like, my being in the world. Do you know and here you know more and more I start to feel that the decisions that we make about how we will make and about who we will be as a result of that. Reflect you know kind of the core issues around, around our lives, around our being in the world. So, so those trajectories of sound that I recreate in those moments they are related of course to the kind of processes, general processes but very profound kind of foundational processes that power our lives so you know there is agency at work. When we make a decision about, about....you know kind of traversing the space in sound in a very, very, particular way. In one way rather than any other way and you know here the indeterminacy comes into play.

We have to make choice. There is infinite possibility there but how will this sound. How will it make its way through across around the space of the performative you know. In those moments, there are so many decisions to make so that reflects what I think are the decision making processes that it has a correspondence with those decision making processes called agency andand those decisions give us what we might call the Ark of Trajectory an Ark of Trajectory and that ends up being our lives. So there is a real correspondence for me there is almost something microcosmic about, about the trajectories of sound I choose to make and the decision that I make about the shaping of my life you know is an expression of agency and of trajectory in sound and so I am very very grateful for the fact that I have not been able to earn anything for twelve months.

STEVE: That I have had no help from our government in that regard.

STEVE: Oh I must send you a link.

EM: Do.

STEVE: I will send you a link to that. So despite the compression we still have agency.

EM: Absolutely.

STEVE: But we have to find trajectory.

EM: Yes, yes.

STEVE: So agency is just an assertion of our possibilities if you like. Trajectory is the articulation of those possibilities.

EM: And the trajectories are different?

STEVE: The trajectories are different

EM: ...in this case.

STEVE:and contingent as well and that issue of contingency of course is you know is akin to the issue of indeterminacy.

EM: Yes, yes.

STEVE: It's interesting that there are so many pieces that we could have made.

EM: Or so many pieces we did make.

STEVE: And so many pieces we di...

EM: Within the same forum yes.

STEVE: Absolutely, absolutely but here is the richness of this universe that we enter into. It's kind of full of jeopardy but that's kind of charge. That's liveness that's feeling.

EM: Well to be honest isn't that the, it's like gambling isn't it. The risk of the excitement.

STEVE: Exactly.

EM: You know when it works it's a big adrenaline rush. Hmmm where did that come from. I wasn't expecting that you know from yourself. So there is a very...that's a very interesting comment from the point of view of you know what is inside of the creative artists that comes out that we never knew was there and it's most palpable and observable in improvisary practice. Isn't it you know.

STEVE: Absolutely that's its richness. That's its reach and its scope and possibility and it's endlessly fascinating because you know we change over time. Our instruments change over time. At least for me. With my voice. It changes with me you know andand there we mustn't forget that an instrument is a space.

EM: Yes. Oh my God. Yes.

STEVE: It's a physical space but it's also a universe of possibilities. It encompasses a universe of possibilities in relation to ourselves and the way we interact with everyone. But, yes so you know in some respects being called to, being given the time to think. To reflect on what I do and then being in a sense given the pressure of finding a way of articulating it. To other people.

EM: Welcome to my world.

STEVE: It has been very useful you know.

EM: No it's fantastic. It's fantastic. There is a book there you do know that.

STEVE: Possibly. Possible yes.

EM: Not possibly, absolutely.

STEVE: Possibly a PhD even.

EM: Yes definitely.

STEVE: I won't get round to writing the book or writing the PhD. I just won't because I am ..I want to do things in order to reflect on them.

EM: I know what you mean.

STEVE: I want a richness of doing there in order to have a richness of reflection.

EM: Well that's even more valid in my opinion. So that's amazing. I love the expression space mediates my improvisational practice. The word mediate is a very strong, word to connect you know the nature of the work and how we put some sort of sense on it you know. For me the use of space was to in a way guide others to how you can you know in collaboration if someone read it that we can see oh we can approach it in this way and these are tips as to how you can organise your practice in a way and things that you mightn't have observed because it is good to structure it and to even though I am labelling spaces I suppose arbitrarily. They are still useful you know and as you said already Steve which is important because this could drive us mad that this is not exhaustive and I have to say that because you know every time you turn there is a new space like you know. It's just tying it into whatever sort of theory or compound I come up with.

STEVE: Yes. Yes.

EM: But I feel very in tune with what you are saying and very, I am very.....heart-warming that what you are saying is aligned with what I am saying myself except for the part about self and the two things are the big takeaways for me are just examining again self in the space which I think are really important and also how the discursive is a continuum. From the initial discussions all the way through. That it doesn't stop. It doesn't stop.

STEVE: Where we start that template that becomes performance and

EM: That was the biggest thing that I understood from my own personal point of view in that research is that, you know.

STEVE: And I think also there you know, in the context of that exchange which is a kind of sharing of course there is a sharing of values too and that's where, that's where commonalities are identified.

EM: Definitely.

STEVE: Are made and that's where trust and that's what trust comes out because we are always. We are always entrusting that other in the collaborative process. We are always entrusting them with, with ourselves. Our invested selves.

EM: Absolutely and that commonality is important because like we had a very useful experience from that, in saying like that because among the three of us there were lots of commonalities of our practice what we wanted it to be, etc so I am not remotely interested when it doesn't work because that doesn't help anyone either. I know it is the control of what we do but that's not how it happened here so...

STEVE: No. Exactly and...

EM: Someone else can write that when it doesn't work.

STEVE: Exactly there are plenty, there are plenty of other experiences.

EM: But this worked sublimely so we are very happy with what happened and you know...

STEVE: Yes and I'll be honest with you Eugene thatthat I kind of as I have got older and more experienced within these processes I know very early on who I am likely to, to bond with in that.

EM: I thought you were going to say Steve you struggled through the whole process.

STEVE: It was agony Eugene.

EM: I can imagine.

STEVE: No it was a total pleasure from you know from you know the beginning there is no end because it continues.

EM: Absolutely.

STEVE: It still kind of resonating and...

EM: It is and it's amazing we can still find new things to say about it you know.

STEVE: Indeed but that tells us something doesn't it because you know this is a sort of a dialectical process we are involved in, we put stuff out there and we reflect on it. We share it and so in that moment we change.

EM: Definitely. We will have to write our own book though Steve. We will have to write our own book to compete with our friend. It'll be fifty blank pages and then one word at the end saying "The End". I am sure you could manage that.

STEVE: I'd buy into that Eugene I really would.

EM: Actually it was very interesting that wasn't it because it forced everybody to read the book.

STEVE: It did.

EM: That was a good thing. Some people turn up at these things and they have read the forward or whatever and there.

STEVE: As long in this case that would have meant that they had read my forward so I would have been relatively happy about that.

EM: Yes. That was a big task. Oh my God I wouldn't have liked that.

STEVE: Yes but ...you know the book, I think the book is a triumph and the launches were so rewarding. All three of those forums were so enriching and all so very different obviously. Here go talking about contingencies but what people individuals brought and what grew.

Appendix 21 April 20th 2018

INTERVIEW WITH MARY NOONAN:

EM: Eugene Murphy

MN: Mary Noonan

EM: So interview with Dr. Mary Noonan, 21st of April 2018. Mary I'm just going to open by asking you to tell us a little bit about your own professional experience.

MN: So, I'm in my sixties and I have to give a context of a long time in the area of the arts and contemporary dance, particularly. I started in Ireland in the 1970s. There was no place where you could study dance, contemporary dance at third level, not that I even seen contemporary dance or that I knew anything eh....about it. But I was introduced to dance at physical education in school. I decided then....my option then, the best option was seemed to be to study physical education in Ireland because you could do dance as part of that. So that is what I did and creative dance was an element of that. Having graduated I was teaching in Dublin and a woman called Joan Davis started teaching. Actually, it was Martha Graham, no sorry, it's actually Terese Nelson who had actually studied Graham techniques...she came to Dublin and she was teaching. She gathered a group of people; one of them was Joan Davis. They were, you know, working with contemporary dance and were formed in the old Project (theatre). I remember going to see that and just being really fascinated, feeling I really wanted to do this and to pursue classes first with Teresa Nelson then later with Joan Davis who opened her own study and that really confirmed my idea I would like to leave and go and study dance.

The whole was that it was really strange. I was twenty two or twenty three and decided I was leaving Ireland and a full time pensionable job to go away off and study dance. And I didn't tell very many people because that was a time when people would have expected, as I did myself, if you weren't, if you didn't study ballet when you were very young how possibly would you want to be a dancer.

What was wonderful about the States was I went to New York and stayed there for a number of years. Em what was wonderful about was you meet a lot of people who had gone to college who were studying something that wasn't dance but then they had gotten interested in dance. They were sustaining a career and were interesting performers of artists working for other companies. Back to Ireland I got an opportunity to work with Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre for 5 years. Then became dancer in residence here in UL (University of Limerick) in the mid- eighties. I founded Daghdha Dance Company, as artistic director and then the end of the nineties I became director of MA in Contemporary Dance Performance in UL until I left it in 2016 to go back to working as an independent artist. It's a bit long what I'm saying but I suppose if on the topic of ways of working I suppose in the first instance I would have worked primarily as a performer or trained as a performer wanting to perform. Simultaneously, in Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre we were also had the opportunity to each create works within the structure of the company...so that was great. And then as artistic director of Daghdha Dance Company I was working with an ensemble so again I was choreographer with different dancers coming ...sometimes the same dancers returning but, so as choreographer, but simultaneously underneath that and maybe increasingly when I went in to become the course director of the mastersnot having a company I found myself working increasingly working with other artists in a collaborative mode or as an independent artist rather than as an artist that had a company and I was working collaboratively in that regard.

And that is really where my interest is and where my interest continues to grow and still is to this day working in a collaborative, interactive way with artists. That's long isn't it ?...sorry about that.

EM: That's not long, that's very interesting because there's so much there, you know. Was Daghdha part of UL or was it separate?

MN: You see, I nearly always offer an historical perspective on dance. I talk about it in terms of Ireland. Daghdha, actually emerged out of....there was a woman called Teresa Leahy in the P.E. building and she invited me and made the case

for me to be a dancer in residence and, you know, it got funding from Mary Immaculate College, from the Arts Council and from Thomond College as it was called at the time and so this was the first residency....I didn't know what a residency meant.....I kind of said...did I have to live there?

So it was after two years of the residency I felt very isolated in Limerick and I said I would really like to see if we can get some funding to bring some dancers to work with and set up a company. So I took it from there. We were based in the University. So the residency was funded in part by the University for quite a long number of years but the company was always funded directly by the Arts Council. We had studio space and office space here on campus.

EM: ...which was fantastic as it gave you security, I suppose, in that as well.

MN: Yes

EM: So that's very interesting when you moved on from your work, academic work on the M.A. programme and you weren't working with a dance company you say that you worked collaboratively with different artists...so my first question is – what are the difference you find when you work on your own and now when you work collaboratively?

MN: Well again to answer that I think I can answer it from an arts performance specific point of view and that's for myself as a dancer, performer, choreographer. And I would say because you are a musician/composer, I would say that dance by its nature has built into it a collaborative layer. Simply by saying that if I wake up in the morning and want to make a choreography I have to, not wake up in the morning! If I decide to make a choreography I have to say, you know, will I use music or will I not ? But I don't think when you have to make a piece of music, I don't think you have to decide will I use dancers or will I not? It's not something you have to consider. So you have to consider that. So straight away you have to think outside of something and likewise, then there's other things you have to think of but particularly, you know, so that's why I say build into it you have to consider other art forms, particularly sound –

music. There's costumes and lighting and all that but particularly sound I would say.

So in one sense and then when you go in you are thinking costume, you are working with light and maybe set design and all of that. So, that in a way, irrespective of how you are working with dance, if you're working with performance, you're working with em....people who need expertise beyond your own unless you can design and compose and write..In one sense, I think, for me its irrespective of whether I'm working say in a way that's kind of named as interdisciplinary there's an interdisciplinary element in the act and process of choreographing. But maybe with slightly different emphasis so we come to that. In other words to put that there first to single...it's not that it didn't exist and then is started to exist but was always part of a choreographers em....

EM: Mindset.

MN: Mindset, thank you. So then the next thing...so your question, sorry..

EM: I am asking then moving on from that, if you are working with another discipline, you know, or disciplines, do you set out to integrate the disciplines, you know, from the beginning, to conceiving of the work...or does it happen accidentally rather than by design (pause) or is it different in each case?

MN: Okay. I will bring that back again.

EM: There's a lot of stuff there..

MN: No, I 'll bring that back again so that in a way, yes, we can use – I think the term collaborative is by necessity again there is a spectrum on that so that as an artistic director of a company and a choreographer with an idea you want to develop and realise so it's inviting people to come in and you're inviting people to come and em...engage with the idea. And, of course, it can change and evolve, in the dialogue, in the exchange with people in really interesting ways but ultimately you are holding it and the final decision will come with you as an artist in lots of

ways. And everybody knows that. So there is a certain sense, you know, of somebody leading it. So that's one way of collaborating in the instance to answer your first, the first question back again. You could nearly call that working on your own...well...sorry now Eugene. I'll circle around that for a minute. When you ask that question you are nearly asking it from the point of view of composer, I'm saying,

EM: Yes, probably.

MN: As choreographer you probably can't work on your own to some degree, unless you're working on your own and you add the capacity to work with other..

EM: I know what you're saying. It's a different perspective isn't it.

MN: Yeh, Yeh, Yeh. So when you set out do integrate disciplines or does it happen accidentally. I think it's not. I think eh I wouldn't use the word accidental for sure. It is a question of eh..establishing relationships with an artist or being interested in working with another discipline and em..eh.. finding ways to develop an idea collaboratively and, of course, things will happen with in that, that, you know, haven't foreseen, they emerge by happy accident but actually there's a whole set of skills involved in getting the conditions for these accidents to happen.

EM: That's very interesting. Another thing that you said that struck me a lot is the word SPECTRUM. I suppose it's a term we can use when we are trying to understand, you know, what is at play when you collaborate. You're saying interesting things about, it's almost like building the elements together but that can be different in each collaboration. And that's really the complexity of it, isn't it?

MN: Yeh. I guess so you could nearly say the term has by necessity to be understood as specific to any one context and maybe it doesn't have really, for me, it doesn't really have a definition outside of how it's actually understood by people working in specific contexts.

EM: In other disciplines ?

MN: Or even say, for example, if one, two sets of artists over there have said we've collaborated and I am saying, oh have you, so have we. We've actually each done it entirely differently but what we understand that to mean maybe entirely different.

EM: And probably there needs to be a lot more reflection and research on that area to understand more how people do collaborate in different relationships with each other.

MN: Or am I saying for example, that the term has to be by necessity just an umbrella term and actually to arrive at a definition of it is probably not possible....or even not that useful because it's got shades within it all the time of like, of the kinds of terrain that's being negotiated relative to what each of the different parties are bringing.

EM: Yeh, absolutely.

MN: Of anything I would feel over the years that like the best situation is really building a relationship with specific artists, a collaborative relationship so that when it's working, when you can come back together again and deepen because you have found a way of working together collaboratively. But you've also had to go through different ways of learning to understand what's really going on with each other in that context and how it's working for each individual.

EM: That's wonderful. Because that's a very interesting area relative to the research I am doing, you know, that the relationship, it comes up in the output anyway and the third question in that is a reflection from an article I was reading on interdisciplinarity which is that Roland Barthes said, you know, when you work like this, the output, the work you produce belongs to no one. Does that type of concept resonate with you ?

MN: Yes. Again , well to some degree it belongs to no one. I wish I thought about this a bit more because there are layers to that. Only because in some ways eh...something happens in the process of making work and circumstances come together and its almost as if a work takes on its own life and you're engaging with it and responding to it. And if there are other collaborators in the room they are doing that also. It comes into then the form that it arrives at and to some degree you could never say whose part did what in it but so in the end it emerges from all kinds of processes into something. It's not...you can't say it's yours or mine. And then I mean I guess. my understanding of Barthes if you really go, what I quite liked, what I understood him to be saying a writer writes a book and the person reads it, it's like who it really belongs to is the reader. Or the meaning probably belongs, happens in the exchange between the reader and the author. In the end, it comes down to the term of meaning rather than the object *per se*. If ownership belongs to who gets the money em....it definitely belongs to the named artist. But the meaning in a work or the circumstances that brought it into being is much more layers than that.

EM: For me it is a philosophical question from the point of view of, you know, entering into a collaboration requires something selfless, in a way, that you are prepared to allow the other person into the creative process that it is a shared organic event that goes somewhere else than if you were just controlling it yourself, if that makes sense and at the same time you are saying that a choreographer there's always that instinct for collaboration if you are using sometimes, sound or set design in a space etc.

MN: I'm going to answer this one now but it would make more sense..

First of all I'm going to say now somewhat provocatively – irrespective of the title of collaboration in my experience there is always a lead artist. And it's usually the one with the money. I like to work that way. If I have set up a premise I would like to explore I invite people in I would like to explore with me. If people agree to collaborate I feel there's a tacit understanding particularly in contemporary dance, whoever has the original idea you are there to support that to come into being and you're collaborating by pushing against

it, asking questions, but ultimately you sort of know – there's a generosity on the part of the contributors, knowing that they are willing to work together to bring this into ...to make this come out as clearly and fully as possible. But when there's fine decisions that have to be made there's always a kind of an understanding that in the end the person who has done the organising, done the practical work, got the resources, is the person – hearing and listening to everybody, saying yeh right, no I think we should probably finish it there or you should do this or you are thinking of two things equally and finally just like yeh, maybe making the decision that we will go with this one. I kind of like when I'm in a situation where I'm the person who is organising something ..I really need that. And when I'm working as a collaborative artist with someone else who has invited me in I want to be there to support them and to some degree I'll do my best... I will engage really fully not so much I'll do the best. I'll really get involved but in the end if there are decisions that I would have liked to have gone in a slightly different direction and they want to go that way I'll be completely accepting of that's the way it's going. And that's where I think the word is kind of interesting. It's nearly an ethos of, where huge generosity on behalf of the collaborators and skill and patience and all of those words and intelligence and rigour but is also a sense of em ..you know, I suppose trust and interest in the work that the person.. But I would still call the lead artist interested in exploring. You know, so in other words, so that's why I nearly said she's because in that regard I like that – I like those roles within it.

EM: Have you ever been in a situation where there was a carte blanche where you hadn't a concept and the other person didn't have a concept and you grew it together ?

MN: Em. I'm trying to think, am I. My feeling is that very seldom has it sustained itself

EM: That's interesting.

MN: Very seldom has it sustained itself. I'm really trying to think that through now. I think we bring shared interests for sure. Yeh probably a little bit with Oscar

Mascarenas, (composer) we are trying to negotiate somewhere that he has interests and I have particular interests. You're bringing your interests together. The interests have to be similar and so then we are trying to evolve something between our respective interests right now in relation to text and movement. I'm glad you are asking that. So that's a different one where we are coming together and it's very research orientated and play and investigation. So it's not we are going to do a performance and perform it in 8 weeks' time or something like that.

EM: Okay

MN: It's a much slower long, burning process.

EM: Is it slower because of the nature of how it begins?

MN: Eh. I think so. And because of the, you're not going to try to force something together or compromise too much. If we can both sustain our interest in this and it feels like it's kind of allowing us to ask questions of our own work in relation to somebody else...so both, then I commit to it because I kind of feel it's a level of enquiry and it's an exchange and there's something there and what's lovely is there may be nothing and you have to kind of accept that so not like really wanting it to be something and rushing it out there very fast.

EM: That's really interesting because that's like , sort of, on your journey you came to that point as well where you're working with no raw material where it starts off as pure enquiry with somebody else where you have this exchange. Of course, there are interests otherwise you would never have started the process but somewhere along the way you don't know what's going to happen and you you're not leading it and you don't have a concept beforehand that you want to bring forward or maybe you do?

MN: No, no you're right.

EM: That's really interesting because I think that might what is truly interdisciplinary when you start that naked point of nothing between you and you have shared interests. You develop it through reflection and exchange, research, enquiry and all those things, and you arrive at another point where something develops. That must be very exciting because you don't know what you are going to see at the beginning?

MN: Yeh. I guess if I think about that in specific situations in ...working with Oscar. He's interested in movement but his own disciplinary expertise is in music. I'm interested in sound and words and voice but my expertise would be more movement. So what's happening is we're both interested in – just to give this example what is it that happens before a movement happens or before a sound happens. It's actually something pre-disciplinary or it's trying not to be bound by disciplinary forms that already exist. So it's almost like are we both trying to get down under – where are the impulses before something comes into sound – that is one of our questions and then there are questions that have to do with say with utterances or space, the materials what we are each working with time, space, weight: of course, body because it is in movement or voice.

EM: It is interesting to see what that output is at the end?

MN: Again I guess in the sense of the preparedness there may not even be an output and that's not where it's going; or else the outputs would go into different things – something else entirely.

EM: It's quite radical to say that you have so dis-owned it, in a good way, that for something to come out of it doesn't matter because it's an exploration between two artists. That's interesting as well because that's truly embracing the exploration because you might find no gold or you might a lot of gold. It's a very mature way isn't it as to how you go about creating work?

MN: I also think it's a kind of a need, Eugene, that there is a kind of exhaustion about the things you have lost interest in. I think it's a need, certain things that used to excite me don't excite me anymore or you know you just feel there is something

more or you are looking for something that maybe feels more vibrant – so it is a need – eh , yes and so in that regard it's as urgent as that. In some ways it's a de-constructive process but what are all the conventions around all the things that we do that have shaped our judgements about what's good or what's bad and what is it that might allow – maybe shaken up a little bit and what might fall out. For me as well it's kind of like, that's a good thing about a certain amount of age as well I feel if it really arrives into something it would be wonderful but it doesn't have the need for an outside acclaim as the way to validate it. Nor is it without needing you do want to bring skills like performance or understanding has it been explored beforehand or what is it that you are doing within it and that there are other people that are doing things in slightly ways and knowing that. It's not without its references or context.

EM: Yet still it's always different when you're doing it. And that's what I beginning to understand myself. So looking at the net question which is probably answered a little bit but I'm going ask anyway – is there something about the creative relationship with another artist or group of artists that influences the process of a new work. In other words to what degree is the creative relationship important to the process?

MN: Well very simply I would say it's absolutely essential. Again, I would say if you can't even get to zero with somebody quickly that you kind of you're on the same...you're kind of both have a way of quickly saying – then you're flying it. But if the relationship is such that you get excited about the wrongs things – that they get excited about something you are not excited about at all that's hard work ...or else you realise we're not on the same we're not on that place of some mutual sense of what we value like the material we're working with. And in relationship there comes for me, if there is an openness and receptivity but if there is a discernment and a kind of skill and sensitivity...you've all of that in the room. I remember talking about, it's interesting, I remember talking about a collaboration with Oscar

(Mascarenas) and Catherine O Malley (Choreographer) we were working on a recreation of this piece in Dublin Contemporary Dance Theatre archives and I

remember saying that what I really loved about working with Catherine and Oscar was the way they'd ask hard questions. We were collaborating and the way I would suggest something and the questions weren't even asked. And the same thing happened when I was working with Mary Wycherly recently and Isabella Upperlan for dancers – what I loved about it's not actually verbalised. You say something and there is a wonderful stillness and everyone is looking at you. And in all the silence they're taking it on and they're not convinced but you know that in a way they're going through a process in their head and they're really figuring it out and they're going to – there is a way in which they will engage or challenge or propose or suggest.

EM: It's complex because that engagement requires a lot of trust – that you can challenge something and the other person, they're going to be open to the process.

MN: Yes, and I think the challenge often comes – people are quite skilled now at collaboration,, that's the other thing. And a challenge would actually come from the point of view, wouldn't be that's a load of rubbish – never get something as kind of dismissive as kind of opinionated, you know. They don't need to say that. You can see – I they're not entirely convinced and I'm not myself and I'm so glad they're filtering it through some processes and they'll bring a reflection and they'll discuss it and it'll come, and there's a skill, a discernment and you can feel by them really trying to tease out what it is that makes sense or kind of what they need to do to make it work better – to get clearer as to what it is.

EM: There is a suggestion that to work with someone you like, I don't know how long you have worked with Oscar, that you have worked with him on a number of projects, do you think that the starting was different from when you first did something?

MN: Absolutely.

EM: That is something I have never thought of yet , the skill of collaborating which is really interesting . People are more sophisticated in how they

approach this from the beginning or it comes out (the ideas) more quickly if you are on terra ferma with the people you work.

MN: Yeh, the skill is also, first of all people don't need to be told what to do – I don't need someone who told me what to do – just show me the steps. So there's a completely different set of skill going on in terms of the exchange and I totally agree. I mean working with any of the people I've mentioned most recently collaborating – Oscar, Mary Wycherly, Isabella Oberlander, she's a dancer, Catherine O Malley and I could mention other people off the top of my head and they're all very different projects – so it's not that they're the same but the thing that distinguishes all of them is that sense of what they bring in terms of both their own experiences in terms of the wider sense of performance and all of that. Sorry now because I am reiterating it but is that thing if really just you know you're in a room with people who are really solidly there in terms of receiving but also processing and responding. And they're the skills.

EM: So the next question – do you think there are degrees of collaboration on the spectrum which influences the output – but you have answered this.

MN: I wouldn't like to romanticise either that there are lovely. I mean I think there's also a sense of narrow spaces you have to get through. There are sorts of intensities and there are misunderstandings but I think the main thing is like – the first time I've thought about this talking to you - but there's also the very nature of it – it has to be mutually respectful and that's the point. Even if you disagree or even if you're trying or have something explored and if there is a resistance or a questioning or a challenging you kind of feel it's done, they're willing to take it on and you're willing to take on and gets really lie grains of sand; it gets refined in that process. It's worth more to everyone not to buy something that feels murky or a little bit conceptual or theoretical and not quite arriving into something that's alive and present in a way. So in a way I love the sense of collective intelligence.

EM: Wow. Because all these things you are saying are things that probably nice to be thought of in the artistic process of an interdisciplinary collaboration.

The phrases you are using – mutual respect and collective intelligence, skill collaboration, getting through that narrow point, like they are all articulating in a very expressive way how that process takes place among artists rather than scientists.

MN: You could also get say a brilliant dancer coming into the room and they are an amazing performer and they are hugely skilled but you could feel that they don't have patience and so in other words or not open and just don't really get it but it's a bit of a gig. What's not to underestimate is the skills that are required in addition to the skill of understanding and the ability to work with material of whatever the discipline is. It's actually to both have that but also to have the questions within that about its limitations and what might be expanded in dialogue with somebody else. You're not coming in to confirm something.

MN: It's a different way of working. How would you distinguish an interdisciplinary project from a multi-disciplinary project?

To be honest Eugene I don't understand. Does interdisciplinary just mean one-to-one.

EM: **What I understand is that multi-disciplinary is the way I used to work where someone would call and say I have this dance and it's 15 minutes long. It's like this and can you write the music. So I'd write the music in a vacuum, right, and then I would be told to snip off a few notes here and there which to a composer is like red rag to a bull. It is where things are running alongside where you have your artistic expertise and the other person has theirs and you slap them together. It works but there is nothing integrated in it. So interdisciplinary – the purest sense of that is what you just articulated about Oscar (Mascarenas) where you start at point A; you have shared interests that you talk about and out of that shared dialogue you are hoping to produce something and that's truly interdisciplinary. So what I'm asking is – working with artist like Oscar and what you did in Dublin Contemporary Dance (in the past) do you see differences in the way that work was negotiated?**

MN: Again if we talk about specific examples and I'm laughing at your description of the composer and the choreographer that was a way of working and John Cage and Merce Cunningham did that so brilliantly because they conceptually – something about the nature of his type of vocabulary and concept and John Cage's music so they could actually say it is going to be 58 minutes and 33 seconds and the dance would be timed to finish then – so it is the music and it happens that this is the first time they ever hear the music sometimes on the stage, the dancers. Well you know that.

I think that it was also a little bit of dancers pushing against the notion that we were always dancing to the music. Get the musician to dance ! To some degree there are instances that would probably really work over time in a relationship e.g., ideally if it suits the nature of the work you like to do and somebody says 'your work always has such space in it and my dance needs space' and there is something about their tones that they really sit together very nicely or they juxtapose each other very nicely and I guess there's times and depending again on the sensibility of the people involved...you know, there's times when I think that really works...and by the way going back to the ballet, I remember someone famously talking about the narratives – if somebody had to die that they took longer to die that they would go back to Tchaikovsky and say we need another ten bars here, seriously.

EM: If I put it a different way then, your early experiences when contemporary dance was just evolving then in the late seventies, early eighties in Ireland where you were one of the pivotal people who was involved in that to where you are now. Can you reflect on one change that you see now in the process that is different to the way you work now?

MN: That's a hard question. (Pause) My experience, of say the musicians I've worked with over the years ..there was just a lovely appreciation of what they brought to the process and their contribution. Certainly, sometimes you would be struck by something by the music really highlighted something that you didn't want to be highlighted. E: In a positive way? M: Yes, sometimes in a positive

way and then more times in a way that it brought an emotional layer than you didn't particularly need highlighting. It was very interesting to really realise how it could bring a new dimension to the work itself. But realising I got a greater respect for what I kind of feel – music is a powerful animal and you have to be careful how you use it. Sometimes you can see a piece of choreography that's relatively mediocre and then when the music is put on to it seems to give it an entry point into the audience where the music is doing an awful lot more of the work than the choreography. And sometimes people exploit that very well and I can see when that's happening and I can see when it's very well done and fair play. But it doesn't satisfy me. I also love it when there is something about the power of movement and moving of the body that is a different kind of space for a dance. Music can sometimes feel like you are putting a wash of sometimes a screen and there's something a bit more challenging about movement that hasn't got a musical accompaniment and it's not to say that there will always be sound but I think it's a bit more challenging sometimes for it to establish itself or for an audience prepared to feel what that does. When they are really done so that the weight of the movement is sometimes washed over by the music. Over the years sometimes I come to appreciate that a bit more – therefore, when in dialogue with the musicians, working without sound, even the role that music can play and how to really work with that.

EM: That's really interesting because travelling through your life as a choreographer you've obviously understood this other discipline music which is very powerful for dance in a much more investigative way – let me put it that way that you are articulating lots of things that work or don't work and how it relates to the dance and how it is imported into the dance and how it can alter some elements within that. That (skill) is probably something you acquired.

MN: Yes. It's about the relationship between music and dance. Maybe I certainly feel my ability to discern what music is doing in the broadest sense of the field of music is not great but I can certainly see what happens when it comes into a relationship with dance.

EM: So that's interdisciplinary. You are relating how it influences you discipline and in a very unique way.

MN: That well could be the case. I was talking to a young choreographer yesterday and one of the things I realise is knowing what is your material doing? What is the music doing and what is the movement doing; what is the text doing? So sometimes the dance is supposed to describe what the text is doing. What does the text do? So you use text and sometimes the text is supposed to describe what the dance is doing. Somebody said to me recently, she really wanted to work with dance; she's a poet and we were having a very interesting conversation because she feels dance is probably the most mis-understood of art forms – contemporary dance – because in some ways I guess again music is abstract and text there's image of allegory and sometimes dance is not abstract enough or not narrative enough. Knowing its power if you put it beside music how to allow it to be as full as it needs to without being obscured by the other elements or in service to the other elements. It is not out of fit or pique but knowing that there is another dimension of our embodied being in terms of how we know or sense or being in the world and know that dance can bring something palpable to that and to give people points of entry. How they can all sit together at different points of entry and how they can be integrated and full in their own right but also collectively the whole thing.

EM: Very interesting. It's a very articulated sense of what you've been doing in that process and you have distilled it which is very interesting because, you may not think you've distilled it

MN: I may have distilled the thinking about it ! It's in the process always which is nice. It's just clearer about the different elements. Another thing I'll finally say to you because we are in this conversation. I was talking to somebody, this other woman that I was collaboration with, that once you start working if you don't particularly want to work with sentimentality or sentiment in some ways you are always working on a bit of an edge... I guess a lot of more popular entertainment does this – but distillation doesn't always bring you to the centre.

Literally in terms of trying to find the vitality and the power. In terms of distillation then to offer it in a way that can have a reach whatever that reach is and what it does. Process of distillation is very valuable. I love working with people who are prepared to go the distance with these enquiries. It's just so nourishing. It's so important.

EM: You've such a wealth as a practitioner and you have become more and more experimental in your way of working and that's really important because you have an empirical role along that path of different experiences you have had working with different people and so you have distilled it in lots of different ways. This is gold to someone like me. I'm hearing different things that I might not have thought about that are relating that I may have put in a box but it doesn't fit like this. And certainly not with artists and artists won't allow themselves to be 'squared off' in that way. It's good because you are feeding off the dynamic of what is actually happening and not what you think might be happening theoretically that's really important. I want to shape this case study within the context of what I'm doing to pronounce what's happening and say what is the case in collaboration with different disciplines as well.

MN: I guess my question is, you have experiences of collaboration and are interested in collaboration do you think by being able to further expand and reflect on and write about topics that interesting for you?

EM: I suppose what I'm trying to do is marry my creative development to the academic part in saying that, unlike you, I did a lot of things in the nineties and after that did virtually nothing and here I am again. What happened then and what's going on now –how can I augment or transform that in certain ways. Thinking and talking about it to different people gives you a rich sense of how you do it. Finally, what advice would you offer an artist embarking on an interdisciplinary process in artistic practice from your experience. What would you say to somebody new who wanted to collaborate – let's say I want to collaborate with a choreographer and not fall into the same pattern of the past. What would you do if you were in that

position because you have a wealth of experience. It's an open-ended question.

MN: I think if you have an idea you want to explore then you have invite somebody to collaborate on it and it's like who you invite to identify somebody you might be interested or whose work for some particular reason you feel interests you. A lot of it is like Beckett – we advance gropingly, we go from following the slenderest kind of thread of some intuitive interest aren't you to some degree? And looking back at what you've done and also you were talking about your music with Oscar (Mascarenas) I am getting a sense that the music had a lot of space in it so again I'm thinking – you might say on the kind of palate of music-making I don't know whether you're interested in full on layered music and the what interests you in sound and sound making- I think of what a choreographer might bring to that. Kind of what yourself you think might bring to the enquiry. It's a very hard thing as it's just about creating an opportunity to invite someone to engage or else spotting an opportunity. It's nearly as random as that but how you calculate the opportunities because you'll calculate it on the basis of – an opportunity can come there are some things about it that are interesting and some things that are not so interesting but on balance it's interesting because it's interesting to the thing you're interested in – there's always knowing that there's something that you're following and you might carry it through that experience and you feel it will feedback in again and it's kind of going through it to bring it back and it will probably change. If you invite somebody in or you'd love to do something site specific with approach to dancers with some notion that they would be interesting to work with then I guess it's to invite them in and seeing actually where it takes your idea. I feel the drive is always inside you but kind of intuitive but at the same time it's – to use Melrose – 'expert intuitive' which is lovely based on your expertise and also at the same time another layer of intuition that's some kind of curiosity that you have or a desire, or a longing to just expand a little bit some of the patterns that you're very familiar with that you know and any of those you would like to take further – to try to risk.

Appendix 22 Q&A First Performance November 18th 2018

EM: Eugene Murphy, interviewer
ST: Steve
FV: Female voice
MV: Male voice

EM: We'll open the questions and comments to the public so.

FV: I should start. Oh, no, somebody was... Ok. Hi, thank you very much. It was very interesting and beautiful in places and bizarre. Bizarrely wonderful in other places. Can you talk a little bit about your creative process in making this work and if you were using a structure in the improvisation? Thank you.

ST: That's a fantastic question.

EM: That's the best question because that's what we were talking about all day today because people think that there's a structure. And in fact, you know, on one of the recordings, we recorded one of the improvisations that we did that was very musical and very lyrical and when we listened back to it, it sounded like a fixed piece that we had created that had been notated and recorded, but it wasn't. But it felt like that. So for me anyway, I have to tell you that the only structure are emotions. That's the only structure. So sometimes it's lyrical. Sometimes it's dark. Sometimes it's bizarre. Sometimes it's very rhythmical. But we flow in and out of each other's momentary sense of what we're doing and sometimes I twist and turn it to something else and sometimes Steve brings it somewhere else, but we end up together. But the only structure was that we had a fixed recording and I have to think Ferdia Murphy for the production on that. And at the start and at the end, but everything else was absolutely improvised. So when we have played this on other occasions, it's been different every time. Completely different. Yes.

FV: But like Oscar told me that it was going to be about 30, 35 minutes and it was, so.

EM: I had the time.

FV: Ok.

EM: That was the only thing. And the only reason for that is because it's a requirement of the PhD rules. It's not that that was why.

FV: Ok, thank you.

ST: I think the idea was for us to kind of flow across and through a small number of fixed elements. So you probably noticed that there was

pre-recording right at the beginning and also at the end. We knew that one would appear at the beginning and one at the end, so there's structure straight away. Another relatively fixed element were the texts, but they changed actually as a result of the process. So as we started to establish what came to feel like the centre, the kind of aesthetic core direction of the piece, it became very obvious to us that it was both dynamic and lyrical at the same time. It had a strong kind of sensitive core to it, a core that really channelled emotion for us, but the context was always kind of dramatic and so the texts, I had written some texts in response to a project I'd been involved in several months ago and just kind of scribbled some responses to the idea of a work which is always in a state of becoming. So kind of inspired by that, as I say, I made these scribbles and when it became clear that Eugene and I were going to be working on this project, I packed a bag and was just putting these texts into that bag. So they may not have come with us and therefore what structure we had might well have been altogether different.

But the texts then changed in response to the process, as I say. So we were in the space yesterday and I felt, you know, actually some of the images needed to be kind of stronger, more dramatic. So we started to kind of redraft them in the light of that, in the light of wanting to create dramatic effect. So yes, there was some structure, but the whole thing was really meant to flow, to be a kind of a continuous flow of ideas, of interaction between the voice and the piano.

MV: Just firstly to thank you so much, Eugene and Steve. It's been a wonderful experience and I think that's for me the primary word I'd use in this context. It's an experience. You couldn't record it, well, you did, but I don't know if I could listen to it again. It wouldn't be the same thing. So I was saying to Cathy just in fact that my impression was that as well in a sense, each one of us has experienced it totally differently because each one of us comes with our baggage, our experiences, our person or whatever. And even I feel I came along with what I experienced today, just today, and it was like a meditation. It was both a meditation and feelings together. Both very strong, but the great thing was I felt you left us free to experience whatever we are at the moment and that's a wonderful thing for a piece of music. I didn't feel... Sometimes I feel in a performance, people are performing and you know, and it's ego. It's the whatever, while in here, it was you left us free, which is a huge gift, I think.

And I'm just wondering about in the process as well the question, it was very much it was the relationship between the voice and the instrument or whatever we want to call it. But how much was that an important part of your creative process as well, the relationship, two human beings relating to each other? Thank you.

EM: We could talk about that for a couple of hours, but the quick answer is that when we arrived at the beginning, I knew nothing really about improvising in this way and so Steve started talking to me, just getting to know me. We talked about Brexit, Liverpool, my family, his family. I thought will we ever get down to it at all, you know? And it seemed to go on and on and on like this, but then I began to realise that he was trying to relate to me in a way

that when we got into this very unique space of improvising, we'd have to trust each other absolutely and have such a, what would I say? A unity or a communication that was core to this. And that's easy to say, but like when you begin to experience then that, you find yourself doing things that are spontaneously different every time. Some of them are beautiful. Some of them are not.

And yesterday, Oscar actually used a phrase, consecration in the instant, consecration of the instant. And that was a very beautiful way to describe what we were doing. It was a consecration of the instant. In other words, it was ephemeral. It couldn't be repeated again. That was it, as you say, and then it was over. And that's the hard thing because what's frustrating is sometimes you play it and some things come out and you think oh, I'd love to do that again, but you can't approach it like that because it's improvisation, but something different comes out every time and that's what's unique about it.

ST: And I'd like to just talk about in regard to this conversation, I'd like to talk about the importance of the image. It seemed to me that if there was a narrative structure, it was based around trying to depict image graphically with sensitivity and with feeling and with drama. To allow those images to imprint themselves in the space, on the consciousness, to explore those images from a number of different angles, if you like, to turn them slightly so that the experience of them is slightly different, but that the imprint remains. So in a sense, you know, the references here are visual as well and I know in my own solo work, that although an awful lot of the time, I work in abstract sound, that again, whatever narrative structure might be experienced, shall we say, by audience and quite often in Q&A sessions like this, people will respond with their own pictures, pictures which then are tied together into a narrative of one sort.

So I think that the, you know, the graphic nature of this and the dramatic nature of this was key and obviously most of those images, not all, but most of those images were conveyed by the text. Sometimes they were offered by the text and then explored by more abstract means. But I was conscious and I think that we both were of moving through a series of images. In a sense, it was almost like a non-linear cinematic experience, for me, certainly.

MV: Eugene, hello. For me, there's this huge complicity between the two of you. You know, almost this hidden language. You're working almost telepathically and communicating. I'm intrigued as when the performance is taking place, are you very much in a state of flow or are you present? Are you aware of what the audience is and do you react and respond accordingly or are you totally removed and in this state of flow?

EM: I have to be honest and say I was glad that the lights were down and I couldn't see anybody. But on a deeper level, in order to create this flow that happens, it is complicit, for me, anyway, that you have to be totally in the same zone as the other person and the more you're in the zone with the other person, the more creative it becomes, the more intuitive, the more things happen that seem to happen together accidentally on purpose. So

just that real sense of yes, that it doesn't involve the audience in that sense. That was my thoughts on it.

ST: Yes, I mean I certainly was not being performative, at least not deliberately so. That was not my intention, although I have to be honest, I was very, very embedded in the drama of what was unfolding. So if there can be such a thing as kind of non-performative drama, and I think there can be, I think we were in that place. But in regard to the issue of complicity, I mean the whole thing in a sense, the whole edifice stems or falls according to one particular action, which is a hidden action, and that is listening. Without very, very attentive listening, it would be really impossible to move the piece forward.

To me, in a work like that, the most difficult thing of all is transition. So I talked about those images and how we might convey them, but how do we move through those images? Who provides the element of transformation? Who, when and how? And well, clearly, those decisions are made spontaneously. There's a form of negotiation that takes place, but negotiation in sound and so both of us were listening for the germ of something, in something that was about to run its course. You're already thinking beyond it. There is the flow. There is the flow and so something... You trust that something will emerge that you either support, embellish, extend or close down.

So there were many occasions this evening, as there have been throughout our process in which ideas were offered as a means of transition and they perished. They withered because somehow, the other party felt that there was not something there that they could kind of relate to and develop. So very, very spontaneous, a very dynamic, a very organic process, I would say.

MV: Thank you so much for the production or the performance. I would say it started on a suspense, continued the suspense and ended in a suspense. I just want to find out did you have any influence behind the performance? Composing or coming up with this? First, when I listen to the pieces at a point, I could feel the change of century kind of caught, like Gershwin music in it. I want to find out if there was any influence behind your production.

EM: Well, I suppose one of the things I value is that in a way, I'm influenced by very little because I never remember names or pieces, so I can't sort of categorise things so much, except for what I learned when I was young learning the piano. So it's not like I've all these styles in my head that I'm calling upon and in fact, that would really irritate me because when I come to the process, my only objective is that it's different the way I want it to be different, the way we want it to be different and that's what motivates me is that sense of... So of course we're all conditioned by if I learned the piano and all those different things, that they are imported somehow peripherally in your technique or what you choose to play, even randomly, but they don't inform it. And in fact, it might have sounded a little bit like Gershwin this time in spots, but it didn't the last time or the time before. So it's not really influenced by anything. It keeps changing.

ST: I would say that the references are actually kind of quite broad and that they go beyond music. They go beyond other composers. I know that in my own practice, I collaborate frequently with improvising dancers, with improvising artists, visual artists and sound artists. So I think we could state categorically that there were no kind of distinct musical influences, none that we brought to bear consciously. Of course, as with every composer and in every type of composition, there will of course be influences and we carry them with us into whatever we make. But we noticed after recording just a couple of days ago that we had kind of fallen into a particular place aesthetically as far as music is concerned in general terms. And I think your kind of mid-20th century, early to mid-20th century reference is not a million miles away. I think we started to experience it as a kind of extended, slightly disjointed kind of art song, the kind of art song that was being written in the United States in that period.

But I was thinking much more in terms of maybe not in this evening's piece, but I was thinking much more in terms of reference, musical reference and composers, I was thinking much more in terms of Samuel Barber, Aaron Copland. So not a million miles away in terms of time and in terms of geography and culture from your Gershwin reference.

MV: To say as well that the influences, if that person had been asked at four o'clock today, it would have been answered very differently because the piece was something else at four o'clock today. Quite different and not less beautiful and powerful. And yesterday as well, it would have been again another set of influences. I mean I had the privilege of listening to both yesterday's sound check and rehearsal, whatever that means, and today's rehearsal too and they all preserve the poetics. The poetics are above the poetry, but they all come out in different, how can I put it? It's like in different... Dressed differently, let's put it that way, you know, with different clothes, you know, in different words as well. So yes, just a comment there. So we'll have one last question here before we close. Thank you.

MV: Can I just ask you another little question about the process? To what extent, if any, did you comment to each other about what each other was doing as you were preparing for this? In other words, did you say something? Oh, that's great. That's working very well. Or that's not working for me. Or did you just let it flow? Could you just give us some insight into the kind of conversations you might have had?

EM: Yes. When we were doing it, we just did it and it started quite organically, didn't it? So we just did things and we weren't analysing it as that's great and that's not. It was more a mood for me that we entered into a different set of maybe more poignant or lyrical things or things that are more dramatic, but we never sat down and said, well, we'll go with this or that because that actually defeats the purpose. In fact, I only listened to anything recorded once because I was afraid I'd start remembering it and then it would be formed and then the whole thing would be lost.

ST: Thank you. I think particularly early in the process, I think it's very, very important in a process like this, not just this process, I think it's very, very

important not to judge what's emerging, what's choosing to come forward. I think if you do that, particularly very, very early on, then the environment becomes of course by definition judgmental. I think initially, the idea is to just let things happen and see where that lands and then try to make sense of it, whatever sense there seems to be. Let that settle into something which doesn't exactly fix itself, but which points towards pattern. As Oscar was saying, every time Eugene and I have improvised together, it has felt very, very different. That core started to establish itself. That lyricism, the drama of it became more and more apparent, I think. But no, there was certainly no sense throughout the process, to be honest, in which we, either of us, articulated, you know, this is right or this is wrong or why don't we head in this direction. And I think that kind of quite open-ended negotiation leads to better, more productive places than the judging and the editing out. You kind of, you become attuned to the process. You become attuned to each other's playing. You learn to judge yourself whether or not what you're bringing forward is likely to kind of fit the model.

MV: So I'd like to say that when I said rehearsal, this is the thing we have always discussed and taught here as well, you know, when we teach improvisation. Our rehearsal consists of discourse and that's another important thing to say about the process, that even though they don't necessarily discuss or when we work together or when we work together in this year, we don't necessarily discuss this, I like and we should expand or develop or whatever. But we go beyond that and start discussing aspects of the actual creative process, you know, how we go about, you know, achieving a certain image, for example. How we go about listening. So the things that get discussed are like listening, philosophical aspects of collaboration, which are very important as well. I mean that's central to Eugene's PhD in fact, the idea of collaboration and dialogue.

So there is, for us, rehearsal is, you know, we spend most of the time in discourse and then we go and do. You know, we don't make. We do. And that relates to being, you know, we have discussed that before, you know, the difference between making art and doing art. And so that's how it works. And so there's the discourse is extremely important. That's the rehearsal part. The rest is sound check and then just giving it a go and creation. So it goes from discourse to creation quite, not quickly, but you know, it's quite immediate. One process after the other and yes, so I think we need to bring this to a close. It's quite an interesting dialogue, but we can continue it later. I just want to thank again Eugene for all the work he has done so far.

Appendix 23 Q&A Second Performance May 31st 2019

EM: Eugene Murphy, interviewer
ST: Steve
MY: Mary
FV: Female voice
MV: Male voice

MV: The first thing is thank you very much. I thought that was an incredibly delicate piece and I really, really enjoyed it and the theatrical performance and everything that went with it. So my question to you sort of comes in maybe three or four parts. What is your starting point for something like this? And did you have a vision for how it was going to turn out and maybe how and why did it change as you were developing the piece?

EM: **It's a very long question to answer. Well, I suppose the brief answer is that the thing that I learned working with both Steve and Mary is that they have in their own practice, Mary is a choreographer and Steve is a voice artist. And in their own practice, they have been practising improvising as part of their way of performing and as part of their enquiry or research. So the interesting thing is that when we came to together, and we describe it as coming into a space, that we came here, the first is that we leave our own disciplines out of this. Steve is a composer as well and Mary, as you can see, creates these incredible images, moving images. And I suppose we leave that outside first and we discuss our own artistic practice and what we desire things to be. And certain things come out in those discussions and in fact, one of the really interesting things for me as a learner and a novice is that we came together in April 2nd or 3rd and there was no voice sounding, there was no choreography and I never played the piano.**

So that really answers the question that really, the dialogue is the most important part of it and from that emanates, you know, a narrative in the enquiry, which in this case came from the text written by Steve, which was a starting point. And from that text then we started to develop ideas about becoming, about how things rise and fall, come into existence and decay and how you can express that artistically through movement, through film, through images, through sound. So that became part of the narrative and through that then, the piece starts to be born.

MV: Thank you. Anyone else who wants to ask? There's a question for Eugene or Steve or Mary or the three of them?

MV: So does that mean then that it exists just for one night only?

EM: **In practice, yes, and in theory, no because I think one of the interesting expressions that I learned through this process was, you know, that you have traces of it. So when you come back again, it's not that you play it the**

same, but the traces and essence of it are there. And in some way, you can say that about most things that you see, either as a performer or an audience. And I suppose it's embodied. So it was inside you in some way that you can then reuse it in a different way the next time that you come to it.

MV: What are the clues and triggers that you give to each other in the course of actually staging the performance?

EM: That's the question that I'm trying to answer. That's what my PhD should find out. That's really what I'm trying to find out. What is actually happening? And there's something about, you know, the relationship where there's such a deep enquiry and a deep exchange of ideas and thoughts about everything to do with the process that at some point, you're going into maybe a special creative space that we all step into that informs how you do it and in that way then, you become sensitive to what the other person is doing. And I'm sure also there's a shaping in the way that we three have done it that three different people wouldn't do. But that's the way we have found ourselves in that. So the cues I suppose come from, you know, I suppose what you describe in improvisation as transitions where things come to a natural end and you move onto something else, or you know, sometimes I believe, but I've never done this, that if you don't like what's going on, you can steer it in a different direction.

MV: Another question maybe? Yes.

MV: I got the impression, and not really sure what the piece is about and not wanting to know beforehand, that it's something to do with the essence of being and took that very much from it. Is there a feeling you identified at any point or could recognise when you were connecting with your own idea and when you could say, well, I'm actually connected, I'm in the space with it? Was there ever a set of feelings or a feeling that you could identify?

EM: Yes. Again, it's very nebulous to try and answer that, but I suppose there are certain things that, you know, Steve talks about affect. You know, that those feelings that come out when you're playing and I'm sure that certain notes or sounds or sets of sounds or in this case, images, which was very interesting for me looking at the images and responding to them when I'm playing, that all those things inform it. And I'm sure like any warm-up, as time went on, you were getting more and more inside the space and inside the zone as it went on and that's certainly true.

ST: Good answer. Yes. Certainly, when I started to sort of write the text, and the texts actually were in the first instance written immediately after another performance, not within this project. Another performance, and I came out of it still in that very kind of focused place, that place of affect and the flow and I just started scribbling down some ideas. Not surprisingly, of course, the images that started to emerge were clustered around issues becoming manifestations, various manifestations of becoming, which is something that's kind of central to the improviser's art, regardless of your particular media. But I think it was also for me, it was written at a time

when I'd suffered a bereavement. In fact, my father had just passed away just a few days earlier and it seemed likely that I would not fulfil that engagement and then my mother asked me to do it. She said look, you must do it and you must do it for him. So the whole evening for me was, in terms of my own performance, was very much bound up with kind of conflicting feelings and I'm surprised by this.

On the one hand, of course deep sorrow, but also of a certain kind of lightness of being. I realised that I was, you know, kind of singing my father's song. It was this lament, but it was also his song and he'd been an incredibly vibrant individual. I started then to write these pieces immediately after. There wasn't much form to them. It was just that it was just a stream of consciousness. In fact, I brought them with me to our first meeting, never really expecting that we would use them. They were in my bag. They just happened to be in my gig bag still and we were talking and we were thinking about how we could initiate the project and I thought, well, why don't we start with this? Let's have a look at some raw material. Let's see if we can sculpt this in a particular way.

I think the other thing, apart from, if you like, the essence of the improviser's art and sort of thinking the mood that might be generated there is the idea of becoming as a kind of a predicament, an essentially human predicament. We have no control over this. We keep on transforming in one way or another kind of until we suffer the ultimate transformation. So it's almost a kind of philosophical environment in which the pieces are still raw, from start until this fruition.

MV: Actually we have another four minutes. Yes. I would like to get Mary's impression and also maybe account of her involvement in the project as well.

FV: That was my question actually.

MV: Thank you so much.

FV: Great minds. Yes, so it was really a question for Mary because Steve and Eugene have worked together on their first performance and then you came in to collaborate, the three of you, for this second one. So what was your experience of collaborating and working with Steve and Eugene in this process?

MY: I think initially, Eugene invited me into the project because of my own work, which is very collaborative and interdisciplinary. So I work as a performer and in fact, I was due to perform in this context, but I had an injury, hence the film side came in. But I also work as a film maker, so my work really overlaps between live performance and film. So I think I understand why Eugene asked if I would work with this because, you know, it's an inherent part of my practice to work collaboratively. So I sort of came in aware that foundations had been laid down quite rigorously in terms of how the sound and the music elements had unfolded. And I think in a way, I felt my role a little bit like a disruptor and also knowing it was in the context of a PhD research as well, I kind of felt that sort of role of disrupting something to ask other kinds of questions was my role. And I'm kind of comfortable with

that because I have to, you know, that's really how I engage with my own work as an artist is a continuous kind of questioning.

So I sort of feel that's part of what I facilitated and then the video side of that was merged in a practical way because yes, I was experiencing an injury and so I decided I wouldn't be able to live perform, but as it kind of unfolded, I really felt that actually the video was the right kind of material for this context also. And then I work as an improviser in live performances and I've set material, but the video in this context was some fixed and then some live responding to what was happening in the space. So it was really sort of unfolding as the materials were happening here in front of you. I was also live choosing what was happening in relationship with the video up there.

So yes, does that answer the question? Yes. Yes.

MV: Well, I think it's time now to bring this to a close. I really want to thank the artists, Eugene.

Appendix 24 Reflection – *Beginnings in the Dark*

Beginnings in the Dark

November 18th 2018

Steve sat on a chair and waited on his own. It was a little unexpected for the audience. Where was Eugene? (who had invited many of the guests in the audience). I think that the fixed, recorded element of the plucked piano strings in the opening sequence, gives great scope for Steve to explore his voice, and bring his range of voice sounds fully into the space so that it becomes part of shade and colour of the performance. It was peculiar because the recorded piano strings sounds were sparse and erratic at the beginning and the audience would have been forgiven for being a little uneasy as to whether the piece had started or not as there was no introduction. Steve waits quietly on the chair listening to the fixed score. I am filled with curiosity as to how Steve will respond to the fixed sounds and it is very interesting to hear how he manages to respond tonally to those pizzicato like sounds and use what he is hearing to trigger voice sounds that are in response to what he hears. The sounds he opens with are bizarre at times and occasionally comical but they prepare the audience for what is to come. The sounds are also raw and unabashed and Steve moves from one sound to the next with great intensity and sensitivity. The audience is drawn towards the interplay between the fixed element and Steve's creative voice sounds. We are in a room, not a theatre, in these moments and the visual of the man on a chair is strong, issuing forth strange, and at times, 'difficult' sounds to comprehend in the normal discourse of conventional, vocal sounds. The visual of the man seated in a chair is a great ploy to distract the audience somewhat from evaluating those vocal sounds and simply to embrace the moment and fully engage in the performance while observing the man on the chair.

My arrival after 5 minutes is a delicate entrée. How would I not break the magic spell created by Steve? I can find a space between my presence and the fixed score that enables me to step in smoothly and to continue the lines of the fixed score as if fixed and unfixed, live and recorded are part of one continuum that makes the whole experience. I am in! My presence with Steve is the overture to the undiscovered elements yet to come and I am somewhat nervous as to what will ensue. But I don't wish to be pre-occupied with the worry of this as I think this will inhibit or hamper what creative forces will be manifested in the live and unknown elements of the performance taking place.

Having physically delved deep within the grand piano and played with the sounds and harmonics created by the strings, as my fingers move across them, I now move to the piano stool and sit in a conventional manner at the keyboard. It is difficult not to be in concert mode but I don't wish to be conscious of that either as it may also inhibit the unfolding nature for the work and transmit something other than the pure nature of the unknown performance. I will be as free as possible to engage with Steve and the audience and the beautiful space where the performance is taking place. I knew that the connections between Steve and myself were intensifying, especially when the fixed score became quite frenetic. I'm playing live with the fixed score and Steve is improvising with these elements. At one point I cannot tell the difference between the fixed and live score integrated with Steve's voice sounds as they were all merging into one and creating a crescendo of a unique body of sounds which was quite satisfying and setting the scene for a strong creative impetus. It all came to rest and I naturally sat down at the keyboard. I felt a strong sense of unity with Steve – we were not making eye contact but were deeply connected with the environment surrounding us in our music making. Already building the piece a long time had passed before Steve sounded the text with the opening phrase – **'Bare bones of body'**. It was such a powerful and dramatic step from the slow build of the opening section and the frenetic, percussive string sounds surrounded the words with mystery.

My one impression is that everything was so tightly connected and ready to burst with creative promise. Now we had moved from the room to theatre where Steve projected lines of poetry which resonated throughout the theatre and the opening up of the artistic space. It was as if we had been walking through a long hallway only to discover the light, the virtual space of the piece as it was opening itself up to the audience. Each musical utterance became a springboard to light up the other artist's sounds, a reciprocal engagement, instinctive and intuitive. The piece began to ebb and flow with the lines of the poetry uttered, sounded and sung, where, at times, it was impossible not to be moved by the delicacy and sombre nature of those poetic phrases and what they signalled. At other times the sound was driven by short dissonant jabs which seemed to recalibrate the score and send it off as it meandered forward with moments of intensity – only to find that the intensity had dissolved and been replaced instantly with so many unexpected sounds and combinations of sounds between the piano and voice. A dialectic between intensity and lightness seems to characterise how the piece unfolded. Sometimes there was a synchronicity in the way we interweaved and spoke to each other through the music and at

other times we chose different paths where the piano led the soundscape in a new direction or the voice found a new vocal path to explore on its own. The sonority of voice sometimes signalled and coincided with bass sounds on the piano which echoed the grand, vocal score produced by Steve. It was impossible not to celebrate with Steve and be divested of all other mundane thoughts. I felt the soundscape of this piece moved rapidly from the delicate voice of the upper register on the piano, barely audible at times. Then through waves of glorious, resonating vocal sounds shifting the narrative of the piece endlessly from voice to piano as if each sound were to virtually ricochet back and forth in the live performance.

I remember a moment when words sounded by Steve travelled with the diaphanous piano sounds, slowly and with great poignancy crept from one note to the next, both Steve and I listening and waiting for the other. It seemed like we had reached a perfect moment of discovery, as we gently unwrapped the sounds and veered them sometimes with great caution and other times freely towards the next possibility. With a loud *sforzando*, the sudden stop marked vocally and on the piano, simultaneously, marked a moment of perfect unity in the performance. This unique response and sensibility to the aesthetic moment was a great surprise to me akin to a musical gasp and the audience would be forgiven for thinking it was an intentional predetermined and fixed moment in the score. But, of course, it wasn't.

As the experience intensified in the performance I felt that the piano had become an extension of my creative self and in some extraordinary way I could not separate myself from it. I ran my fists across the keys from treble to bass, nothing premeditated but feeling infused with unselfconscious knowing that this was the next action to create sound. It felt liberating so I moved my hands in the same way once more only for this short episode to evaporate into a lyrical counterpoint between Steve and myself. I was making immeasurable use of the piano, the strings, the sound board, the keys. Then I decided to close the lid of the piano. It was a decisive moment, complete.

The silence, having closed the lid, opened up a new chapter for Steve who began to make wind like sounds with his voice that drew the audience in and as his voice compressed and whispered the inter play between voice and piano had changed. Once the piano lid was closed it was possible to explore the instrument disparately. I hit the underside of the piano and along with the percussive sound of this action it also gave way to lingering harmonic sounds of the long piano strings sound resonating in the theatre. A new musical narrative was created by closing the piano lid with different spaces, sounds and dynamics bestowing

on the artists the potential for new ideas to emerge. The moment of shutting the piano lid mirrored the end of one movement as it glided into another and what was evident is that the range and sequence of vocal sounds had even more surprise and variety. Steve's exploration in this part of the performance ended with a lovely chromatic phrase and as it came to rest I automatically opened the lid of the piano. It seemed that this is what should happen next and it was purely intuitive.

What I was beginning to understand was that there were no long phrases and no development in this work – apart from the poetic text created by Steve. Beautiful lyrical lines were set forth to bring us on a journey but those poetic lines were always abruptly altered by some turn that took the sounds off into a different place. I remember it required great concentration to keep up as we were always on the edge of a new thing that cut the narrative short again and again and where new ideas needed to be launched.

The Aria like moments where Steve behaved almost as if he was leading us towards a conventional idiom helped to clear the 'palate' of the listener from the vast array of sounds and music that had gone before and to prepare the listeners for what had yet to arrive. The rise and fall, the moments of rest as if inhaling breath was simply to pour forth some new sounds that would either linger or travel or simply die away.

In a couple of occasions I got lost on the journey- moments when I didn't know where to go, looking out sometimes towards Steve to find that moment. However, just as quickly as I was lost I found the compass again and this experience of finding my way in this improvising world gave me an inner reassurance to proceed further along the lines of the unknown and to be confident in my own creative expression. As Steve sounded more text we once again found ourselves bonded completely in the counterpoint of the "the" as I remember it. The staccato like repetition of the sounded word "the" prompted me to 'copy' the sound on a piano string. We echoed each other, self-assured that this was a point of convergence where the voice and piano sounds were simply aligned in sequence. I also recall the sound engineer had put a lot of reverb on the piano (his choice) which made the sound of the 'scraping' piano string much bigger and balanced perfectly against the insistent vocal line.

The range of consonance and dissonance in the piano part lived on much longer after the sounds were made and at times the lingering sustained sounds created cues for Steve to step into the next part of the text or at least it gave space for him to do so.

My overall experience is the two of us waiting for each other – no rush. Silences in the experience were meant to be there. They weren't awkward or artificially made. We had

simply stopped to wait for the other, for the next creative moment to arrive and as it did we were both nourished by its potential outpouring of all types of combinations of sounds. In one fleeting moment I knew my part was over in this and I got up and left. Steve remained.

The solemn hymn like sounds that emanated from Steve, created a sacred moment in the space, lingered and progressed gently as the audience sat in deep silence as the experience petered out. In the final moments of the performance the return of the fixed score signals the end and Steve's diminuendo is inspired with a long, slow exhalation of breath that brought the piece to a close. Indeterminate, gone in a flash.

Strands of the dance medium

The language of dance and movement is challenging to articulate as an expressive form. However, Laura Murphy's analytical presentation of the strands of the dance medium and the structural modes of Laban's language for movement has opened up a new vista for me in how I see, interpret and practice dance/movement. I am not a dancer but I am a mover and therefore, I was able to participate in two sessions with Laura to understand how I would use the knowledge and techniques she would impart to me in my music composition for dance.

Laura Murphy works as a choreographer and performer, both in Ireland and internationally. She has an expertise in choreology and she spent some time with me explaining how I might translate the movement theory and explanations of movement and dance into my composition.

Choreology is recording in notes and notation how dance movement is achieved. Laban principles document in a systemised way how we move as human beings.

TASK

To record in journal format what ensued during my elective and my impressions, thoughts and feelings on choreology.

To compose a 5 minute piece on piano to reflect and engage with my new knowledge.

FIRST SESSION

This took place in Dance House, Dublin. Laura began by outlining on paper some of the words used in dance movement and some of the ideas to reflect upon in the process.

How sound and movement intersect:

Juxtaposed Integrated Parallel

To be considered in the context of

Performer

Sound

Space

Lights

Laura opened up a dialogue about how these elements ‘interlink’.

The key words to describe movement are conceptual and could equally be related to music as to movement. I understand that using these terms is a way of formulating how dancers move. I am eager to find out more but I know that it takes time to digest concepts and ideas. I am enthusiastic.

Laura used a large notepad to help me visualise what is parallel, juxtaposed and integrated when describing the format of movement. So far so good. I took some pictures on my I-Pad throughout the two sessions of any graphs or diagrams that she used. It was useful to do this.

Visualising the ideas on paper makes it tangible and accessible.

Binocular vision theory:

Complete understanding to not understanding (abstraction)

In performance how much do we want the audience to understand ?

I think that it probably is a constructive marker to in performance to know what role the audience plays in the space. It seems fundamental that what the body sees or perceives in our perception of what we embody or observe as an outsider looking on is something to study in this kind of analysis of movement.

Both Laura and I shared about how we work and about our backgrounds. She was particularly interested in what I understood about the audience and what an artist wants to convey to the audience...if anything. As I don't normally reflect on this it was a useful step considering I will have to manage a performance much later on as part of my research.

STRUCTURAL MODES OF LABAN

It breaks down movement. It dissects movement as dance to convey meaning.

Vocabulary to communicate with choreography

DURATION

SPEED

PACE

At the outset I was trying to establish what was the difference between 'speed' and 'pace'. It was great to be in a dance studio where Laura was able to demonstrate the difference and in moving myself and trying to walk at pace and then at different speeds....I realised I was using my embodied self to understand these two terms. In fact I was so taken by the simplicity of the terms and the scope they had in creating music that I chose to use these terms to create a short 5 minute study on piano...after the sessions.

This would be a good starting point for me to create something different, outside my own comfort zone. I was up for the challenge but not knowing yet what it might entail.

5 RHYTHMS PLUS QUALITIES

ACTIONS - Jump / Turn / Twist / Fall / Stillness / Open / Close / Transfer weight / lean / gesture / travel

BODY AND ACTIONS – Eukinetics – rhythm & qualities. They might be linked to sound and tone.

This was a lot to take in. Laura encouraged me to use the space in the studio to move and to experience the different actions in my body.

How we read the actions

Dancers' space – choreutics (form) – lines and curves

As someone who writes music for dance I am very interested to know how to read the actions of the dancer and the space they move in. We experimented with 'lines and curves' moving at different paces and speed. Laura asked me to improvise creating my own lines and curves. I felt at first that I had to create a plan in my head to know how to move. I was a little apprehensive at first but then as I moved I felt more fluid and I began to enjoy the sensation of travelling around the floor space.

I can't believe that after 30 years I am only beginning to examine how a dancer moves. It is patently obvious that if I knew more about the nature of choreography and movement that it would enrich my work. But I never did...

Neil Martin and Jean Butler – 'this is an Irish dance'

Laura recommended that I watch this piece as it related to a choreographer and musician working together. It was interesting to see how both Jean Butler and Neil Martin used the space and where the cello was occupying the space and how they experimented with sound and rhythm, space and time. I watched it in the evening time after the session with Laura.

This is a really good example of a choreographer and composer working together. It is a nice coincidence that it is an expansion from an Irish traditional context. Watching this encourages me to look deep within my own practice to experiment and explore.

The art of good communication seems to underlie any constructive relationship with another artist especially if exploring a work in progress together. This piece was evidence of that communication and I am sure I will look for that level of understanding with new artists that might collaborate with me.

Concept of recurring movement

Trying this out within the space was energising. Even though I can't dance it was nice to be directed by Laura with instructions to twist and turn and move in many different ways to experience the sensation of how dancers dance.

Moving slowly – picking up pace – walking – stopping – recurring movement – walking back at speed.....Slowly, I, pace, circular, accelerating, shifting backwards, shifting forwards, walking backwards, slow movements, fun and tip and turn sideways, shift, slow steps to the end...Breaking patterns and shifting the timing.....I am very aware of my body...I am beginning to be out of breath!

SECOND SESSION

5 Rhythms

IMPULSE IMPACT CONTINUOUS SWING REBOUND

Found in all movement deliberate and spontaneous

REBOUND Heavy / Light / Heavy

IMPACT

IMPULSE – on the piano keys

CONTINUOUS

SWING

I loved the 5 rhythms of movement. Laura said that each one was part of our regular movement patterns as human beings. It is not necessarily that they are related to dance. By looking at Laura enact the different rhythms and by my copying the action was very interesting. It was simply learning by doing.

I could see instantly how impact and impulse would have an immediate coorelation with how I play the piano. Rebound was interesting because it was a reflex action. I felt immersed in the moment of these 5 actions and I know it had a high level of impact as I was literally using my 'embodied know-how'. I pondered on how I would use these rhythms as a musician to express what the dancer is doing in the movement. For the first time I wasn't an onlooker as a composer. I was a participant and as such would have access to new ways of learning and new knowledge which would inform my practice. I was so glad I was here...

The Different Qualities

STRONG – LIGHT

SOFT - LIGHT

LINEAR – CURVED

DIRECT – INDIRECT

FLOW – is constant – how we use our physical energy flow and release VERSUS the containment...

SUDDEN SUSTAINED – relates to pace, duration and speed

SUDDEN IMPULSE

SUDDEN STOP

All of these qualities in movement are giving me a perspective of both theory and practice.

It is dynamic because I am doing it and it is an evolving body perception. Using

movement for me is transformative and a new experience to inform my creative practice.

So many ideas, thoughts and practical examples have come my way in these sessions with Laura. I have crossed the line to the other side and I now have new measures that may influence my work. I don't know where to start really but the fact that I have embarked on this approach is the first step to see what might be revealed in this process.

It would have been useful to have a third session. The different qualities and structures in movement as outlined by Laban and others equips me regarding how I look at dance. I am more informed and more considered regarding what is happening when a dancers moves and there is no doubt that this will influence new ideas which might emerge in my process.

‘Strands of the Dance- a short study’

FIRST ATTEMPT

The piece is 5 minutes long with 5 distinct sections each approximately 1 minute in duration. In this study I explore the ideas of duration, speed and pace. The piece was written over two separate sessions.

The first session which took place at a studio in The University of Limerick was an exploration of ideas and motifs and a reflection on what had happened in the practical sessions with Laura Murphy. It was a difficult task for the following reasons:

1. I couldn't seem to get away from imitating the physical movement using music motifs. No matter how I expanded the ideas I continued to examine the movement from a strictly music context.
2. All of the ideas were very rhythmical which governed how I was conceiving the task at the time.

In the end I decided to wait and come back to the task at a later date.

What negatively affected my development of this study was the fact that I wasn't sure how to represent the movements I had been shown and which I experienced through my own moving. It is frustrating because all of my thinking about the approach is informed by my classical training and my usual way of beginning a process to compose. It was an impasse for me and I was uncertain about how I was going to proceed.

I went back to my notes and reflections on my sessions with Laura Murphy and I decided that the first thing was to decide how to structure the study and how to deliver it. I let this rest in my head for some days.

In a conversation with my tutor Oscar Mascarenas I understood that I had to radically alter my way of thinking about the project. The elective was meant to inform me about a new approach to my composition. This had not taken place in my previous effort which took place over 6 hours. I needed to step outside my own comfort zone and imagine the project from totally different parameters.

I can hear voices outside the rehearsal room. I am a little self-conscious. Can they hear my playing? I realise there is someone in the studio next door to me playing a classical piece on piano. I can't focus with that in the background. It drifts away. It's quiet again.

I play down in the base section of the keyboard churning rhythms of 2 against 3, 3 against 5. It's all very busy. I cross my hands to see what ideas I come up with. I like a motif. I stop. I try to play it again. I have forgotten it. I try again. It's gone. I open up a new idea. I like it. It travels on. I hate it. I stop. Silence. I wait. I play part of a piece I have written before. I've had enough. I need to get a coffee. It's Saturday. There is nowhere to go...ok The Pavilion might be open. Off I go despondent hoping the coffee will stimulate me, will give me a break from my own thoughts to come back with new thoughts. Back again, this time in the middle of the keyboard experimenting with long notes. Not working. Up at the top of the keyboard. I cross my hands and play....hoping to be inspired. Nothing. I go on....Stop. I stand up and pace around the room. I sit. I play again and again and again. Some useful ideas....or are they? It seems there is a disconnect between what I have experienced in the dance studio and what I am producing now. It's not going anywhere. It's 4pm. I must go now. No it's not a waste of time but I am alerted to the fact that this is much harder than I thought. I'll talk to Oscar.

SECOND ATTEMPT

Having spoken with my supervisor I knew that I had to structure the piece so that I could sub-divide the sections. I made a graph and prepared notes and information to assist me in shaping the study.

I also began to reflect on how a dancer might approach a piano piece as a dancer with no musical experience. In some measure I wanted to attempt to see this as an interdisciplinary exercise where I was being informed by new knowledge, techniques and strategies which were not part of my practice. It struck me that dancers would probably not sit at the piano. They might not use their fingers to play the keys and they might have a different spatial relationship with the instrument. Their sense of what makes sound may also differ from that of a musician. From that perspective I decided to outline a simple structure to enable me to move the project forward. I took the 5 minutes and broke down the sections to comprise of one minute each in duration.

I began at around 10am and went on until 4pm in a studio on the second floor of The Irish World Academy in UL. I chose the room because it had a nice grand piano and also a white board where I could write my notes. There was a nice vibe in the room and I was determined to finish the study. I rehearsed it for about an hour. I recorded it on my I-Pad. I hated looking at myself and it was a distraction. I started to move the piano further back

into the corner of the room so that the perspective which included myself in the recording was less 'alarming' to my visual sense of self. I don't often have to encounter myself on video...

I have included the chart I used to follow the sequence on the piano. It is on the last page.

0:00 – 1:00 – DURATION – I took the idea that a dancer approaching the piano might be interested in the outer extremities of the instrument first. So the idea was to play the lowest and highest notes. The interval between playing the lowest note and walking up to play the highest note was also to be part of the exercise in duration. Also to accentuate the concept of duration some notes were longer or shorted in sound.

I recorded this section at least 10 times with many false starts. What was happening was that I wasn't happy with my stance at the keyboard because I needed the viewer to see that I was standing at the side of the keyboard. Once I got a good angle I continued. As I wanted the whole 5 sections to be played simultaneously I practiced it for many hours. On the white board I wrote up my notes for each section and used the stop watch on my mobile phone to check the timing of each section. I realised that the distance between playing the first note at the bottom of the piano and the second note at the top included my walking. I realised that this was not part of the piece and my pace from one note to the other should form part of the piece. So I walked more deliberately to achieve this. (Before that I was hesitating).

1:01 – 2:00 – PACE – I thought that a dancer might be interested in exploring the black notes only. It is easy to see how they are grouped in threes and twos. I played with my knuckles to express the possibility that a dancer might do this also. There is an established pace in this section which slows down at the end of the minute.

I remember thinking that sometimes when small children learn to play a piece on the piano with little or no formal training they learn a piece with the black notes only. It is easy to navigate when playing. I thought the same with a dancer that she/he might be attracted to playing the black notes only. There is a sense also of exploring those sounds inconsistently but trying to create some form and structure out of them. It's about pace so there is a consistent rhythm to be found in this section.

2:01 – 3:00 – Speed – I continued this idea in a different way by playing notes with unequal intervals. It was also an opportunity to examine how I hit the notes using either impact or impulse actions as used in movement. The sound was quite different and I enjoyed exploring the notes in an ad hoc way and randomly using my body to move from

part of the keyboard to another without any pre-determined design of what notes I would use.

It is intriguing to look at a keyboard and have an idea to play single notes but not to know which ones. Is this improvising or is it some trigger to let the random element of the exercise lead itself in its own direction. Certainly, I was preoccupied with what action I would use to play those notes. I wanted to include some of the elements of the movement technique in the elective and impulse and impact were readily translatable into moving on the keyboard and touching the keyboard in different ways. I felt that this was the start of something new. I was at pains that if I hit two notes that I didn't aim to make them concordant which is a natural inclination as a musician.....some were concordant but it was purely accidental. To be honest I felt a little awkward doing this but it was constructive to feel awkward. It was a feeling I had when I couldn't match my mind to the instruction for movement given by Laura in the dance studio and make my body work the way I wanted it to. Here in this context I was unsure that what I was producing was of value in introducing the concept of speed. The gap between the individual notes did feel random but I don't think this is a bad thing.

3:01 – 4:00 – Speed – It is not original but I am sure that if using a grand piano and the lid is open that a dancer would be interested in touching the strings and experimenting with them. I contrasted the speed by running my fingernail along the length of one of the strings. When I reached the end I used my fingernails to fan out over a number of strings. Then I patted the strings with the palms of my hands in a percussive manner hitting the strings quite hard and at speed. This created an interesting collection of sounds and harmonics.

I definitely felt that what I was doing in this section was exploring the instrument much like a non-musician would. Up close I could hear the harmonics and different sounds as my fingernails attacked the strings. It would have been great to capture that with a sensitive microphone. Certainly, the idea of speed was guaranteed by patting the strings with the flat palms of my hands. The sound lingered as I moved away from the strings. I have used this technique before in a piece in 1990 and it's certainly not original but the feeling of the strings vibrating against my hands is vibrant is something for me to reflect upon.

4:01 – 5:00 – PACE- The last section of this study is creating pace by simple attack on the white keys only and flipping clenched hands, both right and left hand, backwards and forwards over the keys, playing groups of notes at each turn. There is a definite pace to

this and each time the hands turn they move further apart to the higher and lower notes on the keyboard simultaneously. I end it with one last attack on the keyboard.

What was good about this was that I was on my hunkers. It was a little bit of a strain to control my balance and also play the keys. I had practiced it a few times to correct my balance. It was a non-musician position at a keyboard and that was refreshing. I am so used to being poised, sitting at the keyboard, emulating what thousands of pianists do every day as they sit at the piano – in a stylised pose which is Western and classical. This was some embryonic shift of focus away from what I am used to and towards something outside the realm of playing. I was experimenting at last.

When I examine the study by watching the video I realise that I don't like the ending of the last section where I play one last staccato burst on the keys. It signals the end of the piece and is what I would naturally do. However, when I hear it, it sounds at odds with the ad hoc nature of much of the study. It is something to note for the future.

It was a worthwhile exercise. I appreciate that I must drill deeper to understand more but it is a first step.

See grid below:

DURATION**SPEED****PACE**

| 0:00 | 1:01 | 2:01 | 3:01 | 4:01 |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Duration | Pace | Speed | Speed | Pace |
| <p>Single Note Exploration</p> <p>Bottom note Top note Explore</p> <p>Change Duration</p> <p>Use Sequence</p> <p>Duration also includes walking from one end of the piano to the other</p> <p>Contrast the duration by having long and short notes</p> | <p>Focus on the black notes in groups rather than individual notes</p> <p>Use knuckles to press down on keys</p> <p>Slow down at the end of the section</p> | <p>Tension & Release</p> <p>(impulse impact) Explore the keyboard</p> <p>Use different actions with hands and elbows to make sounds on the piano</p> | <p>Use the strings inside the piano with the tips of your fingers</p> <p>Play the length of the strings a number of times to show a slow pace</p> <p>Use the palms of your hand to pat the strings in fast succession to quicken the pace and create a crescendo</p> | <p>Approach the piano with attack</p> <p>Use your knuckles to hit only the white keys this time using both hands. Flip over your hands so that you are making sound using both sides of your hands.</p> <p>Make the sound sustain and keep moving outward with the movement to the furthest keys on the keyboard.</p> <p>Squat while doing these movements</p> |
| 1:00 | 2:00 | 3:00 | 4:00 | 5:06 |

Appendix 26 Fourth Elective ‘Work in Progress’ April 2018

PROCESS

Developments in my Practice as Composer

The main purpose of my Elective on composition was to examine potential developments in my practice as a composer with the hope to ‘ignite’ my creative practice in a new way and that it might act as a springboard towards my first performance in November 2018. The result of the Elective was presented at a lunchtime concert in UL at The Irish World Academy.



I began the process in January 2018. I used rehearsal rooms at IWA at weekends in an effort to find new ‘sounds’ to move away from the previous boundaries of my compositional style. At first my efforts seemed futile as I tried to create new sounds, motifs and rhythms on the keyboard. The problem was that ‘I reverted to type’ with the same melodic structures and ideas that I naturally gravitate towards when beginning to express my musical ideas. I spent hours and hours blending different musical ideas that I discarded almost as instantly as I had thought of them. Sometimes on the creative journey, the ‘camino’ is arduous and often futile with no signs of inspiration. In Pollack’s biography ‘The life & Work of an Uncommon Man’ (1999) he quotes Aaron Copland

‘Somehow, suddenly, a musical idea occurs to you; either a whole phrase, or three notes, or a series of chords, something that seems pregnant with possibilities for development. Once you have the kinds of ideas that fascinate you, you're no longer in a position to decide the nature of the animal. It's going to take its essence from the musical ideas that occur to you....Some musical ideas are too short, they don't seem long enough to carry you through ten minutes of music, so you have to start searching about for other ideas; contrasting ones that seem to fit with the original ones.’

I needed to find an idea that fascinated me. At the end of February 2018 while it was snowing and everything came to a standstill I sat at the piano at home for a long time and I used my right hand percussively to hit the underside of the keyboard while holding down the sostenuto pedal. I listened for a long time at the sound of the harmonics from the piano strings. It was rich and full of incidental vibrations and harmonics that disappeared very slowly and lingered for a long time. I did it again and then used my left hand to create a percussive sound on the side of the frame of the piano; then on top near in front of the music stand. Each sound had its own life and wherever I chose to hit the body of the piano the harmonic sounds shifted noticeably and certain notes rang out in the discordant reverberation of sounds which were mellifluous to my ear. I was fascinated.

I took the front part of the piano off completely and opened the lid fully. I explored the inside and realised there is a wealth of sound possibilities. I knew that others had used the strings on a piano both for sound and percussion but I wanted to do it in an original way which is my response to the sounds, noises and rhythms which were beginning to form part of my new exploration.

Back in UL in the IWA, weeks later, two things happened which made a significant difference to this experiment. I wanted to record some of my ideas so I used an Ipad and was able to place it delicately inside the grand piano, hear the result and assess whether this was a worthwhile experiment. When I played it back I liked some of the ideas. Then I noticed that there were two small but substantial speakers beside the piano and there was an input which would fit into the Ipad. Once I began to play back with the amplified sounds I could hear that some of the fainter sounds were being picked up by the amplification and also some sounds that I hadn't noticed without the speakers. In that session many ideas began to flow with ease and I recorded all of them.

At this point I was eager to play them for Oscar Mascarenas because in the initial brief we had set out to use piano and vocal sounds as part of the experiment where I would be responsible for the fixed media and piano part and Oscar would use his voice as the second

instrument. I played some of the samples I had recorded and we discussed them. Over many months we had spoken about all the types of collaboration which can take place especially what constitutes an interdisciplinary process as part of my research and transferred this onto how we would work as two composers and musicians in an intradisciplinary context. We decided to develop two particular ideas from the batch of sound motifs I had prepared – one piece because it formed a rhythmic continuum and the other because it showed some very interesting sounds emanating from the high octave strings. I went away and developed the two elements to form two contrasting pieces which lasted approximately four minutes each to be ready for a rehearsal on April 9th.

On April 4th 2018 Oscar Mascarenas and Steve Boyland performed new work and discussed their creative process. The title ‘Harvesting Echoes: Composing Through Voice’ demonstrated a unique vocal range, sound and style for vocal composition. An experimental work that chose words as an essential element of exploration it captures sounds and expresses them in an artistic exchange that rises and falls between the two voices. My initial impression was that the artists are very experienced at performing together. In speaking to Steve Boyland after the seminar he said that it was early on in their musical collaboration that he and Mascarenas had much in common in their musical language. He went on to say that for the most part when they rehearsed that ideas come to the surface very quickly and he said that this was the case with ‘Harvesting Echoes’. Both finding inspiration from the work of other artists Boyland said that one of the interesting features is that he and Mascarenas come from different worlds of music – Mascarenas is classically trained with an expertise in chant while Boyland found himself immersed in jazz in an UK university. Boyland said that in his estimation that improvisation in the type of vocal work he is drawn to stems from his experience with jazz. He went on to say that because both vocal artists were coming from different backgrounds that this enriched the collaboration and the musical language they found themselves exploring.

Noting that there was such a strength in communication between Boyland and Mascarenas I wanted to take that as the measure of how our piano and vocal experiment would be framed.

On April 9th we had our first rehearsal. I made a fixed recording of some of the piano rhythms and sounds and edited them on LOGIC. That in itself was a learning curve for me. We began the rehearsal and we listened to the fixed media of the first slow moving piece. Then we began to add vocal sounds and live piano sounds to the fixed score. Little by little I could tell that the elements were coming together and the overall sound was very

interesting. The sound engineer was also supportive of both Oscar and myself in consolidating the soundscape we wanted to create. By the time we were rehearsing the second faster piece we were definitely in 'a groove' where the whole piece was opening up and the amplified sounds in the theatre were creating not only a very interesting and unique set of sounds but also a sense of drama which gave the music an energy and tension which was exciting. At the end of the rehearsal we discussed the length of the pieces and decided that both pieces should be 8 to 10 minutes long because there was not enough time to expand some of the ideas in such a short work. This I did and at the next rehearsal before the recital on April 19th we engaged intensely with the score and improvised with some of the musical ideas. My overall impression during the live performance is that the more engaged we were in the performance the more creative was the output. The vocal sounds were extraordinary and the combination of the fixed media, live piano and vocal lines was original.

After the first piece I introduced the two works and remarked that a lot of the sounds I produced in and on the piano are natural and not manipulated or synthetic sounds which I prefer. I found that sometimes these sounds appeared in the ordinary and everyday sounds that occur but that what made them different was that I had collected them into a creative work and in that regard they had been transformed and were now extraordinary. I believe that the voice which also produces natural sounds is for the most part attractive to the ear and the combination of the piano and voice used in this way was a constructive and memorable experience in my search to 'ignite' my practice.

Appendix 27 DISCOURSE Meeting with Mary Wycherley January 2019

Towards a second performance

Meeting with Mary Wycherly: Choreographer

One day in January 2019 I spent exchanging ideas about why we create and how we create artistic work. It was a very useful introduction to an on-going discourse with Mary Wycherley, choreographer and film-maker. Mary explained that over the past number of years she was interested in embodied knowledge and that as a dancer/choreographer this was pertinent to her thought process when she set out to create new work. She also said that she had come to question why she danced in a certain way that for her certain types of movement and shapes seemed stylised and sometimes limiting. She explained that she explored how movement can be broken down into different parts where the launch of a sequence in movement and all the parts of the movement are equally as important to her creative process as how the movement cadences. By focusing on these other parts of the movement Mary is expanding the language of her movement in a new and innovative way. She also said that she is very interested in movement and expression of movement that exists outside the current language of contemporary dance – sometimes idiosyncratic hand gestures or elements that interrupt and disrupt our understanding and expectations of where a series of movements should arrive forms part of Mary's reflections on her own choreography and process. We listened to the piece created for the First Performance (Steve & Eugene). Mary commented on the depth of the work and in particular how it shifted from sounds that were bold and dramatic to moments when there was a delicacy and sense of something simple but detailed and which drew the listener in. She described it as being on a journey which was a comment made in the Q&A after the live performance.

In the afternoon we decided to explore the dance and music in some 'warm up' moments together. It was clear that during the session that we were periodically shifting from being independent in our creative process to being aligned and responsive in performance to nuances in the sound and the movement. Eugene made the point that the movement was at times slow moving so he could ponder on the detail of the movement. We both agreed that in order to make the improvisation useful and to ensure that it worked we needed to avoid a 'call and response' from which she can draw her inspiration to create. This means that when she improvised in dance it is coherent and she explained that concepts like'

interruption' and 'up and down' (Appendix 25, p. 2) are useful in adopting points of shared interest from which we can work together. We agreed that a single improvised piece for 40 minutes could become 'rambling and dilute the outcome'. We proposed that we should provide a number of short improvisations and this might be worthwhile in terms of the research i.e. to gather a variety of perspectives on collaboration. I was mindful of the fact, at this time, that interdisciplinarity is a key concept in this research and by introducing another discipline into the process would be a significant step in terms of the process, observing how the collaboration unfolds with the introduction of another discipline into the collaborative space.

THE SPACE

Mary, Steve and I met to explore ideas for the second performance and a poetic opening was made by Steve when he set about to announce that the appointment by Eugene, Mary & Steve to arrive in the space at an appointed time is a 'process of consecration' and by being there we have already started 'to make'. There is an anticipation of what is going to happen or what might happen. I made the observation that our artistic conversation is almost in a pre-disciplinary space because we come to the space not wanting to express ourselves initially as choreographer, voice artists or composers but to find the common ground to express something meaningful in the creative process before that identity ever comes into being. And so the question arises from Steve – 'What is it I'm engaged in?' Questioning outside of the discipline means that questioning is not about referencing the disciplines but is a broader questioning and Mary said that it is a philosophical questioning, in a way, that precedes the later questions on how to make a piece.

What's underpinning the fact is that the three of us are in the space irrespective of what we do outside or what type of expertise we have acquired as artists. Usually, where the initial conversations gravitate is towards disciplinary analysis and concepts and Mary said that it is to pare the discourse away from the role of disciplines and concepts especially with people who have different expertise from other disciplines that is vital for new ideas to emerge. The expertise can get in the way of finding something. She described it as a base line in the space where artists in a room come together to seek out that space where the fertile ground is and upon finding and entering that space it is possible to build on a concept or idea or share our knowledge within the context of different disciplines at work together. These images of inhabiting space express the steps towards nurturing and making the environment for a piece.

In terms of space Mary asks the question – ‘How am I warming up in the studio?’. It is much more than the preparing of the body. The warm up is the preparation for performing and over the past number of years this has formed part of her thinking and is part of the whole process of her work. In terms of ‘the making’, ‘the preparation for the performance’ and ‘the performing’ these different stages shift the question towards what is important and what is necessary? There is a type of finding/exploration and preparation in the warm up and we arrive in a space, taking the space in and listening and finding have to take place in order to develop the creative process. It’s different each day you enter the studio so the focus each time is stepping into the physical space to find a new creative ‘space’ with a new sense of exploration in mind.

That desire to finding allows ‘openness to sing’ so what Mary is discovering in the warm up is what she really feels is only necessary. That folds into whatever process she’s going into that day whether to prepare or to perform. Stepping into the space where something is going to happen is really important and for Mary it is getting clearer and clearer in her exploration as an artist what is necessary when you enter the space and where you make yourself available and ready for something to happen. If it is not necessary it doesn’t belong and needs to be discarded and the decision to know what is not necessary is also an important to know.

Steve’s ideas about space resonate with Mary’s in this moment of the conversation and he adds that in his experience formal warm up exercises prior to singing in no way prepare him to enter into the performance in the same way that Mary’s physical warm up did not work for her either. Steve has long since abandoned those mechanical preparations as a voice artist and has become very interested in the metaphysics of performance and the metaphysics of being itself. As performers, why should we go into the space prepared, in effect, to do the same thing each time? It is a mechanical form of detached, almost abstract preparation that fails to prepare the performer. Space in this case is not only the physical place where the piece is performed but it is a metaphor for finding a new realm to inhabit where there is attention to those creative moments that we access in order to allow a piece to develop.

There is the space created by the interaction between the sound performers make which can be tonal or related to timbres or creating a sense of intensity. Steve speaks about reaching out into the space to visualise the sounds he makes and he ‘watches’ the sounds as they travel in space and how they can create different results. This visualising is part of

how he transitions and generates new ideas and he has a very profound awareness of this concept of space.

A very interesting discussion took place about transitioning in practice and performance. Mary said that we have multiple choices as to where movement and sound can go in transition and that this space belongs to a process of becoming. It is fascinating that artistic moments take form in space and then another transition signals something else is about to happen. If you are not in that space of transitioning in a mindful way the extent of new development and new ideas is a lost opportunity and true and authentic ideas won't emerge. It's a question of performance too as to how we inhabit performance particularly in improvisation. It has to do largely with our presence in the space and all of the things about who we are manifest themselves when we 'arrive' in the space. According to Mary when an artist inhabits the space the details of something creative takes off and where it goes has endless possibilities. Steve went on to say that sometimes he 'throws his voice out into the space' and a quality of sound might be suggested to him such as poignancy. In inhabiting that space he has been affected by the sound and moves that moment towards further enquiry until he has a sense that something has culminated or has been resolved and a transition needs to take place. The transition is the 'holding space' where the artist lingers to generate new material and when we stop transitioning, particularly in improvisation, then the conscious mind rushes in to fix the space with 'stuff' that this not a new idea and in this way the piece doesn't reach its full potential nor does it travel on. The burning question 'what is happening in an artistic collaborative process' is partly answered by understanding images of space. Steve described his creative process as making trajectories of sound where there are moments of interjection between one trajectory and another when there is more than one voice that might usefully be called a shared trajectory. Steve elaborates further saying that sometimes he is leading towards an intersection and that when it happens, whatever it is that takes place there's a sharing of some sort and the intersection is a development and playing out of something that becomes something other than the two trajectories that meet. It is difficult to describe these moments and name them because they are unique to each collaboration in terms of who is in the space but it is the potential of the colliding of these things that is of interest in the space. There is all of this potential in terms of the choices that are possible to make by the collaborators in the colliding moments of artistic expression and in the performance we can often visualise the arrival of an intersection coming between two disciplines and letting it rest in that space of becoming and then the choice to allow it to fall away and decay to give

access to something entirely different to follow on. This is the surprise and the joy of the unknowing environment in the framing of composition which is improvised. There is an ephemeral nature to this kind of performance, improvisation, where the images within the space harness the creative movements from one idea into the next which collide, intersect and then transition on to something new. These images of the process articulated as spaces in the interplay of performance assist in give poetic expression to the artistic process and they are continually in flux, iterated and re-iterated.

THE AUDIENCE

Mary suggested that in terms of improvisation there is the risk of becoming attached to what is prepared before and for a performance. She understands that different elements have to be fixed loosely because ideas/motifs/expressions of movement reoccur and the performance is about how we manage those things which come to the foreground in the performance especially since it is easy to over prepare where materials lose their improvisational and spontaneous quality. If we deal with too much of what is known then we lose the sense of risk in the moment of performing. When the risk element is gone then it closes down and the potential for the audience 'to find' in an environment when the audience should be constantly finding, is gone. What has become of great importance to Mary in her research is 'when I transfix completely with my own experience in a piece'. If not, there is no way in because there is no opportunity to bring her own experience into the piece. Otherwise, as an audience 'we are being told stuff' and art is not about the telling but the potential to find out something new about ourselves or the world in a shared enquiry. In a fixed performance the audience can sometimes feel they are being given 'facts' as opposed to opening up to finding something new for themselves. This relates back to the preparation for a piece and how the question of audience gets built into the early stages of preparation and the question of the relationship with the audience is carried through in the creative process. Steve said that within this project *The Second Performance* and discourse around it that we certainly have a desire to include the possibility of questioning relationships with audience as was the case with the first performance. Dispensing with the seating system, for example, is changing the configuration of the space and this and other questions relating to audience need to be answered to bring the piece forward. All of these choices and elements that get reasonably fixed are containers which hold the freedoms you need to find as a performer. If they're not there in a very clear way then it's problematic. These are loosely fixed ideas which

become the springboard for improvising and anchor the performers in a way that paradoxically opens up a space for much richer improvisation. But it is not only the literal understanding of where the audience is in relation to the performers but also the intention of the performers to communicate the vision of the piece and this can be given by way of sounding and music that responds to the concepts being explored. For example, the concept of 'becoming' which has been a steadfast concept in the early stages of the discourse for The Second Performance has manifest itself in creative thoughts about using small cells and partial motifs that arrive and then disappear, that move towards a crescendo but fall away as easily and iterate and reiterate what is expounded in the poetic texts and the movement which create visuals and images of 'becoming' in a dramatic flow. At least that is the aim at this point in the exploration and all is in function of bringing the audience into this experience so that they too can have an intense moment of 'becoming' shared by both performers and audience. Not is not what the audience expects but it offers them something more.

In terms of audience and space the idea of interrupting their expectations is a vital question and how far this can be pushed and what are the values of completely interrupting the space are key questions in the process. As artists/performers we are in a position to do what the audience cannot do - choose to take the audience with us on the same journey or allow the audience to go on a parallel or personal journey. If the artists' vision for a piece is to 'find' something new and the desire is that the audience are allowed into that space as well then the lines between audience and performer are somehow blurred and boundaries are crossed. Are the audience part of the performance and are the performers also part of the audience? The detached, conventional and directional approach where audience are spectators relates to not only how the space is physically structured but also about how the artists perceive their role in the environment. The audience are the recipients of what we create and as such play a vital role in the outcomes.

THE PERFORMANCE

Much of the focus in dance work is on delivery and artists have become skilled in all forms of delivery and production to serve an Arts Council format of engagement with artists. Mary has often asked herself and her fellow artists if there is such a focus on delivery does this mean that creative practice in dance is dead? Her main reflections over the past number of years is to focus on what are the broader questions we are asking outside the

concept and the production? If process and performance are repetitious without creative practice being drilled into we're losing ground in terms of what dance is saying or potentially could say. Pre-disciplinary conversations around creative process leads to impulses to create work through a particular medium but the essential question is what lies behind the medium of expression. Mary & Eugene had spoken in an earlier conversation about the fact that Mary stopped performing because she recognised that there was no grounded understanding of what she was doing nor why she was moving around a stage in performance. She knew she had to continue to pursue the questions she needed to ask as an artist and decided to use film as a medium to explore her dance without actually performing live. Performance wasn't eliciting answers and it was possible through film to get close to the detail of her dance movement to examine details of movement which are very interesting and the camera allowed Mary to carry on exploring her work. This process lasted over a 10 year period but 4 years ago Mary decided she wanted to reinvestigate what it means to be a performer and in so doing began to rediscover why she performed and to know its value has become a fascinating journey for her. Steve said that questions within the process are about authenticity – when we strip everything back what can I say and what do I feel moved to say? Steve elaborates saying that the act of performing is also about making relationships with the audience and what kind of experiences we want to cultivate and share with other artists and the audience. It is a shared moment in the creative dynamic which begs the questions as to how to articulate what is happening? He also said that the senses are acutely developed as receptors, as interpreters of what can come next in the improvising space. There is a transitional moment that carries with it suggestions about what the rest of the journey might consist of and that forms part of the process. However, it is also about the motivation to continue to work like this and why, when we collaborate, do we want to create art with other people? His perception is that what other people bring something he doesn't possess, or sees things he doesn't see or who sound in a way that he doesn't sound. The differences form the initial attraction in the enquiry which exists at two levels: firstly, there is the excitement of the richness of collaborative enquiry and secondly, where something happens that is different to working on your own which Steve describes as 'intense suggestion' which is impossible when working on your own. In collaboration something that can't be legislated for is how the artist reacts in the moment and what might result in the organic moments of an improvised performance.

It is essential to hold the vision for the performance in the experience of the performance when improvising. The artist constructs an environment for the creative journey to take places in space and time and the environment is created through the choices made by the artist/artists but the question in terms of audience is how do I make the best choices so that I can facilitate everyone's experience, that is, the audience's as well as the performers? This is the challenge of the space because the audience often come with the expectation of being given some meaning, that there is some meaning inherent and that as artists/performers you have defined meaning for the audience in terms of the piece. In the First Performance Steve and I introduced some different performance elements. When the piece started there was a level of uncertainty created for the audience because Steve was already seated in the space when the audience arrived and I didn't enter the space until five minutes into the programme. The only other element in the opening section was a fixed recording playing alongside the sounds Steve was creating. The audience were unsure and therefore spent time processing this. However, the theatre space was conventional and there was a traditional sense of seated audience facing a performance on stage. We expressed in our engagement for the Second Performance that it would be interesting to have a more flexible space in the theatre so that we develop an acute understanding of what kind of experience we want to make now by playing with the space. Steve suggested bringing the sound through the audience would enable the audience to experience being very close to the voice and the idea of being closer and not separated from the audience has awoken some new ideas about the form and expression of the Second Performance. Playing with audience expectation and deepening our understanding of the role of the artist to arrive at what is necessary in this piece has influenced how the process is being played out.

The ephemeral in performance (at least in dance) is an illusion because it arrives into the space as a performance space and it disappears. Mary stressed that it never feels like it is ephemeral thinking of it as a performer because it has gone into a store – it is embodied and has become part of the information that's available in the performance of the piece and whatever the vision is for the experience. That is so essential to hold in the process of improvising. The artist has constructed the situation and has made an environment that is going to open up the journey and the experience of the artist through the vision of the piece. The question Mary has asked is 'how do I make the best choices to facilitate everyone's experience and not just my own in the performance?'

Ephemerality is challenged because it's not that it disappears because it has gone in somewhere and then folds into the information that the performer holds which doesn't disappear even if it appears to be gone. The artist is not holding this information to repeat it literally but it becomes part of the information available to the artist when improvising in performance. Steve described it as traces that are left when something has taken place. And the audience are also left with traces of the performance through memory, emotion, sense of processing a new environment. Steve also pointed out that there's an emotion that comes with the performance as well and it allows us to know or sense 'how we can move ourselves into that place again, in general terms'. That emotional context is also available to the audience in some way because the impact of text and sound in the First Performance had a profound affect on some of the audience participants.

There is a timeframe also in how we hold the vision of the piece as performers/collaborators from beginning to end. The challenge in improvisation is – how do we process the information as it is unfolding in improvisation so that we can construct a timeline? There is a crafting that is required to take place of what has emerged in relationship to what will emerge so that over time the vision of the experience that has been set up does something by the end.

It is a question of structure – how we deal with materials, how we deal with our imagination, how these things fold into one another in the context of the piece. For Mary this is a key point to observe that because ultimately in improvisation the collaborating artists are dealing with things that can arise that have to be managed in the moment. And as improvising artists do we allow the openness and the unfixing remain and make sure that what we have set out to construct is authentically true to the experience and the vision of the piece? They are interesting places to reflect on because sometimes they collide and the thinking of the piece or what the structure of what the piece is collides with the capacity to listen and to be able to generate new material by listening.

According to Steve, there are two seemingly discrete processes at work and they come together when we are successful. The first is about the compositional nature of effective improvisation. There is too little acknowledgement of the essentially compositional nature of improvisation. For certain artists' improvising is a certain type of randomness but we know that there is more to the compositional nature. Secondly, composition is also narrative. We as human beings are hard wired towards storytelling and we like things that make sense. In those moments of live improvisation we are editing, reconfiguring and making narrative whilst still remaining always in the moment. Therefore, something new

and unexpected might emerge but what we know is that we haven't started out with a fixed narrative structure nor should we. Steve describes the vision as a 'broad intention' but not a 'fixed goal' and in that regard we don't know where the piece is going to end – that's the beauty of it and that's why improvising remains live and exciting for us as performers and hopefully also for the audience.

All the way through the discourse for this project we are responding to what is emerging and we have to keep a firm but light hand on the tiller according to Steve. In an improvised work we can accept that something we have legislated for has just happened and we are starting to get a sense of where this might be going. What are the new possibilities? When making new work Steve says that he is conscious of the architecture and the structure as it moves along.

CAPTURING THE EXPERIENCE

Eugene introduced the idea of intuition saying that without thinking in the moment you are able to process the information using sensory connections, a relational approach to what is going on in the process. It is not an exact interplay and sometimes as Steve pointed out we can give off the impression that the work is effortless but sometimes it's not easy or comfortable in performance. Performances are not equivalent to the repertoire based expectations from audiences where the performance is 'note perfect'. Mary echoed this thought referring to Rosalind Crisp, a choreographer with whom Mary has worked. Crisp has worked in the area of improvised choreography and she talks about her transition from working using contemporary dance and choreography to improvisation. The changes in her practice arose because she was fed up with constantly trying to make the rehearsal 'right' before a performance because ultimately when you are in rehearsal you are feeding the narrative of working towards getting it right and Crisp resisted this. Mary said that this approach is absurd when you think about it. Steve added that there would be little difference with those slight recalibrations in movement that are achieved for the overall performance. The challenge is that we carry with us a notion that something needs to be complete and that it needs to be perfect. It never happens.

The environment/world constructed in collaboration is one that unfolds in relation to the decisions we make about who is involved in the piece, how the piece is set up, where the audience might sit. All of these elements must fit into the overall potential of the experience.

All of this leads to questions about moving in the space, sculpture of other disciplines and what that brings especially as these questions become conversations about interdisciplinarity.

Appendix 28 Audience member written impression (Declan) September 26th 2020

Observations after attending performance of Eugene Murphy's – Flux

Declan - September 2020

My experience of the piece at the time:

Beginning

The beginning of the piece felt stark and not quite engaging. The imagery (projection) used was non-specific and the music equally so.

In retrospect the beginning had to be like this and it took courage and belief in the performance. This belief aspect was important as the audience depended upon it to engage having not being presented with conventional musical or imagery storyline.

On a performance level this did however ask the question of the audience as to what this was to be about.

This is probably a key observation as in my opinion the experience of the piece was as much about the mind and life experience of each audience member as it was about listening/attending the performance itself. So the piece was experienced by the audience passively and actively in at least equal measure in my opinion and perhaps even with a bias towards actively but without the audience member being very aware of this at the time.

This was confirmed for me in hearing various people's comments and reactions immediately after the performance and I noted it particularly, as I had experienced the same myself.

Middle

The middle section , cannot be described as having any boundary from the beginning and flowed seamlessly from the beginning as experienced by the audience.

Various possibly musical themes and possible musical passages and possible images and sound scapes were introduced which brought the mind of the audience further and teased the 'listener' into attaching to various notes or images, engaging the audience further, raising an expectation in the listener for the familiar which appeared to arrive and yet the piece always floated somewhere else.

This left the audience with impressions of the familiar but remarkably, my observation immediately after was that each audience member appeared to experience this 'familiarity' differently from each other. It appeared that each audience member was as much influenced by their own past experiences as by what they were hearing. The piece facilitated this.

This was the overriding impression of the writer from talking with others immediately after the performance.

One audience member described hearing eastern influence. For that audience member substantial parts of the piece sounded like this.

While I could identify the notes that might have suggested this, it really wasn't there in the music or imagery. For me it was clearly the past experience of this person coming to the fore for them.

Ending period

The entire ending period of the piece in my opinion and experience brought an experience of meditation. It wasn't contemplation but beyond that ...meditative.

The entire structure/flow of the piece appeared in hindsight to facilitate this. Again, my observation in talking with others after the piece confirmed for me that many had experienced this although perhaps somewhat unaware and not naming it. Every person I spoke with seemed to have their own interpretation and feelings on what they experienced and to how the piece sounded or looked. The only commonality between them appeared to be that they had experienced something in a similar way to each but the experience was most definitely different for each.

At the Time and also in the Period since:

Audience type – comment – And thoughts on evolving for Public performance.

The audience was receptive and wanted to be there. I wondered how a piece like this would travel to public performance where an audience may be very mixed and arriving with very mixed approaches while perhaps being less receptive to an experience.

I speculated that a longer performance keeping the essence of the piece intact while interspersing with actual melodies or themes might be one way of bring it to a wide audience.

Beckett

I've thought many times since that the nearest equivalent to the experience of the performance might be a Beckett play where the subject and form is so sparse that the participation of the minds of the audience member becomes paramount and unavoidable for the audience.

The piece goes beyond these play's format as the Flux appeared to have substantial free form periods and so the audience are not even given a subject or theme to speculate on. In essence each audience member is given the opportunity to experience something of themselves and to hear it in performance and this was my understanding of what I heard from them in conversation afterwards.

The piece appeared to create a landscape unique to each audience member. In achieving thisthis piece was high art!

Appendix 29 Audience member written impression (David) June 2019

David: Impression after the second performance

When you look at the titles of the two performances you get subtle hints as to what may be coming up, perhaps unintentionally. Because at the performance of the 15th November – ‘Beginnings in the Dark’, I was completely in the dark as to what to expect, and it was the beginning of a very particular adventure. I knew it was an improvisation performance, and I have heard some interesting contemporary music and singing, but I was initially tempted to laugh, as it was very original the way Steve used his voice as an instrument. But I wised up quickly enough, especially as Steve’s voice and then Eugene’s ‘playing’ expressed an amazing unity of thought and life, and began to create a ‘space’. And I use this word in a very specific way. I mean that they created, seemingly ‘ex nihilo’, and without a defined structure, a ‘space’ where each one of us could be totally ourselves, totally free. And they did it by knowingly putting aside their egos (as they explained later). It was not by accident. In a sense the ‘space’ had been carefully ‘prepared’ by all the conversations between Steve, Eugene and Oscar beforehand. And, on this basis, their ability to risk everything in front of others, and to trust each other so completely, led to something quite new, that they did not have total control over. Both because it was a real life dialogue going on between the two, and because we were ‘invited’ by their openness to participate in this very intimate dialogue. In fact our presence there became a silent participation in a multi-faceted dialogue which became a very spiritual moment.

And in this open space I found myself reflecting on the day I had just spent, in the morning with an elderly and very dear Aunt of mine in Adare, and in the afternoon with a former Abbot of Glenstal Abbey (who had been my headmaster when I was there at school) in a nursing home in Newport nearby. These are two people very dear to me, and the ‘space’ Steve and Eugene created gave me the chance to celebrate them and my relationship with each one. It helped me to see these relationships for what they really are for me.

The performance on the 31st May – ‘Flux: 5 Iterations of Becoming’ - was, on the other hand, a true ‘becoming’ – so, more than a ‘beginning’. It was on a bigger canvas in all senses. The addition of Mary Wycherley’s subtle movements and images on the screens gave us several added dimensions. It all became more incarnated – the physical/visual was added to the auditory, even though Eugene’s and Steve’s physical presences had been vital to ‘Beginnings in the Dark’, and were so again in ‘Flux’. And this time I was happily assaulted by the creation of more than a ‘space’, perhaps a ‘small world’, where again though I could

be completely myself and totally free. And again I was sent in the direction of my day just lived up to then, where, above all, I found myself rejoicing in a particular conversation I had had on the phone for half an hour with one of my dearest friends, sharing a challenge/suffering that is still going on, but which unites us even stronger than before. And then I reflected on the people in the room with me several of whom are very close to me, and who again I found myself rejoicing in their presence and our relationships. In fact as I explained to Steve afterwards, the whole performance was like a meditation, which I did not want to end. And yet it was reality again, so I had no problem when it finished, as I could continue the reality with Steve, Eugene, Oscar, Mary and others there as we shared our impressions afterwards. Mary's images of the bare tree branches with ragged pieces of cloth attached brought to my mind Tibetan prayer flags hanging on trees. While in fact her original idea for these was as a piece about sustainability of the planet, which put another layer onto my thinking/experience, again of a more incarnate nature.

Ultimately the two performances were unlike many other musical experiences I have had, where quite often I have had the chance to escape from reality. Here instead I was given a chance to investigate and celebrate reality, I was faced with it, in a full and beautiful way. And Steve and Oscar confirmed that with me as we talked afterwards. Also for them it was 'reality' – not an escape from it. In particular Steve recounted how he wrote the text for 'Flux' after the death of his father, and so it had a deep suffering behind it. I had the impression in fact that 'Flux' was on a much grander scale than 'Beginnings', more like a Greek tragedy. Oscar referred to the fact that he felt that the day before 'Flux' when they were 'practicing', if he had to give the mood and tone a colour, it was 'Blue'. While on the night itself he felt the right colour was 'Black'. And Steve referred to the moment when he was voicing and he looked around at everyone there and felt that they were reflecting back to him their own lives and experiences, with all their joys, struggles relationships etc. And I suspect the feeling of a Greek tragedy with all its depth and wisdom came from that unspoken communication of life between us all.

I experienced both performances as very profound moments of meditation, but lived/shared/incarnate meditation.

I'm convinced that the fact that the Eugene, Steve, Oscar and then Mary too, talked out a lot of their ideas and thoughts and feelings (and many other things?), meant that the creation of these relationships between them all were what mattered in the whole experience, and what continues to matter. Because that's what struck me in the two performances – relationships/dialogue/creating something together - and then because of that dialogical basis

my reflections always went to, and focused on, my own important relationships. Martin Buber's work on relationships came to mind for Steve, and I accorded it, that 'I-thou' reality when people really live in front of each other and for each other.

If I had to say which one I liked/enjoyed more, in one sense I'd say 'Beginnings', because it was the first one, so an initial magic was there. It's like your first real love, there's something particularly sweet about it, and you never forget it – that was so with 'Beginnings', also possibly for personal reasons of the day as a whole. But there was also an intimacy to it that was a bit unique, and so the immediate sharing was more open and profound.

'Flux' was more like theatre, a symphony – it was on a grander scale, and stronger and more universal, more incarnate. I also felt like it could be performed in front of a large public, if presented in the right way.

Two different beauties but with the common thread of the people and their lives and relationships as the focal point, the creation of a 'space' where we can live fully with the reality of who we are and who is dearest to us.

Ultimately, I have a deep sense of gratitude to Eugene and Cathy, Steve, Oscar and Mary (and everyone who participated), as the two nights were huge gifts.

Appendix 30 Audience member written impression (Henry) June 2019

HENRY: Impression of second performance

Yes Eugene, 11 days since that creative performance and I'm still buzzing! Where do I start I asked myself. If I'm still buzzing after 11 days, that experience transcends space & time! You'll probably be sorry for asking me for feedback, given the length & breadth of my soul! I'll try to be concise and also let my fingers do the typing.

It all began when I heard yours & Cathy's experience one evening in Clareville! Cathy's emptiness was the canvas for your creativity. I was so drawn into that experience you shared of the first performance, that I wanted to be part of it. I did feel a part of your first performance also because it was embellished by the experience of those present that evening in Clareville! When I got home that evening I told Trish all I heard about and she was convinced I was at the 1st performance!

When I got your invitation for the second performance, I was a bit intrigued by the title "Flux". My understanding of the word Flux was: "a chemical fluid, inserted into a core of the element, lead; that enables solder to flow into the smallest of crevices to assist the bonding of metal components." (The engineering background coming out in me). I was also drawn by the image of the eye, which to me; is the window to one's soul. What initially tickled my curiosity about the image of the eye though, is the fact that I am now a practicing dispensing optician!

At the pre-performance gathering, your absence was noted. The anticipation of something greater than all of us present, was about to happen! The fact that we mingled with introductions to new faces, and renewed acquaintances, and the void of your physical presence was filled by the presence of Cathy, some of your children's & siblings. The accent & introduction to the performance made by your tutor, gave an air of an internationally acclaimed performance! Although We were performing in Limerick, this was going to go beyond all borders!

On entering the intimate performance space, I felt obliged to be a co-author of what was to be performed. The intimacy of the seating arrangement on that stage gave me an awareness of participation. Black, was the backdrop! In my mind, black is the absence of color and light; and the absence of light to me, also signifies the silencing of my soul! so the predisposition of my soul to perform was complete. To perform in You!

The rhythmic sound of your footsteps, entering our stage gave a sense of an innocent lamb going to a slaughter unaware of what the future holds. Sitting at the first piano and then moving on to another gave a sense of disarray. The entrance of the vocal artist wasn't as dramatic and neither were the images projected onto black backdrops which I found quite interesting right through the performance! The two illuminated Steinway's, although being the only illuminated objects in that space, were incidentals; without performers like you, meant nothing!

During the performance, I journeyed through various emotions, hard to put into words! Resonances of past hidden and innermost experiences were re visited! The vocal stimuli evoked sensations of physical pain and emotional grief and sorrow. The pain of letting go of loved ones, only to enter into a different sphere of rhythmic augmented sounds performed by you and the sound engineer which gave a sense of bliss and familiarity which resounded in the emotion a mother's tenderness and comfort! Looking around me was Padraic Gilligan's foot tapping the ground to the rhythm of your performance! We were suddenly drawn in as co-authors of this performance. The visual stimuli were subtle enough to create the backdrop of emotions I went through because they were projected on a colorless black backdrop and played an important role of the beauty of femininity as its intended role in nature! Your move to the second piano, had a purer sound, probably due to the proximity of where I was seated. What came more into relevance was the relationship between the performers: Echoes of one another's beauty and expertise!

After the performance, I had the sensation that time stood still during that recital. I felt privileged to be at it as a part of an audience and Co-author of an experience that transcends time & space as we know it!