CURRICULUM FOR EMERGENT IMPROVISATION

Solo Practice

Embodiment (working with the breath, sensation, body scan, body mapping),
Development of original movement vocabulary,
Awareness of spatial environment,
Focus on the particular.

Geography of the Body- mapping on the floor across the space, describing the
dimensional space of the body, working with negative space with a partner in
stillness, working with positive and negative space with a partner in motion.

Construction of an Original Movement Vocabulary:

a) Sourcing movement material through an external place building an
accumulation phrase, the deconstruction of an accumulation phrase by varying
the phrase by repetition, change of focus, change of body parts, levels, space,
and time.
b) Sourcing movement from an interior place through focus on sensation to
create an image that is investigated.
c) Sourcing movement material through the fluids systems, based on Bonnie
Bainbridge Cohen’s work in body-mind centering, adapted for emergent
improvisation; synovial, lymph, aterial, venal, interstitial, cerebro-spinal, cellular.
d) Sourcing movement material through energy states based on Simon
McBurney’s work for Theatre de Complicite adapted for emergent improvisation.
e) Sourcing movement from focus and attention, walking and stillness, utilizing
balance, utilizing phrasing that begins to develop an arc or trajectory.
f) Sourcing movement material from architecture, working with spatial pattern,
carving through space, space shifting the body, internal geometries
g) Sourcing movement material from developmental arcs, rhythms that transform.

Ensemble Practice

Understanding patterns and how they combine to make a form.
Patterns:
paths, waves, charges, washes, unison, repetition, canon, retrograde,
spill, main event/chorus

Forms:
The Complex Unison Form: Flocking, Simple Unison, Complex Unison
The Memory Form: Event, Remembered Present, Reconstructed Memory
The Trio Form (M. Ellenhorn): Initiator, Responder, Framer
Composing Structures:

There is a beginning and an end to a composing structure. A form can turn into a composing structure by utilizing selection and constraints about time, space, energy, and the development of movement material.

Complex Unison
Reconstructed Memory
Worlds – The beginning is central. All subsequent choices are a result of developing material from the initial statement.
Landscapes – The creation of images in the space that define an idea. An example is the “glacial erratic” (P. Schmitz) that creates a spatial pattern within an environment which leaves a remnant at the end
Fields – An encompassing visual area of similarity and integration with small, distinct, differentiating characteristics as in fields of grain, forests, dunes, etc.
Work in the Performance of Improvisation

Dancing Practice

developing solo movement vocabulary
sensory work
Peter’s four sensory layers:
interoceptors in the organs, exteroceptors in the skin
proprioceptors in our awareness of our bodies in space,
special senses (touch, smell, hearing, taste, vision) to explore the environment
moving from the breath

initiating from body parts
rhythm and musicality
phrasing and timing
deconstruction of phrasing
focus
spatial orientation and listening
fluid systems - textural shifts
levels of intensity - energy shifts
partnering and contact work
Peter’s mapping and landscape work
Penny’s visceral duets
Penny’s light touch ensemble
center
Terry’s merging of weight

Lisa’s work with the senses
Ellen’s techtonics-geographical mapping
Katie’s internal geometries

Emergent Forms

accumulation
shadowing
unison
repetition
waves and eddies
washes
paths
stillness
freeze and replace
solo / chorus
framing
charges

parallelism
the catalyst
interruptions
referencing
spatial landscape
narratives
diagrams

Fluids/Textures

1) synovial: rag doll
2) lymph: exact articulation & focus
3) arterial: expanding high energy
4) venal: swinging and rebound
5) interstitial: sensual and flowing
6) cerebro-spinal: moving from
7) cellular: approaching stillness
sudden changes: contrasts, counterpoints
retrograde
beginnings
endings
entrances and exits
Maureen's initiator, responder, framer
Katherine's middle child
Katherine's A to B form
Estelle's permission to start over

Composing Structures

Lisa Nelson's Tuning Score
Beginning, Development, Ending
Theme and Variation: AB, ABA, ABCBA, etc.
Structural settings: Anti-climax, stream of consciousness, etc. structures that support and do not impose
Penny's organic structuring: structures that emerge from inside
Peter's glacial erratic: an ensemble that leaves a remnant
Susan's World: solo initiated landscape into which people enter a frame
Sue Rees' landscapes: creating a specific environment into which dancers enter and make a piece
J.K.'s Fields: visual imagery which sets a landscape for certain structures
Collaborations with musicians, theater artists, visual artists and poets where structure emerges from the dialogue

Rules of Improvisation

Show up
Pay attention
Tell the truth
Don't get attached to the result

Katherine Ferrier from an old Buddhist text

Susan Sgorbati October 4, 2003
SOLO PRACTICE

Embodiment -
  Breathing
  Internal Geometries
  Touch / Gravity / Texture
  Eyes / Focus
  Sound / Silences / Rhythms (internal and external)

Physical Vocabulary -
  Balance
  Extension
  Detail
  Turns
  Falls
  Jumps
  Phrasing (simple and complex)

Spatial Environment -
  Levels
  Traveling
  Speed
  Frames
  Images
  Sound / Music
  Cognition (awareness of ensemble)

Focus on the Particular -
  Repetition
  Theme and Development
  Sequence
  Specificity / Selection
  Direction
EMERGENT SOLO

BEGINNING -
- The Particular (the vocabulary)
- The Definition (the phrasing)
- The Containment (the spatial frame)

DEVELOPMENT -
- Sequence
- Unfolding
- Exposure of Elements
- Life Span
- Direction - Search for Pattern
- Forms / Selection / Constraints

ENDING -
- Coherence
- Conclusion
- Resolution
- Emergence of Metatopology (new pattern or form)
ENSEMBLE FORMS

Flocking
Simple Unison
Complex Union

Event
Remembered Present
Reconstructed Memory

Main event / Chorus

Initiator / Responder / Frames

Paths - Waves, Charges, Washes

Spills

Retrogrades

Repetitions / Canons

New Forms to be Practiced:

Simulated Annealing (freeze and thaw, stillness and motion)
Border Crossings
Binaries
Distributed Nets
Wading Pools
Building Sets