



Improvisation as Intercultural Contact and Dialogue

IICSI-MUN Colloquium

Memorial University of Newfoundland

July 6-8, 2016

The International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation at Memorial University (IICSI MUN) invites proposals for papers, discussion panels, and interactive workshops to be presented at an international conference at the School of Music and the Research Centre for Music, Media and Place. The colloquium will take place from July 6 – 8 and will overlap with the International Sound Symposium festival of new music and sound (July 8 – 16) a biennial event that animates historic St. John's with concerts, installations, and happenings (such as the famous Harbour Symphonies) that explore creativity, sound, and the environment. Featuring workshops, panel discussions, keynote lectures, performances, and dialogues among researchers, artists, and audiences, the colloquium will promote a dynamic international exchange of cultural forms and knowledge.

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity states that “In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together.” Both *intercultural dialogue* (defined as “open and respectful exchange between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or world views”) and *intercultural contact zones* (by which we mean both real and imagined, collective and personalized spaces/times in which people from different cultural backgrounds may meet) are presented as processes for promoting peace, but they also carry the problematic resonance of power dynamics and mixed motives. For example, nation states are apt to “manage” diversity through multicultural policy, and an emphasis on interculturalism can mask the politics of refusal found in current debates about indigenous sovereignty. This colloquium will explore (and put critical pressure on) ways in which improvisation intersects with intercultural contact and dialogue. If successful improvisation depends on skills of deep listening, responsiveness, and code switching, how might it assist in developing meaningful intercultural contact and dialogue? Although we welcome topics from across the arts (e.g. music, dance, theatre) and from all academic disciplines, we are especially concerned to include the deep and specific cultural perspectives of ethnomusicology.

We will consider all possible approaches to this interdisciplinary topic, but especially encourage themes related to performance, education, social and political contexts, policy, and activism. What are the inherent power dynamics in both dialogue and contact zones? How might participants in intercultural processes respond to the needs of specific cultures, the pressures of nation states, of conflict, and of transnational economics? To what extent can improvisational practices promote intercultural contact and dialogue? What constitutes *effective* intercultural contact and dialogue (and who determines it)?

We are particularly interested in interdisciplinary work that speaks to both an academic audience and a general public. We also invite presenters to submit completed versions of their papers to our peer reviewed journal, *Critical Studies in Improvisation/Études critiques en improvisation* (www.criticalimprov.com) for consideration. Papers will be 30 minutes (20 minutes for delivery, 10 minutes for questions); workshops and panels will be given up to 60 minutes depending on the content. We also welcome proposals for telematic exchanges, especially ones that bring two or more remote sites into real-time contact with the St. John's colloquium audience.

**Please send 300 word (max) proposals and a short bio by February 15, 2016 to:
Dr. Ellen Waterman, Coordinator IICSI-MUN, ellenw@mun.ca.**

The International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI) is a partnered research institute established in 2013. The Institute's research team comprises 56 scholars from 19 different institutions. Funded for seven years by the SSHRC Partnership grant program, IICSI's partners include six academic institutions (University of Guelph, McGill University, Memorial University of Newfoundland, University of Regina, University of British Columbia, University of California - Santa Barbara), a foundation partner (Musagetes), and over 30 community-based organizations.

www.improvisationinstitute.ca

