

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: MUSICAL IMPROVISATION
AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

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Doctor of Musical Arts, 2012

Dissertation directed by: James Fry, Professor
School of Music

Musical improvisation combines technical proficiency and musical intuition. Due to its interactive nature, improvisation provides an avenue of communication among all art forms. This dissertation project explores the collaborative aspects of improvisation involving a musician, visual artist, a small group of dancers, and videographer.

Video footage from two separate recording sessions provided hours of visual materials which were studied and edited. The first session was a live performance recorded in front of a studio audience. The second session was a two-day collaboration between musician and dancers in a studio space. The process of editing and compiling images with audio—an important element in this project—presented many unforeseeable challenges and lessons.

This recorded dissertation is comprised of seven music videos that demonstrate my ability as an artist in collaboration with visual artist-professor Richard Klank, dancers David Yates, Jamie Garcia, Raha Behnam, Rachel Wolfe and Adrian Galvin, and video artist Nguyễn Nguyễn. Each video represents an individual creative process involving musical performance, studio lighting, sound recording, and video editing.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my family, students, former teachers, and collaborators from past and present.

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DISC ONE:

1. Musical improvisation with visual art

Elliott Hayes, piano and Richard Klank, artist

Nguyễn Nguyễn, videographer

*Recorded live at the Gildenhorn Recital Hall, May 15th 2011
University of Maryland, College Park*

DISC TWO:

1. Beethoven with mask

Elliott Hayes, Nord Stage

2. “Suiteness” Highlights Prelude

David Yates, Jamie Garcia, Raha Behnam, Rachel Wolfe, Adrian Galvin, Dancers

3. Fantasy

David Yates, Jamie Garcia, Raha Behnam, Rachel Wolfe, Adrian Galvin, Dancers

4. Planking (Raw Footage)

David Yates, Jamie Garcia, Raha Behnam, Rachel Wolfe, Adrian Galvin, Dancers

Nguyễn Nguyễn, videographer

*Recorded at the Dance Theater in the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center,
August 12th and 14th 2011*

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