

Improvisation as Relational Practice

Listening, Risk and
the Politics of Openness

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Grazer Impro Fest 2026

SAME EVENT

SWITZERLAND

GRAZ

—— microphone · screen · loudspeaker ——

Different places. Different listening positions.

OPENING

IMPROVISATION AS RELATIONAL PRACTICE

**What happens between people
when they create something together
in real time?**

not only sounds — relations

THREE MOVEMENTS

I. Orientation

II. Criteria

III. Care

MOVEMENT I

When Nothing is given in Advance

emergence · uncertainty · orientation

No score

No script

No prescribed genre

No predetermined form

We don't only hear music.

**We also hear training, habits, expectations and
confidence.**

THE FIRST SILENCE

**The absence of a score
does not automatically produce freedom.**

silence · uncertainty · different ways of entering

RELATIONAL ORIENTATION

PROPOSITION 01

**Orientation does not disappear.
It changes its source.**

emergent · situated · relational

TRANSITION

**Is everyone equally able
to influence what happens?**

MOVEMENT II

Freedom Is Not Innocent

freedom · power · criteria

OFFENE BÜHNE ZÜRICH



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OPENNESS

Everyone may participate

≠

**Everyone feels equally able
to participate**

POWER

**The absence of visible authority
does not mean the absence of power.**

Volume · Silence

CONVENTIONS

Openness → Style → Norm

What should freedom sound like?

ORTHODOXY

Orthodoxy of openness

how freedom should sound

Criteria



Visible
Negotiable
Open to revision

not no criteria — revisable criteria

PRACTICE

Listening Practice

attention · position · relation

I can offer directions for your attention,
but I cannot determine
what your experience will be.

WRITTEN RESONANCE

One sound
One shift in attention
One question

write a few words · no name needed

MOVEMENT III

Listening, Risk and Care

attention · exposure · responsibility

SHARED SITUATION

Shared structure

≠ Identical experience

We can organize conditions
without controlling what emerges.

PAULINE OLIVEROS

**Attention is focused and selective.
Awareness is broader and more open.**



Awareness

SELECTION

Listening always selects

**Attention changes
what becomes present**

ATTENTION

Foreground

Background

We cannot listen to everything
with the same degree of attention.

POSITION

**We never listen from nowhere.
We always listen from a position.**

Listening is situated.

RISK

**The same instruction
does not affect everyone
in the same way.**

uncertainty · exposure

CARE

**Care means creating conditions
in which uncertainty does not simply become
pressure or abandonment.**

RELATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Action → **Consequence**

**Listening
after acting.**

Intention is not enough.

An open situation ↓ needs to be sustained.

Risk without care can become abandonment.

Care without risk can become control.

CONCLUSION

I. ORIENTATION

changes its source

II. CRITERIA

visible · open to revision

III. OPENNESS

needs to be sustained

**Improvisation is a practice
of sustaining relations
under conditions of uncertainty.**

Responsibility becomes shared.



Thank you.

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