



INTERNATIONAL  
**INSTITUTE FOR**  
CRITICAL STUDIES IN  
**IMPROVISATION**

# Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium 2015

## Among the People: Arts, Improvisation, and Well-Being

September 16-18, 2015

*Call for Papers* – 2015 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), a groundbreaking organization with a commitment to fostering musicians' growth and to the development of new, serious, and creative musics. Importantly, as George Lewis notes, the group used its charter to lay out a set of nine purposes that “reflected serious engagement with social, cultural, and spiritual issues affecting black musicians and their community” (*A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music*).

In the spirit of these deep commitments to musical and cultural well-being, this colloquium asks: How might participation in musical improvisation be understood to affect the health – physical, mental, spiritual, and relational – of those who participate in listening to or creating it? An emerging field of exploration and scholarship investigates and asserts the positive effects of arts participation on individual and community well-being, yet many questions remain. How might we explain the ways in which people are affected by music-making, at neurological and physical levels, in terms of emotional and interpersonal wellness? And what about when that music is *improvised*? Are there ways in which the relatively unstructured and open nature of improvised jazz and other music enable and encourage wellness at the personal and group levels? How do improvisational practices resist the erosion of public spaces and the rise of the surveillance state? Can improvisational artists preserve their social and cultural mobility? And what about other forms of improvised creative practice, such as visual art, dance, and theatre? How might we conceptualize and explore the links between improvised creative practices and social, cultural, and environmental health, broadly conceived?

From the roots of improvised jazz as a means to resist, challenge, and survive brutal racism; to the longstanding relationship between folk musics and struggles for social justice; to the clinical practices of art and music therapists – arts and well-being have long been intertwined. At the 2015 Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium, a diverse group of artists, workers, activists, scholars, and other thinkers will come together to reflect upon these connections, and upon the questions above. We will engage in shared experiences and conversations with the intent of learning with and from each other.

The International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation, in partnership with the Guelph Jazz Festival and the University of Guelph, invites proposals for presentations at our annual three-day interdisciplinary and multi-genre conference. The colloquium will take place Sept 16-18 as part of the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Guelph Jazz Festival (Sept 16-20). Featuring panel discussions, debates, immersive experiences, and dialogues among researchers, artists, and audiences, the colloquium fosters a spirit of collaborative, boundary-defying inquiry and dialogue and an international exchange of cultural forms and knowledges.

We welcome proposals for paper presentations, panel or roundtable discussions, musical and other creative performances, and experiential offerings such as arts workshops and multi-media presentations. Please indicate the format of your contribution and any technical or other resources you require. We also invite participants to submit completed versions of their presentations to be considered for publication in our peer-reviewed journal, *Critical Studies in Improvisation/Etudes critiques en improvisation* ([www.criticalimprov.com](http://www.criticalimprov.com)).

*Please send 500 word proposals (for 15 minute delivery – alternate formats will also be considered) and a short bio (maximum 250 words) by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to: The Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium, c/o Dr. Elizabeth Jackson. e. jazzcoll@uoguelph.ca*



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