

Interview with Adaptive Use Musical Instruments Project by Mauricio Martinez

Transcribed by Tiffany McCormick

Pauline: This project began as a conversation between Leaf Miller and myself, Leaf is a long time friend. We had so many musical encounters over the years and she was talking to me in these encounters about the work she was doing at what was then called the Rehab Program in Poughkeepsie in her work as an Occupational Therapist and she was talking about how she wanted to help some of the children to perform in a drum class. So I got very interested, I knew that technically it would be possible to help, we just needed to figure out how to get that going and then I got a small grant from the Malcolm Morse Foundation for \$20,000.00 to begin this project. I assembled a team from students and faculty at RPI, Rensselaer Polytechnique Institute that is, and staff from the Deep Listening Institute and I asked Leaf to organize a visit to see if the students with the least possibility to move, the ones who were in most need, to solve that problem was a very creative adventure. How do you make it possible for people who can't move, or can hardly move, to participate in a drum class? This is a great problem. I brought the team to the rehab program, it's now Abilities First which is a great thing, it has changed its name. The team was hosted by Leaf at the school, she showed us all the different technology that they were using and then we saw sessions between the students and therapists, so we got an idea what the problems were. So the first thing that happened was one of my senior students at RPI did a little program, this was the prototype of the adaptive use of the software, and this program, the core, the seed of this software we've developed now, which it was a camera tracker so you could put a virtual marker on a virtual nose of the student and if the student moved its head, his or her head, passed the line, you'd get his drum sound, that was the beginning of it and there was a virtual keyboard so if you moved along the keyboard you would play a melody, a scalar melody. So that's the core, the seed, that's the way it began and it began as a team effort and the team is ever-increasing.

Leaf: After, because we've been doing this now, this is our third year, so I've noticed a lot of profound changes both in the kids and the general energy of the school and the school staff and there's the kind of the basic stuff where the kids are getting more movement, better attention, better focus, some of them better posture, better visual awareness, better processing of sensations, I mean they have to process the sensation of their making sounds but they're also in a group so they're processing visual, their processing the oratory, and they're just kind of generally processing what's going on and what's coming at them so there's been a real improvement there. Major therapeutic value, more movement, like I said, but also, as we've talked many times that these children, it may be the first time, or one of the first times, that they're actually able to participate in a group and be independent, and that's major. And also that we're creating a community and a new kind of community for them to be part of, to be in a cooperative community. I was talking with Jackie today and for a lot of these kids they're very isolated. This group, and the model of the drum circle, which is what the group is based on, there, everyone's input is important and also everybody, it's not just about them. Also I think when kids are used to having people do things for them, sometimes it can be very different when all of a sudden your hands are off and there they are and so that's also an adjustment they've had to make and the excitement of coming to the class is really palpable. There's a lot of excitement

cause it's a real opportunity and I want to say not only therapeutically but just for myself as both a therapist and also as a musician, and it's totally transformed who I am in all those ways this software.

Jackie: It's just exciting, like every week we come, there are kids who see Leaf and know it's drumming day and they get all excited and think right now is drumming but, you know, they have to wait an hour if we have to set up, and the excitement of the school and the community it's just, you know, like Leaf and I were talking earlier, it's the only place where you can walk in and you have people who can't walk and can't talk and the people who can talk and walk and whatever, but it's the only place where it's all evened out; it doesn't matter who you are, if you're staff or if you're a student, if you're a therapist, if you're just somebody walking off the street, we're all equal once that drumming circle starts, once we start to use that software, and it's because of the software that allows us all to be equal. I mean, I feel like I'm a peer of these people that I'm coming to work with and it's a community and we grow together and we have fun together, I mean what better "family" can you have? That's the family you want, the one you come and have fun with and that's what we do once a week, we come in and we have a good time and then we go home and can't wait till the next week, it's like it never comes fast enough, it's like the highlight of my week to be with these kids and it's amazing. Even when we did the open house, we had an open house, and parents were welcome and trustees were there and everything and everybody got involved, I mean everybody was playing the drums and you see these parents playing with their kids who normally wouldn't have the opportunity, and it's like a first chance. A lot of these parents don't get to see their child's first steps of their first words, but this is their first independent thing. We had a parent come in with a video camera one day and almost crying watching his daughter do this independently and that is only therapeutic for the child, it's therapeutic for Leaf and I, it's therapeutic for the family, the faculty, the staff, everybody, it's therapeutic for everybody, it's community-building for everyone.

Mauricio: And as what I understand you developed the software right, their responses to it were crucial to how it was developed, is that right? So, in a sense, it wasn't so much developed for them as with them and how important was that collaboration?

Pauline: This is key, it's very key to the project, that everyone's input is valued and is important, there was one senior student who observed and then came back with something that could be used and the important aspect of that, for me, is that it's not invasive in the sense that there's nothing attached to anybody and I think that's crucial so that it maintains the independence that the body has as much as possible, but the use of the software does not involve any attachment.

Sherrie: I think that's one of the most exciting things about it actually because this is not my field in any way, my experience with research is pretty isolating so this mode of research is quite exciting to me and I think that was one of the things I was reacting to was that Pauline, I'm learning a lot from Pauline, and from this project but you know this, a project like this could happen differently and the way that's it's working is very exciting to me because it's never done, it's never finished and I finally got that through my head, it's not like here's a thing we're going to study, it's like everybody, that's why I said everybody's a researcher in this project and that's the kids, that's everybody, because if somebody finds a new adaptation that this instrument needs to make, Pauline and her team and all the researchers, they got to figure out a way to do it and so

it absolutely is something where everybody could contribute, so I've been, this has really changed my thinking about research, about any kind of research.

Ellen: Remember when we went down to New York; Jill and Sherrie and I to visit Abilities First and meet Leaf and for the first time really see how this AUMI software worked? The big question we were asking ourselves was not 'should we be involved and supporting this project?' it was really exciting and clear that we should absolutely be supporting the development of this software, trying to get this out to people but we weren't sure what the research question was, how was the research was the question we asked, instead, it's kind of made a paradigm shift in how we're thinking about what constitutes research and it isn't just the idea of applied research where you try to make something good happen or even practice as research, it's really a fundamental notion of who's contributing to the discovery and when we saw one particular teenager, for me, when we saw one particular teenager work with Leaf, and I realized that she had shifted her approach when she was first in front of the software, warming up as it were, to improvising with you, that was the moment for me when I realized that there was a process of discovery that was going on with this particular teenager that was really important and was teaching us something. So I agree with you, it's creating a whole new world really.

Gillian: Well I'd first like to speak about when we first found out about the project and what got us down to New York. We were all members of the Gender and Body Group of ICASP and we had been floundering a little bit in terms of what we were going to do as a group and how could we find some focus for the research, and we had a lovely retreat near Montreal and spent a lot of time talking about that issue and two projects came out of that that were already underway and one of them was Pauline's. She said I have this project that I really care about deeply and I would love it if people joined in with this support, and she talked about it in much of the same way that you've heard her talk about it today and Leaf talk about it today and Jackie talk about it today and you can imagine how one would say okay.

Ellen: What's not to like?

Gillian: What can we do? We're on board and it didn't really have any sense of how we would get on board; I think that has been a questions for us all along is what do we, Pauline was saying earlier she's not really qualified for this work and boy, I have felt all along that I am not qualified for this work, but, and of course we do all bring things to the work and that's been an interesting thing to see emerge out of it, you can sort of shift how you think about the kind of learning you have acquired over your education and life experience and how you can in fact apply that in ways that might be valuable as they merge with other peoples' learning and experience and so, I guess I would agree, I hadn't really thought about that, I guess I would agree it has shifted how I think about research and about collaboration and I'm still not entirely sure how I'm going to contribute but I'm not going to stop. My background is literary studies so I've never been so directly involved with a project where you can see the impact right away and I'm not devaluing literary studies because I think literary studies are very valuable and can lead to change and the way we think about things that can have a direct impact on the way people live, but it's a more circuitous route perhaps and this is so direct and I love that about it, but I guess that's been part of it, what does a background in literary studies, literary analysis and maybe cultural studies and that kind of thing bring to this? I don't know how to do ethnography, I don't know how to do

participant observation, but I'm happy to learn these things and that's been really fun and valuable.

Sherrie: I mean, I think that, I'm a very interdisciplinary scholar, that's my background, I don't have a discipline, so instead of trying to fit what was the square in the circle or the circle in the square, I've tried to fit what I thought was the circle into a circle as different.

Gillian: There's a circle, and then there's circles.

Sherrie: So what is done has been very interesting and challenging to me in the best possible ways because it makes me think about the limitations of my inter-disciplinarity, I'm used to crossing certain kinds of boundaries but they're boundaries where I feel some kind of authority in, so it's kind of moving into places where I don't have authority which I didn't think, I mean I never thought I had it so, to be confronted with wow, I'm used to working in places where I feel like I know something and I think that I'm always like, I'm interdisciplinary, I don't, you know, I'm anti-disciplinary, whatever, but so this has really been a confrontation, but what I think, for me, it's also about improvisation because that's what, this is why it's teaching improvisatory approaches to research and to community-building because it's a kind of community where we don't come together because we all have the same background, we don't have all the same things in common, we don't even have all the same goals, and that's fine and that's necessary in this kind of work, and I think that's what's been exciting has been walking into a project without ever knowing how one fits and working on it.

Pauline: Improvisation is a central issue of this project and the software is designed for improvisation partly because I know that's the only way that we could solve a creative problem and what doesn't work is trying to impose a template on the students who are not able to respond to that template. What I think is the, that improvisation or the improvisatory portal which, I think of it as a portal, that once going through that portal, the student is free to explore and find, discover for themselves whatever they can and then, as it has, it has opened up so much for Leaf and Jackie and Paula and my colleagues here, that discovery and exploration is all the way around the full circle, also for the technologists, the programmers who have worked on this, and we're moving into a new level now, we had a bench mark event where there was a community event which Leaf organized at the school, Leaf and Jackie, a great part of the school participated in it and the therapists and teachers and parents for the first time understood the value of what was going on and I think it's important also for it to be known that Leaf was contributing her musicianship and organized a drum class for the school, which is outside her job, it was volunteer.

Leaf: No, no, it was part, but it wasn't OT, they did support me as a musician, but it wasn't part of my job as Occupational Therapist.

Pauline: They did support you as a musician. It's important, in this event that occurred, there was a confluence of interests where there was an understanding amongst all of the school staff that this was working, that it was doing something for the school, it was doing something for them, it was doing something for the students and all of that, and that understanding came to a focus right there, that event, and since then the therapists are now really wanting to learn how to

use the software and how it aids the parents and so on and this is a huge step, but it also makes the setting for us to work on the next level of the project which is to create a training program and a training manual to help others learn how to use the software.

Paula: I think it will expand it, I come into it not just as a choreographer, but as a movement analysis and a movement specialist and a movement therapist and I think I've had the same questions even though I've had this deep long movement background, I have a lot of the same questions about, well, where does my work fit in and how can my work support the project going forward? And I don't have all of those answers, but I feel that in the development of the training manual, in my ability to look at movement and discern what the themes are that are presenting and what's absent or what's present and to help tease out some of the possibilities, when I have that opportunity I also think that I look forward to being able to help the caregivers and the parents to understand what's possible and how they can look at movement and how they can support their child in finding more of what is possible. And I also see which is humbling, that the kids tell us what is possible and that is a beautiful thing. For example, today we had our workshop, it was startling to me that the minute the adults, abled, fully abled adults, stood behind the monitor, they immediately became very uni-dimensional and they got to be like this in their movement and it was interesting to me as a movement analysis to see that they went straight into dimensional movement and so I think helping adults of all abilities understand what is possible and what kind of vocabulary they can access and maybe what are some other doors they can walk through to make more of that movement available whether it's, regardless of the level of ability.

Pauline: Sherrie created a wonderful phrase that I love which is: Improvisation Across Abilities, I think that really says a lot so, whoever you are, wherever you are, or whenever you are, whatever your ability you can improvise, and you do, you have to.

Ellen: That even made me think back to your saying that a lot of us feel unqualified because we don't have extensive experience maybe working with children with disabilities or with the therapeutic end, but in some way we're all uniquely qualified just because we're human beings and the whole idea of the project, at its core, ICASP at its core, is thinking about the potential of improvisation to help us think about new ways of forming community and inclusiveness, democracy, non-hierarchical structures and one of the wonderful things about the AUMI Project is that it asks you to get over yourself, just show up.

Gillian: So much of that though has to do with Leaf, I think, I mean I think this software could be used inappropriately if you don't foster what you're talking about and it's amazing to watch Leaf work with these kids, I wish you could see her in action cause it's kinds hard to characterize, but she's so completely full of energy and moving around and with them and around them but not grabbing them and not moving them and then playing with them, playing music with them and playing playfully with them, they have such respect and fun.

Leaf: It is so much fun, but it's a challenge, I always say it's like doing a gig, I'm exhausted after. It's amazing and it's so funny about the staff because sometimes they're just playing the drums they forget about the kids, but it's really everybody is participating and I think that's really unique that drum circle. I always say there's no drum circle like this on the planet, and I

know there isn't, there really isn't, and I'm honoured to be part of it, really, that's what feeds me, there's not enough I could give because really I'm getting more than I'm giving and I'm giving a lot but I get so much, it's totally amazing.

Sherrie: I was going to say what Jackie does too, I've learned a lot watching Jackie, I got to see Jackie and Leaf working and Paula and the group and Jackie is amazing because she's so attentive without disrupting anything that's going on, it's like she can connect the, okay, picture the drum circle with the three laptops and then, of course everyone wants to use the laptops, and it's starting with the kids with the least mobility first and Jackie is organizing and getting people moving in and out, getting then set up really quickly which means setting their sounds, she's remembering what their preferred sounds are, remembering what their range of motion is, remembering what they did before, where to set the laptops, does it need to be up on top of something or down below? Everything without interrupting or breaking the attention of the participation, it's an incredible skill, it takes a long time to set up and I think, how do we teach people how to do that? I don't know.

Pauline: That brings me to the next level of our project, the technical development, and we have to take Jackie's know-how and automate it so that the software can remember the client, can remember the preferred settings and remember all of that, we need your input to program the programmers to do that kind of level of automation, also to measure from time to time, as they use the software, what their range of movement was, what their range of movement is now, anything new that comes up, this can all be programmed and so that we get an intelligent agent working in the software that can also create a data report for the therapists and also keep records in a database so that then there can be comparisons over time about how the student is progressing.

Gillian: I think the other really important thing will be in the training manual, how do we capture the spirit or the philosophy of how we think the software should be used so that improvisation does continue to be part of it and that kind of respect and interaction.

Ellen: But what is really distinctive and special about your approach to building this software, was that it should be based on an improvisational model and that's where I think, again, it will help this group work with you to make this manual, is that we're musicians and as musicians the way we think about improvisation is as a very fluid, intuitive and responsive form and it's the same qualities of listening and respect and responsiveness that underwrite musical improvisation in any situation, in any kind of listening.

Leaf: It's really interesting too because you usually have to get some kind of, usually improvisation comes after you've gained some kind of skill, I'm not even sure what that is, but here it's the starting point which really kind of flips that over and I just want to say that at Abilities First people have stepped up to the table, the therapists, the staff and they are starting to really learn, I mean, that's the idea, it's not going to work is we have to leave and then nothing's going on there, so they are, and of course it takes a lot of confidence, most people are fairly intimidated even to press a button on a laptop, for us that's not a big deal but for some people it's a very big deal, so again, getting rid of that, I think, that's the beauty of this software, is that it's

very user-friendly and that it's free, but right now, it's possible that people with very little tech-savvy and anybody can really get into that software and set it up.

Jackie: I think the most difficult part of the software is to let go of the control. Everybody wants control of something, so like teachers and the assistants and everybody wants control because their used to helping everything, hand-on-hand or something, they're not making enough notes so we gotta help this kid make more notes, how do you help somebody to just let go? I mean, if the kid makes two notes in thirty minutes who knows, that may be what that kid chose, we can't say for sure one way or the other, but I've noticed that that seems to be the most difficult thing for people, to cross into the technical barrier of the program itself is to let it go, let the child sit there alone, you don't have to be on top of them, it's that one opportunity where you can let go of the control and let the child, or whoever is using the software, have the control.

Sherrie: This morning Muhal Richard Abrams said something that I would like to put on the cover of the training manual, he said "improvisation is a human right", that just moved me and I think that's why improvisation works so well here too.

Ellen: What do you think he meant choice? The ability to, like as a right as opposed to a human activity? What do you really think he meant by that 'right' for you?

Sherrie: Well, he was not just talking about music, he was talking about life and I think he was talking about, it's so good to me because improvisation is a human right, that means that we have to define human in a way that understands that this is really important, that gets at the control issue, so if somebody's life is constantly controlled by another person, even if it's meant to be helpful, that person is denied improvisation.

Iris: Yeah, for me this project has been extremely virtual in a lot of ways, the software itself but also in the connections I've had with people, I met everybody but Cera and Ellen yesterday in person, but also the work that I do is extremely virtual in that one of the jobs that I have is when someone out there has found our website and downloaded the software, I get an e-mail. So I know we said there's no drum circle like the one you do (to Leaf), but there might actually be more drum circles than we think. I get people in London after the conference there, have the software and are using it, someone in Dubai downloaded the software and so the role that I'd like to have is finding these people and seeing what they're doing. Even in the panel today we watched Sergio in his work, what he does is very different from what you do and so the possibilities in terms of building a real global community are there and kind of finding out what people are doing with the materials that have been made available and kind of incorporating that is going to be another way that we kind of improvise together to understand what the software really is and how it works.

Pauline: Iris is not mentioning that she's out project manager and that this is a crucial role that she's filling for us and Cera also served in that capacity, and we really need that co-ordination and that's what's happening here that she's not talking about.

Cera: I guess my experience is very similar to Iris', I came in not feeling very qualified because in my research I talk about difference a lot, I'm very interested in race especially in gender

because I also came from a Woman's Studies background and class as well, but something we don't talk about a lot is ability and how that doesn't get talked about enough, and for me it was very eye-opening to be able to explore how our own society kind of creates that difference. It's not necessarily that people are inherently disabled it's just that society in a lot of ways creates that environment and those are all these new things I've been learning and am really excited about just being able to be here today and see everything come together because a lot of what me and Iris have been doing is e-mailing back and forth between people, organizing Skype meetings, but not actually seeing everyone, so being able to see everyone here today and what everyone's been doing here has been really, really exciting and enlightening for me. I've just had a blast and I feel really grateful to be able to do this especially because a big part of my life outside of academia is, I'm really interested in social justice and I don't think these things have to mutually exclusive and these people, this is what their work is doing, it's creating practice and also using a theory, but it's not in the regular, the same kind of structured way that I'm used to and it's opening all these new possibilities for me so I'm really grateful to have been part of it.

Paula: My role at Abilities First, as I understand it, has really been more sort of looking at what's happening and then looking at how I can work with that info. and add to the picture. I think it will come more into focus as we start to develop the training manual, certainly the log-on system is one of the tools in my toolkit is a very flexible tool and it allows us to look at movement from so many different perspectives and in so many different ways, I really look at what presents and then, based on that, and I'm looking at what presents not just in the child, or the person who is disabled, but what's presenting around that child. When you talked about people crowding around that child and wanting to control what they're doing or help, that's part of the picture and when Jackie saw that by moving the care-givers back and away, suddenly the child's movement began to expand then that becomes part of what we are documenting, it's part of what we're looking, it's part of the whole picture, so nothing about what I do or understand about movement is about preference for a certain kind of movement or expectation that we're going to reach a certain goal that looks like normal movement, it isn't about that at all, it's really about valuing and nourishing what's there and with the sensitivity and an appreciation for what's possible, which I don't know, none of us know that. (To Leaf) You had a great idea yesterday, we talked about it at lunch, so, her idea was to really create a performance event using the software, like a real performance involving abled bodies, disabled bodies of all kinds, but to blow the technology out in a way that you could see images on big screens, on surround screens. I personally would love to start to find places to seed the work that we have to see it used with the geriatric population, brain injury patients, autistic, I think there's so much, it's such fertile ground, there's so many possibilities.

Pauline: War veterans.

Leaf: I think it just really puts a spotlight on what's ability? What is disability? Why do we even need those categories? Who is a musician?

Ellen: And where does music lie in the body? All this time we trained for so many years to learn to play the piano, or the flute or something, so much of that is disciplining your body in very particular ways. As Alex Lubet was saying in his keynote talk at the colloquium, so many times people injure themselves trying to discipline their bodies to the instrument or to the kind of

music that they're playing, so when you switch the view around and you see the creative, expressive possibilities of a human being are there, they just reside in the core of the human being or an animal or environment or in our being in the world, well, if we take that attitude, then we might start inventing instruments that invite people to express themselves. (To Pauline) You had another project going at RPI to create a haptic sensor.

Pauline: We have a seed grant at RPI from the research office of RPI to work with blind and deaf people and with the deaf we're working on haptic sensors, actuators actually, so that a person can get the vibrations and senses of what is happening with sound for example, if they're deaf we want to create a virtual platform where a blind person can navigate in the virtual world through echo location and then we'd like to have the deaf person be able to navigate in the virtual world with that haptic feedback with actuators. Then the very challenging this is how do we do a cross-model reference so that the blind person can talk to the deaf person or the deaf person can talk to the blind person cause their signals, their data, can be translated from one model to another. Cross-model communication is what it would be.

Ellen: Was it C.S. Lewis that talked about imagining six impossible things before breakfast? I think what happens with Pauline Oliveros is that she imagines six possible things before breakfast, only nobody else thought they were. I think there's something to put on the record Pauline, because one of the engines that runs this collaboration is that you're in Finland one day and Oregon the next and France the next day, and even though you have this dizzying life, a document gets sent out to be read and you've read it and responded and answered back to somebody no matter what time zone you're in or how many other pressing engagements you have, so that's a tremendous pull of energy to me as a researcher to think, 'shoot I better read that document too', but that transmission of energy and ideas and this notion of having something really vital to work on together is tremendously energizing and that kind of helps with that virtual communication.

Pauline: Well we couldn't do this project with the team that we have without virtuality, could we? No, there's no way, our monthly conversations are on Skype and without the monthly conversations we couldn't have done what we've done.

Ellen: Or with the Google Docs that we send, or the files you can transmit, huge files you can send over the internet.

Pauline: Today we had Sergio from Chile in our conference even though he was in Chile.

Leaf: I was talking with somebody after our presentation today and he's working with populations in the community that were victims of abuse and I think sometimes there are no words, but I feel like even this software, it's all about communication, all about the language we can use and sometimes words are not there, we can't draw them, but I feel like the application of this software, because it can be used by everybody, is pretty amazing, and he was talking with me about that because there are no words but there is lots of expression and ways to express and I feel like that is what this software, the applications, we've just touched the very tip of the iceberg.

Pauline: We're just beginning.

Jackie: I thought it was interesting when we were doing the workshops, some of the adults behind there, you could tell what their issues were by the way they used the software. There was a woman that would go like this, she couldn't move her arm out from here and I finally got in front of her and I'm like do this and she did it once and she was back. You could tell their comfort zones within themselves and things like through the software which was really interesting to me because I've seen it work with people with disabilities, you know, physical disabilities, to watch how one woman would just be all over the place and the next man is kind of like and this woman, like, this was all she would do, and she stood up there for fifteen minutes, just this, and it just blew me away. I'm like, okay, it could be used in so many different ways with people of ability and people of disability.

Leaf: Physical ability, because we all have our.

Jackie: Everybody has a disability, some sort of issue. I mean, you have the way the body should look, you have the way you should act, you have all of these different aspects.

Pauline: All of the codes.

Jackie: All of these boxes you have to fit into, you know, and how do you start to break those boundaries and those boxes to find yourself?

Paula: I think this is a brilliant tool for abled movers, in particular for 'abled' musicians because most musicians do sit in one position or they play an instrument in one way and I think this is very revealing, it's very, it challenges, you could see that as I saw them become very dimensional in their movement, as well because it is embodied music, it's not safe behind an instrument, you're really exposed and that's a very wonderful and exciting possibility for all kinds of applications.

Ellen: This is also something to me that's inherent in the kind of creative improvisation that a lot of us are interested in because I know, as a flutist, what it's meant for me to become an improviser is not to abandon or to degrade at all my classical training, which I think has its very deep value, it's to open up a whole other vocabulary that isn't about going out and learning a bunch of external things, it's about listening to the sounds that you make and can make with your whole body and your whole instrument and listening carefully to them, the little details, the little tiny ones to the great big gestures and sounds and realizing that those things are part of your self-expression where so much of learning to play an instrument. I care, whether you're talking jazz or a world-tradition or classical, so much of learning any defined style tradition is about excluding all the things that don't belong, so instead of editing out all the stuff that doesn't belong, we're taking what's coming out and treating that as the stuff that's valuable. So that's just a complete inside-out, it's absolutely revolutionary, really, if we took that all the way, if we talked about who comes to music school or what music school means or something or what it means when we get together to express ourselves, what could that mean if instead of words we used other gestures or something?

Sherrie: I'm thinking about the social disability or ability, how is this society abling or disabling people so when somebody gets behind the laptop and in suddenly the movements, their habitual movements, are even more restricted, that's telling us something about a society and I'm thinking too about, I guess I'm more interested in the social connectiveness and the social listening that this makes, so one of the things I was really moved, I mean you see the kids expressing themselves but you also see the other kids, you see kids listening to each other and when Leaf would point the drum stick at one participant and everyone would listen to that person, like that's really important for that whole group, it's important for the self-expression for the one person but it's also important for the whole group, so it's about, because different people, even without words, don't you think? In an improvising situation some people are going to feel more like they can do a wider range of things within their abilities than other people, so it's also about, I think improvisation is a human right is also about, it's about the improvising community.

Ellen: Just think what it would do to improvised music if improvisers learned the lessons from these kids, about patience and processing, the need to be supportive of one another, the idea that creativity doesn't reside in a single body but is somehow about the enabling that other people can do around you as well, it's incredible. Some people I think would like to say that an instrument is like a prosthesis, it's like another limb or something, but I think it's just something different, not quite sure how to characterize that, but it's more like a conduit or something.