

Musical Improvisation at Land's End / Coin-du-Banc en Folie! (MILE)



In the summer of 2016, the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation (IICSI), with support from the Musagetes Foundation and the Chawkers Foundation, mounted the inaugural session of a bilingual improvised music camp entitled *Musical Improvisation at Land's End / Coin-du-Banc en Folie!* in Coin-du-Banc, in the Gaspésie region of Québec. From August 6-13th, seven participants engaged in improvisation workshops facilitated by experienced improvising musicians Jesse Stewart, François Houle, and Kathy Kennedy. The camp was co-organized by Ajay Heble (Director of the International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation) and Alain Chalifour, with Heble taking responsibility for curricular, artistic, and research-related matters, and Chalifour responsible for registration, lodging details, and extra-curricular activities. IICSI staff and students provided significant administrative support.

Artist-Facilitators

Jesse Stewart is an award-winning percussionist, composer, improviser, visual artist, instrument builder, writer and educator. He is a professor of music at Carleton University and an adjunct faculty member in the visual arts at the University of Ottawa. In 2012, he founded an organization called "We Are All Musicians" (WAAM) rooted in his firm belief that "music is a fundamental human right and that everyone deserves to have opportunities to make music, regardless of musical training, socio-economic circumstance, and/or level of physical or intellectual ability."

Kathy Kennedy is a Montréal-based vocalist and certified instructor of Deep Listening (a meditative practice developed by composer Pauline Oliveros). She teaches music in the

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¹ http://www.jessestewart.ca/bio.html



Faculty of Music at Concordia University, and has taught singing and voice privately for over twenty years. She is a well-known figure in sound art and new media internationally, and her large-scale works have been performed internationally. She hosts a wide variety of group singing events from medieval to pop songs to noise choirs.

François Houle is a Vancouver-based clarinettist. His extensive touring has led to solo appearances playing improvised music, as well as classical and jazz, at major festivals across Canada, the United States and Europe. He has released more than twenty recordings, earning multiple Juno Award and West Coast Music Award nominations. He is a faculty member at the Vancouver Community College School of Music and teaches Masters and DMA clarinet students at the University of British Columbia.

Workshops

Throughout the week, participants took part in workshops on musical improvisation, deep listening, site-specific improvisation, and sonic experimentation, collaborating across genres, graphic scores, assistive/adaptive use technologies, choral improvisation, and conducted improvisation.



In improvisation workshops, participants

learned the practice of improvisation from professional improvising musicians, developing musicianship, confidence, and collaboration skills. Deep Listening workshops with Kathy Kennedy developed greater awareness of the sonic environment and enhanced musical collaboration skills. The listening skills developed in these workshops fostered a compassionate and inclusive listening environment that nurtured musical experimentation.



Workshops and collaborative opportunities enabled participants to explore the intersection of music with diverse art forms including theatre, drawing, sculpture, and dance.

Participants learned about the physics of sound and the sonic properties of everyday objects in site-specific improvisation and sonic experimentation workshops with Jesse Stewart.

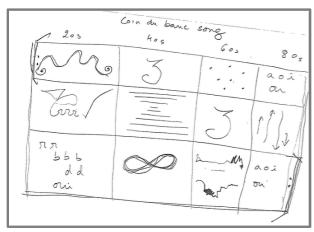
Participants explored ways to make pebbles, tubes, and driftwood resonate, and constructed a driftwood xylophone as



a group. A collaborative performance in and around the art installations of *Barachois in Situ*, a land art installation initiative in the neighbouring community of Barachois, extended exploration of the intersection of sculpture and music.

A workshop on graphic scores with François Houle provided the opportunity to explore non-traditional forms of notation at the intersection of the visual arts and music. Participants created their own graphic scores and interpreted those of others.

Collaboration with local improvisation theatre troupe *Improv Gaspé* enabled participants to explore the effect of



leitmotiv on character and musical development on plot. This collaboration formed the basis for a public performance at the Festival Musique du Bout du Monde.

A workshop on assistive/adaptive use technologies involving an Adaptive Use Musical Instrument (AUMI) provided the opportunity to explore the intersection of movement and dance with music, as well as to think critically and creatively about inclusive musicianship.²

Participants



MILE camp brought together musicians of diverse ages and levels of expertise. Canadian professional musicians played side by side with music students and with community members from the small, remote community of Coin-du-Banc and surrounding areas in the Gaspésie, and from metropolitan centres such as Montreal.

The seven participants differed in language, age, gender, cultural background, and level of experience. While most participants were

in their teens or early twenties, one was somewhat older and much more experienced. Participants spoke different languages & dialects including Montréal French, Gaspesian French, Mexican Spanish and Ontarian English. There were three female, and four male

² This instrument developed by The Deep Listening Institute in partnership with the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) translates movement into sound, making it possible for everyone to make music, no matter their range of movement. http://ccc-rpi.org/research/aumi/



participants. There were several youth with minor exceptionalities, including one on the autism spectrum.

There was also a certain amount of musical diversity as participants were influenced by a range of musical genres and played a variety of musical instruments including violin, saxophone, piano, trumpet, guitar, viola, clarinet, percussion, and the human voice.



Performances

The camp opened with public performances by the three visiting artists at Le Musée culturel de Coin-du-Banc / Corner of the Beach Historical Museum, housed on the site of the recently decommissioned St. Luke's Anglican church. Jesse Stewart, François Houle, and Kathy Kennedy all performed (in solo settings and then as a trio), sharing their unique musical approaches with the local community, and providing a unique opportunity to hear improvised music in the area. For an encore, they were joined by camp co-organizer Ajay Heble on piano. The performance was very well attended and enthusiastically received.

The week culminated in two performances, one at the Festival Musique du Bout du Monde in neighbouring Gaspé, the other at Le Musée culturel de Coin-du-Banc / Corner of the Beach Historical Museum. Both performances were again well attended and helped to raise the profile of contemporary creative music in the area. For their performance at the Festival Musique du Bout du Monde, participants collaborated with Improv Gaspé, a local improvisational theatre troupe exploring the effect of music on dramatic action and conversely of dramatic action on music. For their final performance at Le Musée culturel de Coin-du-Banc / Corner of the Beach Historical Museum, participants performed a group improvisation that drew on the improvisational skills developed throughout the course of the week. This was, by all accounts, a remarkable performance.



Participants also performed among the installations in neighbouring Barachois in Situ and were filmed as part of a documentary on the preparations for the Festival Musique du Bout du Monde.



Partnerships

MILE developed and built relationships with several local creative, cultural, and community groups. These partnerships were key to the success of the inaugural edition of the camp.

La société historique de Coin-du-Banc / Corner of the Beach Historical Society supported the camp by offering the museum as a programming and performance venue. As this picturesque and historic location is well-known in the community, it facilitated connection with many community members. The excellent acoustics of the venue made for an ideal listening environment. Special thanks to Alex (Sunny) Vibert and Patricia Vibert for their enthusiastic support in promoting the activities of the camp.

Festival Musique du Bout du Monde is a distinctive and well-established community-based world music festival in the town of Gaspé. Performing at this festival enabled participants to gain valuable experience performing improvised music, and to share their music with Gaspé audience members. The MILE performance was included in Bout du Monde publicity materials, enabling performers to benefit from additional media exposure and to expand their audience. *Improv Gaspé* worked with MILE participants to collaborate on an interdisciplinary performance at Bout du Monde onstage on the main street of the city of Gaspé. It was very well attended, and audience members responded enthusiastically to the performance.

Barachois in Situ, an exciting new land art installation initiative, collaborated with MILE facilitators and workshop participants for a public performance in neighbouring Barachois. MILE participants also benefited from inclusion within Barachois in Situ's publicity, press



releases, and press conferences. Special thanks to John Michaud for encouraging this collaboration.

La Vieille Usine de l'Anse-à-Beaufils is a local cultural hub housed in a historic fish factory in neighbouring l'Anse-à-Beaufils. It is a success story of community action, as it was salvaged and turned into a cultural hub by local community members, and today houses a concert hall, a recording studio, an art gallery, and a restaurant. Founder and administrator of *La Vieille Usine* and current mayor of Percé André Boudreau offered the concert hall as a future performance venue for MILE performers. He also offered the use of the on-site recording studio to make live recordings of future performances which could become available for sale and contribute to the ongoing support of MILE.

Impacts

Key impacts: musical mentorship, collaboration across difference, inter-cultural exchange, and arts-based community making.

Participants benefited from the opportunity to learn the practice of improvisation from professional improvising musicians, developing musicianship and confidence by taking musical risks in a nurturing and inclusive environment. There was also a mentorship component as participants sought encouragement and guidance about professional development as emerging musicians.

Workshops built the confidence of participants as performers. Participants differed greatly in terms of stage experience, and several experienced stage fright before their first live performance. However, by the end of the week, all participants demonstrated an increase in confidence in themselves as performers, and were able to participate in a final performance that drew on



improvisational skills developed throughout the course of the camp. The driftwood xylophone that the participants constructed as a group, as well as the Adaptive Use Musical Instrument (AUMI), were especially helpful in extending an inclusive invitation to all performers to participate, as was the general emphasis on collaboration and experimentation over individual virtuosity.

The camp provided an opportunity for participants to collaborate across linguistic, and cultural difference. Participants from diverse communities learned about the local history of this unique region of Québec, while local youth had the opportunity to share their culture, connect with youth from other parts of the country, and access professional musical mentorship.





The camp also provided a significant opportunity for linguistic exchange particularly important in the Québecois context of the camp. In the community of Coin-du-Banc / Corner of the Beach, many community members speak only French, while others speak only English. In this context, the deep listening and improvisational skills developed in musical workshops fostered an atmosphere of compassionate listening and mutual respect across linguistic difference.

In building and developing relationships with local creative, cultural and community groups, MILE contributed to the growth of a cultural hub and to the strength and resilience of the local community. This could help to combat the significant problem of youth exodus

in the Gaspé,³ as well as strengthen the local tourism economy and help alleviate problems associated with an under-resourced area. In addition, bilingual events support inter-linguistic exchange within the local community, further enhancing community cohesion.

Research Outcomes

During the course of the week, camp activities were recorded for a forthcoming documentary about the camp and the region of Coin-du-Banc. Kimber Sider and Jeannette Hicks conducted video interviews with participants and community members about their experience of the camp and about Coin-du-Banc and the surrounding region.

Reflections on MILE will also likely result in an article or a book chapter on improvisational pedagogy and art-based community making.

The MILE experience has also formed the basis for a forthcoming essay by Jeannette Hicks on improvisation and deep listening as models for inter-cultural collaboration that will be published on Musagetes' artseverywhere.ca platform.

Conclusion and Next Steps

By all accounts, MILE exceeded expectations. Comments gathered from participants and musicians have been very positive and there is a strong desire to go forward with another iteration next year.

³ This problem was noted by the Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi MRC Côte-de-Gaspé.



Appendix

- i. MILE camp poster English language version
- ii. MILE camp poster French language version
- iii. Gaspé Spec review of the MILE Camp
- iv. Camp schedule







August 6 to 13, 2016 Coin-du-Banc, Gaspésie, Québec Coin-du-Banc, Gaspésie, G

At this unique summer camp in the Gaspésie, students aged 16 and up will

- participate in hands-on workshops, lectures, and performances
- work daily with world-class improvising artists, including
 François Houle (clarinet), Kathy Kennedy (vocals), and Jesse Stewart (percussion)
- perform publicly for diverse and attentive audiences at various events, including Festival Musique du Bout du Monde in Gaspé
- experience the beauty of the Gaspésie through whale watching, concerts, tours to local artisans' studios, and other outings

While training can be an asset, a sense of musical adventure is a must!

Camp participants will be lodged in a newly-renovated guest house located on the stunningly beautiful Coin-du-Banc beach.

Details at http://bit.ly/improvcamp

Musical Improvisation at Land's End has been made possible thanks to the generous support of





The Chawkers Foundation



C'est au bout du monde, que commence l'imagination.

Coin-du-Banc en folie... camp d'improvisation

Du 6 au 13 août 2016 musicale!

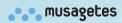
Unique au monde! 'Coin-du-Banc en folie' est un camp d'improvisation musicale pour des jeunes de 16 ans et plus. Voici un aperçu :

- Participer tous les jours à des ateliers dynamiques, des enseignements interactifs et des performances.
- Explorer l'improvisation musicale pendant une semaine complète, avec des artistes de renommée mondiale, notamment François Houle (clarinette), Kathy Kennedy (voix) et Jesse Stewart (percussion).
- Être à l'affiche de divers spectacles musicaux, dont le festival 'Musique du Bout du Monde' de Gaspé.
- Profiter de la beauté légendaire de ce 'Coin' de la Gaspésie, en y allant d'une visite aux Fous de bassan de l'Île-Bonaventure, d'un pique-nique à la Rivière-aux-Émeraudes ou encore d'une randonnée au fil des vues panoramiques du Mont Ste-Anne de Percé.

Alors qu'une formation en musique serait un atout, un sens aigu d'aventure musicale est indispensable! Les participants seront hébergés dans une pittoresque maison, récemment rénovée, située directement sur la magnifique plage de Coin-du-Banc.

Pour de plus amples renseignements : http://bit.ly/improveamp

Coin-du-Banc en folie tient à remercier les généreuses contributions de ses amis et partenaires :





The Chawkers Foundation



A success for the Land's End summer camp

"I think that the participants and the faculty members of the camp all had transformative experiences and it went beyond our expectations"

Thierry Haroun

CORNER OF THE BEACH: -The Musical Improvisation at Land's End (MILE) summer camp initiative was a success. A first experience was held August 6-13 at Corner of the Beach.

The camp was presented by The International Institute for Critical Studies in Improvisation. Its Director is Ajay Heble. SPEC reached him to see how things went. "I'm very satisfied with the experience. I think that the participants and the faculty members of the camp all had transformative experiences and it went beyond our expectations. It was extraordinary. We continue to hear from all the participants about their personal experiences. I'm very pleased over all with the results," he

The objectives were to foster, through improvised musical collaboration, relationships and understanding between youth from diverse urban and rural backgrounds; to contribute to participants' sense of confidence in themselves as musicians, and as members of a community; to promote creativity through immersion in collaborative creative practice, experimentation in musical improvisation and to investi-



Photo: T. Haroun

Some workshops and performances were held in the deconsecrated Anglican Church in Corner of the Beach.

gate and document the impacts of the program through a complementary research and evaluation component.

Workshops and venues

"During the week, there were a number of workshops that took place sometimes on the beach, at Alain Chalifour's House, which was the camp's headquarters and in a dome that was set-up in my backyard in which we had performances as well. We also used the museum located in the deconsecrated Anglican Church in Corner of the Beach. We had workshops and performances there. The workshops covered different topics, such as improvisation, how to listen, how to collaborate and how to use

extended techniques on their instruments." He adds, "That's not all. We had several collaborations on Queen Street in Gaspé in the theme of the Festival Musique du Bout du Monde. There was an improvisation made with the Gaspé Improvisation Theater Group. We also had a collaboration with the Barachois In Situ Land Art installation. Our

group played there during an afternoon event. It was really exciting," he pointed out.

The MILE has been made possible thanks to the support of the Musagetes Foundation, the Chawkers Foundation, Corner of the Beach Historical Society, Festival Musique du Bout du Monde, Improvisation Gaspé, Barachois in Situ, and Photo Cassidy.



DAY 1 – Saturday, August 6th Travel Day

Time	Location	Event
7:30-9 am	Camp HQ	Breakfast
12:00-1:30 pm	Camp HQ	Lunch
1:30-3 pm	Camp HQ	Introductions and overview of camp
5:30-7 pm	Camp HQ or	Dinner
	local restaurant	
9:30-11 pm	Beach, Dome	Jam session on the Beach or in the Dome (optional)

DAY 2 -Sunday, August 7th

Time	Location	Event
6:30 am	Crooked Spoke	Sunrise Patio Concert by Guest Artists (Unscheduled and
	Cottage	optional)
7:30-9 am	Camp HQ	Breakfast
9-10:30 am	Beach	"Deep Listening" & "Sonic Meditation" Exercises: Guided
		Listening, "Teach Yourself to Fly," "Environmental Dialogue"
		(Kathy Kennedy)
10:30-10:45 am		Break
10:45 am-12	Museum	Creative Considerations for Practicing Improvisation (François
pm		Houle)
12:00-1:30 pm	Camp HQ	Lunch
1:30-5:30 pm*	Camp HQ	Collaborating Across Genres: Musical and Theatrical
		Improvisation (François St. Laurent, Improvisation Gaspé)
		*4:00 pm
		Welcoming Remarks from Mayor André Boudreau
5:30-7 pm	Camp HQ or	Dinner
	local restaurant	
7-8 pm		Free Time
8 pm	Museum	Solo and group performances by camp faculty (François Houle,
		Kathy Kennedy, Jesse Stewart) (public event)
9:30-11 pm	Beach, Dome	Jam session on the Beach or in the Dome (optional)



DAY 3 – Monday, August 8th

Time	Location	Event
6:30 am	Crooked Spoke	Sunrise Patio Concert by Guest Artists (Unscheduled and
	Cottage	optional)
7:30-9 am	Camp HQ	Breakfast
9-10:30 am	Beach	Peripheral Listening (François Houle)
10:30-10:45 am		Break
10:45 am-12	Museum	Improvisation Exercises (Jesse Stewart)
pm		
12:00-1:30 pm	Camp HQ	Lunch
1:30-3 pm	Camp HQ,	Small group breakout and one-on-one sign-up sessions
	Dome, Museum	
3-3:15 pm		Break
3:15-5:30	To Be	Extra-curricular activities / regional tours (La Vieille Usine de
	Determined	L'Anse-à-Beaufils, Barachois, or Mont Ste-Anne)
5:30-7 pm	Camp HQ or	Dinner
	local restaurant	
7-8 pm		Free Time
8 pm	Museum	Open rehearsal
9:30-11 pm	Beach, Dome	Jam session on the Beach or in the Dome (optional)

DAY 4 – Tuesday, August 9th

Time	Location	Event
6:30 am	Crooked Spoke	Sunrise Patio Concert by Guest Artists (Unscheduled and
	Cottage	optional)
7:30-9 am	Camp HQ	Breakfast
9-10:30 am	Beach	Site-Specific Improvisation and Sonic Experimentation (Jesse
		Stewart)
10:30-10:45 am		Break
10:45 am-12	Museum	Choral Improvisation (Kathy Kennedy)
pm		
12:00-1:30 pm	Barachois	Lunch
1:30-3 pm	Barachois	Collaboration with Barachois in Situ
3-3:15 pm		Break
3:15-5:30	To Be	Extra-curricular activities / regional tours (La Vieille Usine de
	Determined	L'Anse-à-Beaufils, Barachois, or Mont Ste-Anne)
5:30-7 pm	Camp HQ or	Dinner
	local restaurant	
7-8 pm		Free Time
8 pm	Museum	Workshops with Improvisation Gaspé (to be confirmed) or Open
		rehearsal
9:30-11 pm	Beach, Dome	Jam session on the Beach or in the Dome (optional)



DAY 5 – Wednesday August 10th

Time	Location	Event
6:30 am	Crooked Spoke	Sunrise Patio Concert by Guest Artists (Unscheduled and
	Cottage	optional)
7:30-9 am	Camp HQ	Breakfast
9-10:30 am	Beach	Conducted Improvisation (Jesse Stewart, François Houle, Kathy Kennedy)
10:30-10:45 am		Break
10:45 am-12	Museum	Notation Systems for Improvisers, and Graphic Scores (François
pm		Houle, Kathy Kennedy, Jesse Stewart)
12:00-1:30 pm	Camp HQ	Lunch
1:30-3 pm	Camp HQ,	Small group breakout and one-on-one sign-up sessions
	Dome, Museum	
3-3:15 pm		Break
3:15-5:30	To Be	Extra-curricular activities / regional tours (La Vieille Usine de
	Determined	L'Anse-à-Beaufils, Barachois, or Mont Ste-Anne)
5:30-7 pm	Camp HQ or	Dinner
	local restaurant	
7-8 pm		Free Time
8 pm	Museum	Workshops and rehearsal for concert with Improvisation Gaspé
9:30-11 pm	Beach, Dome	Jam session on the Beach or in the Dome (optional)

DAY 6 – Thursday, August 11th

Time	Location	Event
6:30 am	Crooked Spoke	Sunrise Patio Concert by Guest Artists (Unscheduled and
	Cottage	optional)
7:30-9 am	Camp HQ	Breakfast
9-10:30 am	Beach	Developing an Expanded Musical Vocabulary (François Houle,
		Jesse Stewart, Kathy Kennedy)
10:30-10:45 am		Break
10:45 am-12	Museum	The Concept of Virtuosity/Anti-Virtuosity and its Relevance to
pm		the Experience of Musical Improvisation (François Houle, Jesse
		Stewart, Kathy Kennedy)
12:00-1:30 pm	Camp HQ	Lunch
1:30-3 pm	Rue de la Reine,	Festival du Bout du Monde: load in and sound check
	Gaspé	
3-3:15 pm		Break
3:15-5:30	To Be	Extra-curricular activities / regional tours (La Vieille Usine de
	Determined	L'Anse-à-Beaufils, Barachois, or Mont Ste-Anne)
6-7 pm	Rue de la Reine,	6-7 pm
	Gaspé	Improvisation Mixte Performance with Improvisation Gaspé at
		Festival Musique du Bout du Monde
7-8 pm		Free time
9:30-11 pm	Beach, Dome	Jam session on the Beach or in the Dome (optional)



DAY 7 – Friday August 12th

Time	Location	Event
6:30 am	Crooked Spoke	Sunrise Patio Concert by Guest Artists (Unscheduled and
	Cottage	optional)
7:30-9 am	Camp HQ	Breakfast
9-10:30 am	Beach	Waiting Game (François Houle)
10:30-10:45 am		Break
10:45 am-12	Museum	Rehearsal
pm		
12:00-1:30 pm	Camp HQ	Lunch
1:30-3 pm	Camp HQ,	Small group breakout and one-on-one sign-up sessions
	Dome, Museum	
3-3:15 pm		Break
4 pm	Museum	Grand Finale: Musical Improvisation at Land's End / Coin-du-Banc
		en folie camp participants in concert with François Houle, Kathy
		Kennedy, and Jesse Stewart (public event)
5:30-7 pm	Camp HQ or	Dinner
	local restaurant	
7-8 pm		Free Time
9:30-11 pm	Beach, Dome	Jam session on the Beach or in the Dome (optional)

DAY 8 – Saturday August 13th Travel Day

Time	Location	Event
6:30 am	Crooked Spoke Cottage	Sunrise Patio Concert by Guest Artists (Unscheduled and optional)
8-10:30 am	Camp HQ	Group breakfast