



## SOME REALLY FANTASTIC MOMENTS OF CREATIVITY

by Paul Bothén

*Paul Bothén and Lotta Melin were asked to join the Choreosound 09 playing the part of mentors. Their main task was to follow the processes and to spread as much of their observations as possible to as many participants as possible during the summing ups in the afternoons.*

I was asked to join the reference group, to help out in the process that would result in Choreosound 09. The subject - collaboration forms and methods pertaining to modern dance and new music today - was far too interesting to turn down. During the winter and spring leading up to the event, the group outlined the project: From application forms to workshops, master classes, schedules, technical requirements and so on.

In addition to the people who were invited to teach master classes and hold seminars, highly experienced choreographers and composers, an idea materialized along the way: That it would be beneficial to let two mentors follow the process during the week. Two observers, a choreographer and composer,



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would gather impressions from the various individual working sessions and share what took place with the entire group of participants at the daily afternoon summing up session. The basic idea was to convey as much of the experience and infor-

mation to as many as possible, to keep everyone involved equally "up to speed" during this short period of time. That is how Lotta Melin and I ended up moving in and out of the rehearsal studios during Choreosound 09: Acting as two pairs of observant eyes, even though some may have perceived our presence as an intrusion.

The most important aspect was the participants, who definitely determined the outcome of the project. 10 dancers, 10 musicians, 5 choreographers and 5 composers: A wide range of talented artists from all over the world who had expressed curiosity and great interest in the theme of the week. From many different angles.

We put a lot of effort into creating the groups with regard to esthetics and style, in accordance with what we could find out from their applications. At first, we tried to compose groups that, in theory, should find it easy to work together. Later, we aimed to add some friction, to inspire our participants to break new ground.

I think that the short pieces produced in the working sessions reflected quite well what kind of material and what sort of method each group had been working with. Not all the time, but certainly most of the time, it was clear that the simpler the ideas, and the more clear-cut the framework was, the stronger the piece itself turned out. Improvisation, for example, was used in many ways.

One group, I recall, used improvisation as a method for gaining material. The material was then used in a strict composition. Like a pattern in a drum machine or a step sequencer. It worked very well in the first performance situation, but not as well the second time. Why? The perform-

ers started to add improvisation into the strict form and the result went blurry. That was also the case when it came to the master classes. If the lecturer left the participants a clear-cut task, this reflected on the results as well. Also, when specific rules were handed out, the option of breaking the rules always existed. Some happily did. And something came out of it in the end. The task could be quite pointless, but it was generally something that sparked a relationship. A reaction. When the opposite situation occurred, when the guidelines were “do anything you like”, the results demonstrated a lack of communication. It also left many groups in a stressful situation; dealing with confusion and negative energy. Not entirely fruitful, if you ask me.

It was also amazing to watch how carefully prepared pre-fabricated material could fall to the ground, forcing the artist in question out on the thin ice of presence, and instant action. On the other hand, everybody had to work very fast during the working sessions. There was not much time to let things sink in and evolve in steps and stages, which is also a powerful part of the creation process. Therefore, the outcome of the working sessions sometimes tended to be a little “workshop-ish”; meaning that it is difficult to go for the longer lines in situations like this, and that you end up

with bits and pieces that may work just fine in the small room that we call workshops.

It is almost impossible – and I see no point really in trying – to get a complete and comprehensive evaluation of the events of the week and what was created by the 30 participants. Choreosound 09 had a kind of fundamental backbone, a number of core issues that we tried to explore during the lab week. I am not quite sure we can say that the lab week actually answered all those questions, or covered everything we set out to do. Choreosound was not perfect, but it had the best intentions: Achieving close encounters between choreography and composition. Six months later, my overall impression is that I was fortunate to witness some spectacular moments of creativity: Beautiful, ugly, and sometimes really strange stuff - far beyond what instantly comes to mind when you picture dance and music.

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PHOTO: MALIN ARNÉSSON

*Ari Kauppila, Andrius Katinas, Ellen Sjö Sander at Aktör & Vänner.*