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Contact Improvisations for Advanced Dancers

by Joe Edelman

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Next Level Press

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Credits

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Then, to Rythea Lee. Most of these scores, especially the intimate and scary ones, were tried first with her, and benefited from her elaboration and feedback.

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1. credit the book when you teach (e.g. "the following is a score from 'Contact Improvisations for Advanced Dancers.'").
2. drop me a line if you perform them or improve upon them.

Thanks.

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Chapter I

Contact Scores for Close Friends

score 1: **lines of love**

1. give your attention and love to a particular point or to a small area on your body
2. allow it to travel across the surface and interior of your body
3. in contact, continue to give attention and love to a point in or on your own body

score 2: **defrosting ourselves**

1. begin a duet in contact
2. periodically, hug your partner's body towards a point on your own body where you feel you could use some love, energy, or attention
3. periodically, cup your hands and blow warm air into a point on your partner's body which you feel could use love, energy, or attention

score 3: **playing with fear**

1. begin with one person moving, the other watching
2. mover, project something you fear into the space and dance with it—imagine something or someone you fear is near you, and find an authentic response. when you become tired of this, give yourself a little break, but then shift to something or someone else that you fear, cast it into the room, and respond.

3. keep returning to something you fear, as if it were in the room
4. take a few turns moving and watching, then both of you can move simultaneously, and even in contact, embodying and representing one another's fears.

score 4: sub/dom

1. begin a duet
2. if your partner says your name, you must stop. you must remain alive to the dance but passive. you become an object which can be manipulated, explored, or abused. you cannot move or speak again until your name is said a second time.
3. either partner can freeze the other, but the frozen partner has no recourse until they are unfrozen. in order to freeze your partner, you may say their name gently, in the ear, or shout it loudly. explore your options.

score 5: taking care of oneself

1. taking turns, one person is the pusher, the other is the one taking care of themselves.
2. the pusher is to circle around the other, at first giving very gentle pushes on various chosen parts of the other's body
3. the one taking care of themselves can either shift to regain balance, or fall, cartwheel, or roll, maintaining an alignment and internal body tone and attitude which will support the joints which are stressed by the pushes and subsequent activity
4. the pusher escalates as the other seems ready for it, pushing more suddenly, more forcefully, and on trickier parts of the body, as well as becoming more visibly hostile and aggressive.
5. the one taking care of themselves can tell the pusher verbally to stop when they have had enough, and the two switch roles.
6. the roles can be gradually mixed, and the score changes to a dance where pushes and attitude can come from either person at any time.

Chapter 2

Moving Outward and Away

score 6: **falling leaves**

the idea of this score is to develop an approach to contact and to weight-sharing that is fleeting, transient, light, and open to the environment, rather than the predictable and heavy inward-facing sequence of leans and lifts seen at jams.

1. begin out of contact, each individual trying to emulate something of the wafting movement of falling leaves as they crisscross the room and move from standing to the floor
2. waft past each other
3. begin to interact as you pass, as if the air currents between you were eddying
4. finally, continue to waft individually across the room and down to the floor, but allow brief moments of contact that naturally disentangle and flow away

score 7: **almost but not quite**

1. duet as usual, but pretend that you can't quite do all the things you would normally do: start to lift people but then drop them. say "nope", or "i guess not." randomly despair or change your mind constantly.

score 8: sense relaying

1. begin by standing apart
2. imagine that your feet are connected by some kind of magnet to the earth
3. imagine that, with everything you look at in the room, with everything you smell, you have the power to send your sense information down through your body and down through your feet into the earth, where the ancestor spirits can see or smell what you can see or smell out here
4. continue the practice of moving and sensing as if you were a reporter for the ancestor spirits
5. dance

score 9: inner & outer spaces

created by otto ramstad

1. block out at least an hour for this score
2. also, learn some anatomy first. get a specific idea of where in your body your pancreas is, your large intestine, your biceps, your bladder, each rib, etc.
3. you will begin internally, picking two anatomical structures within yourself (say, your left femur and your right lung) and experimenting with lining them up or orienting them relative to each other in different ways
4. after 10 minutes of that, locate an anatomical part of someone else in the room, say someone else's bladder, and move one part of yourself in relation to that
5. after 10 minutes of that, begin to work on relating the tissues and structures within your own body with tissues and structures, not only in the humans around you, but also in nearby natural and artificial objects.
6. let the object you are relating to travel, finding underground streams, wood beams, parts of other humans and animals, etc to respond to. let your own individuality subside as you become a bundle of tissues and structures.

score 10: **geoloitering**

1. make friends with someone elsewhere in the world
2. using their longitude / latitude and yours, calculate the angle the two of your spines make against each other, and calculate the number of degrees below the horizon that each of you are at, relative to each other
3. using an atomically synchronized timepiece, both of you can exhale at exactly the same time and stand together for 10 minutes

Chapter 3

The Body and the Emotions

score 11: **regression**

1. in this simple score, both participants in a duet become toddlers involved in a petulant, whiny temper tantrum: complaining about everything, pushing on each other, flailing arms, and making appropriate noises.
2. bring it into contact.

score 12: **jiggle yoga**

this score is about suppleness of the spine and the development of softness and stickiness in contact.

1. begin a duet in contact
2. wherever you are touched, try to bend, embrace, become concave, enclose the object which is touching you like the bark of tree
3. see if you can bend so much and become so loose and conforming to your partner's body that your joints can jiggle a little.