



BEEE CREATIVE

Dance connections in Herts & Beds

Improvising Generations

**Creative
Evaluation 2022**

curated by Cheniece Warner

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A culmination of images that celebrate and showcase the many moments shared from Improvising generation sessions.

01

Introduction

The Brief

To evaluate BEEE Creatives' dance project Improvising Generations between March 2022 and September 2022. This evaluation will be a mixture of photographic documentation and insights from facilitators, participants and myself.

My Missions

Photographically capture the content, energy and interactions in the sessions.

Organise, analyse and reflect on material collected to form a lively creative evaluation of Improvising Generations sessions.

Gather contributions and feedback from participants and facilitators of Improvising Generations sessions.

Acknowledgement of previous Evaluation 2020-2021

There was a focus on how BEEE Creatives' Improvising Generations project could use dance as a tool to encourage and maintain connections across diverse communities.

**There was a particular focus on;
lessening the negative effects of the
pandemic, feelings of loneliness and boosting
participants' well-being.**

Previously the evaluation aimed to identify and measure the impact of participant participation from perspectives of self-esteem, motivation, connectedness, sense of belonging and well-being (moving from pandemic) and discover possible way to move forward and develop Improvising Generations sessions for the future.

What is Improvising Generations?

Improvising Generations is an intergenerational dance and arts project created by BEEE Creative under their strand of Mental Health and Physical Well-being. It aims to help communities overcome loneliness and social isolation by offering monthly sessions for participants to come together; socialise, move and create.

Improvising

BEEE Creative

A small arts charity working across Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire that promotes the message of accessibility and enjoyment for dance alongside supporting connectedness for artists, practitioners cross-sector partners and communities.

Sessions took place across two main sites in Hertfordshire; Leavesden Country Park Woodlands Community Hub in Abbots Langley and Trestle Arts Base in St Albans.

There was a real mixture of art forms brought to each session by thoughtful facilitators sharing their practices for the groups to hear, experience and get creative!

Generations

Session Outline

- 1) Soundscape & Movement with JollyBeats
- 2) Visual Design & Movement with Anji Archer
- 3) Moving Memory Dance Theatre Workshop
- 4) Outdoors & Movement with Maga Judd
- 5) Green Connections Workshop

02

The Sessions

Soundscape & Movement with Jolly Beats

Date: Sunday 20th March 2022

Location: YMC Woodlands Community Hub

About Jolly beats

Founded in 2016 by Graham Jolly, a sound therapist as a way to rhythmically and socially build experiences for people to work together, let go of inhibitions and make music.



Graham brought a wide variety of percussive instruments into the room for participants to first learn through play.

The room began to swell with sounds of crashing cymbals, gongs, bells, quartz crystal singing bowls, djembe drumming and more!



From these explorations, a task of combining sound and movement was proposed. The room was divided into 2 groups to create soundscapes inspired by two images.

One group had a galaxy-like image with a collision of planets at its centre.

The other group had an image of a person leaping over a bridge with splats of colour.

Once each group was happy with the soundscape, and the narrative they created it was time to delve into improvised movement!



Sharings, Thoughts & Findings



These are all comments and thoughts from participants

Visual Art & Movement with Anji Archer

Date: Sunday 24th April 2022
Location: YMC Woodlands
Community Hub

About Anji Archer

As a Multidisciplinary Artist, Anji Archer works within community engagement, bringing and connecting people through visual art.

From tights, socks, newspaper, cotton wool, coloured wool, and elastic bands Anji brought the group over to select any materials they wanted for their structures.

The structures could be anything the participants desired. The idea was that the participants' imagination was ignited, with attention to detail and an innate focus on mobility.

Extravagant hats, bracelets and necklaces were designed and worn while others made fantastic toys and sculptures!





“There were moments where the structures became sentient. It took me somewhere instead of me taking it!” - Participant



“There were no rules!”

“I found myself becoming entranced as an observer of the movement of my peers”- Participant



"Game-like"



"Play!"



"Roll"



From making to embodying; each participant shared and moved with their creations and as a word bank of descriptors was formed they become the structures in space. Thinking a lot about the qualities of some of the structures: curves, bubbly, angular, fluffy, sturdy, and squiggles.

The group then was split into two for a task that continued the idea of being structures as one half (with their creations formed an even bigger structure and the other half inhabited, played and had the opportunity to explore!

Curiosity bubbled while laughs, experimenting and observing took place. The participants shared how they enjoyed how they had creative license 'to play or not to play' or 'to make up your own rules!'

Moving Memory Dance Theatre Workshop

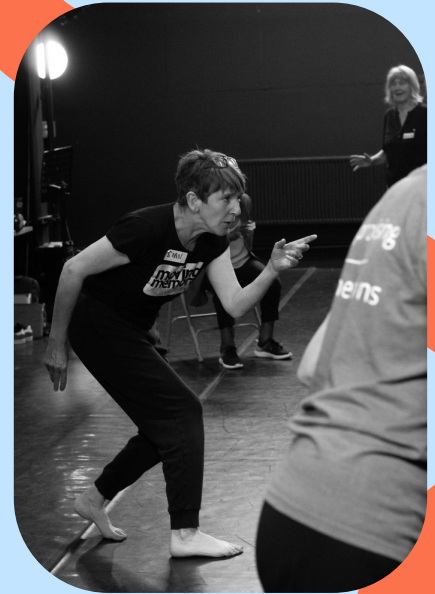
Date: Sunday 22nd May 2022

Location: Trestle Arts Base

About Moving Memory Dance Theatre

A company that focuses on creating meaningful, collaborative, innovations and inclusive physical performance.

Presenting a plethora of works in varying mediums that surprise audiences and change their perspectives on ageing.



This fun and the thought-provoking session was led by Sian Stevenson, director of Moving Memory Dance Theatre.

There was a focus on physical theatre gameplay and using movement as a way to evoke emotion.

Fun games such as stop/go, noise machine and flocking were played and really got the blood flowing and funny bones jumping!



Moving then into a task that focused on eyes. Drawing the eyes of a loved one on a page and writing the characteristics and attributes of that person. Words such as 'beautiful', 'intelligent', 'kind', 'courageous', and 'supportive' flowed from the participants and these words were then turned into actions, that would reflect their selected words.

Words into actions, actions into phrases and phrases were then brought into a smaller group setting where they each combined their own phrases into one long collective choreography.

'A true extension of memories from loved ones through thoughtful movement' - Participant

**“Moving both
physicall and
emotionally”-
Participant**



**“Peaceful”-
Participant**

**“Considered and
reflective”-
Participant**



Outdoors & Movement with Maga Judd

Date: Sunday 17th July 2022

Location: YMC Woodlands Community Hub

About Maga Judd

Choreographer, Dance and Vinyasa Yoga Flow Instructor Maga has a passion for movement. Leading for joy and expression Maga aims to empower the communities she works with to develop their own practices at their own level and pace.



“So great to have live music through out the session!”- Participant



“Forming trust further with my peers was made easier as the space felt safe“ - Participant





The session begins with mindful movement meditation to bring everyone into the room, check in both mentally and physically and gently get the body ready for moving.

Taking a moment to settle into your chair

Bringing your attention to your breath

Slowly breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth

Simply scanning your body muscles and bones from head to toe

What do you notice?

Any aches, pains, or points of tension?

Attempt to softly soothe them with each breath along with any thoughts that might be rushing and racing around to be present in the room

Not judging them but allowing them to pass you

“I felt connected both physically and emotionally-like a whole person” - Participant

The session then dives into movement qualities concerning the natural elements of earth, air, fire and water. Identifying ways to embody these elements in dynamic, space, and actions both individually and within a group setting.



“Darting flying and swooping like the AIR, flickering and jumping like the flames of a FIRE, being rooted in my feet as my arms like branches reach and fingers like plants of the EARTH and WATER curved and flowing with the ability to be treacherous”



Green Connections & Movement Workshop

Date: Sunday 11th September 2022

Location: YMC Woodlands Community Hub

About Green Connections

Green Connections founded by Michelle Gersh moves with the desire to help people through daily struggles and cultivate social connections through nature and art.

Then separately dance artist, Laura Horn runs movement sessions for older dancers that promote great well-being outcome's through building social connections.



The session carried a seasonal theme, taking inspiration from nature, and exploring connections between individuals, their surroundings and the natural world, as a way of better well-being.

The session took inspiration from nature and the autumnal season of September. We venture on a short woodland walk around the site on YMC Woodlands Hub focusing on comfortability, safety and mindfulness.

With a clipboard in hand the group were ready to take note of any;

Sights

Sounds

Textures gathering

How many colours of green could be found

Smells

What we saw



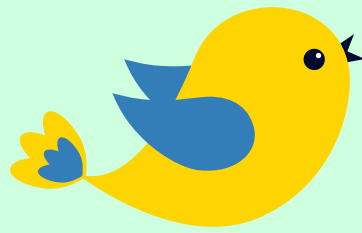
So many shades of amber, red, and green leaves. Textures like smooth berries, and rough bark leaves.

Sounds of birds tweeting, dogs barking and the crunching of leaves under our feet, and the lingering smell of geosmin in the air.

Heading back into the hub, we had the chance to look at what the group had gathered and moved into some delightful movement tasks with Laura.

Using the wonderful green finds participants grouped up and sought to explore the physical features of the leaves from the jagged edges and lean vein-like structures, to how they fall off trees or grow from the ground.

“Nourishing to be outside” - Participant



“So great to use our senses as a way to create movement from!” - Participant



“I really enjoyed taking the time to really be present and tune it” - Participant



03

Participation Feedback

looking back at sessions the participants reflected and shared
their thoughts, feelings

How they have found having Improvising Generations sessions back in person?

“It is just so different from being online, we are coming out of a time of isolation and human and nature connections are so vital”



“There is a massive increase of connection, being able to really see everyone again and feel their energies in the room. I really treasure and look forward to it each month!”

“Alive! So alive!”

“Nothing beats human connection and and expressive arts”



“I love the varying content and tasks from each session. I learnt and explored something new and enjoyable every month!”

“Feeling a real opening up of myself everytime I entered the room”

“Having an opportunity to move with different people each session!”

Their favourite moments

“Having live music!”

“Movement still feeling like dance and less robotic, like exercise or structured. It is more expressive and equally enriching!”

“Mindfulness of my body in space and nature. Feeling grounded in my feet and simply breathing in the possibility”

“I felt really a part of the group! The way the group responded to one another was so respectful and positive”

“Moving with and in response to the sound, art, memory and nature created a so much deeper connection to live in”



And what they'd like to see more of..

"I'd love to spend more time delving deeper into each session again with a follow up or project that extends on further with it"

"Creating more from different stimuli in the session: genres of music and dance"

"Exploring Mental Health management through art and mindfulness"

"Somatic techniques of moving"

"Looking into movement and mobility as a way of managing daily pain and aches kindly and thoughtfully alongside some fall prevention"

"I'd love to have more dancing or singing sessions! I am getting older it becomes a worry but when I move here these sessions energise me, and make me feel stronger and happier. They remind me of what I can do!"



04

Collage

Some more wondrous moments shared by participants and facilitators throughout sessions of Improvising Generations









Sessions made possible thanks to funding from The National Lottery Community Fund.

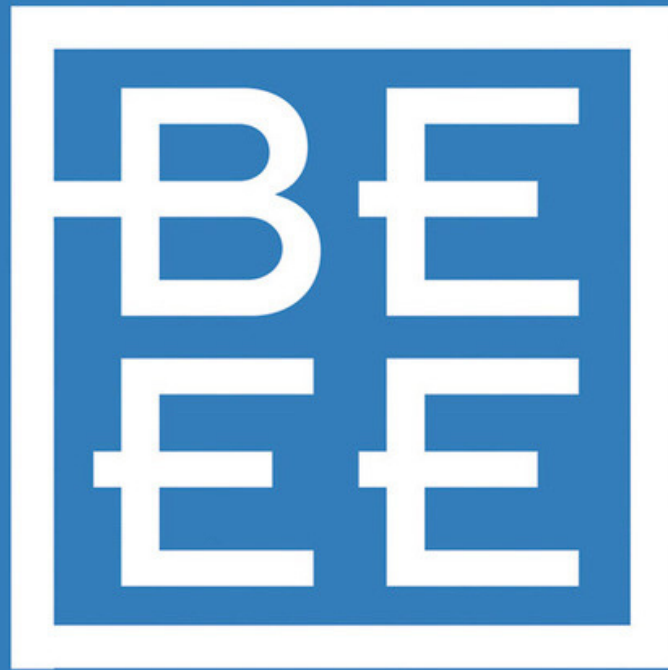


I would like to take this time to thank Carrie Washington, the wonderful participants and lovely facilitators of Improvising Generations, for welcoming me into the space to observe, capture and creatively evaluate the sessions.

– Cheniece Warner
Art and Dance Documentary Photographer



Thank you



CREATIVE

This evaluation was curated by Cheniece Warner alongside the photography too. Text is a mixture of comments from participants and and observations from Cheniece.

