Distance Collaboration Meeting, 2020.05.08

The Shakespeare Ensemble

Dylan Kammerer shepherding; Ben Crystal taking Minutes; Anirudh Nair invited to share his Distance Collaboration idea…

Anirudh 'Rudy' Nair - This idea isn't just about collaboration during lockdown;
We are fortunate to work with folk around the world

Problems with this:

$$$
Visas
Climate contribution

Distance collaboration technology experience - rehearsing online with Chicago company to limit amount of time needed together in the same room, to drop costs; e.g., posting an instruction video for a dance routine to all learn together remotely.

What does it mean when this technology is useful rather than a hindrance? What happens when we're not in the same space for performance? How do we incorporate distance collaboration that isn't just digitally working together live

Dylan Kammerer - Wooster group-y? Using tech out of necessity. The Awkward silence: Family or workshop or performance - always happens, and it feels terrible. How can we choose to go towards this tech once things are back to 'normal'

Dan Beaulieu - is there a project that can lean in to the awkward silence?

Rudy - Why bother? Global participants, wanting to connect.

Ariana Karp - Real need right now to artistically collaborate.

Ben Crystal - It'd be good to make sure the technical platform enhances the eventual piece we create. Not just a standard format. Maximise audience involvement How is the piece enhanced by a technological platform?

Andrew Codispoti - live broadcasts of theatre; play is ongoing, to theatres all over the world. This idea is bi-directional. Each end is having a different experience. Total experience created by all the people participating form both ends. How to marry the two?

Ben Crystal - An article recently about mirror neurons, and the anxiety that comes from Zoom
The idea of an audience being involved, and seen in Zoom backgrounds is being talked about a lot.
Audience in the room with us could help bridge the empathy gap that comes from squeezing theatre into the digital. Audience see audience.

Rudy - this could be a way of bringing the audiences closer together. An actor disconnects, performance continues without webcam, solo performance until the reconnect

Matthew Bentley - reminds of watching Stephen Sondehim 90th birthday concert -
the utter sense of complete claustrophobia. Broadway considering isolating audience...

Em Thane - idea of instigating 4 mins of disconnect. With a 3rd camera across the room, to get the different angle… Something about the duality.

Dylan Kammerer - Choosing your frame, the secret things audience can sometimes intuit, but we're choosing not to see; and the ability to subvert that.

Helen Foan - Fantastic show I saw played with this idea of video-calling. Artist called Claire Gaydon. Can't see her face for the whole show. Watching her on the screen, see yourself as the backdrop. Never quite sure if she's performing live or not. She seemed so vulnerable. I like the idea of playing with mirrors to show a different perspective of our characters and their space.

BC - We could fold in a pre-recorded scene to our live broadcasts to allow us to do something shocking or sudden or complicated, an subvert the live vs recorded, theatrical vs digital.

Matthew - Network - Ivo Van Hove - the misdirection they use.

DK - blurring of realities is super interesting. Subverting our audience's understanding of what's live and what's recorded. Also, Zooming now with Rudy in India feels no different to FaceTiming with my neighbour. Ideas of proximity and closeness is interesting

DB - marriage of Dylan, Em, and Rudy - the notion of the phone call being dropped, we still see the action but can't hear it; experiencing silence and a dropped phone call; a sense of puzzle pieces to figure out once we've reconnected

Rudy - Really exciting. Of these stories breaking apart and coming back together, the live time distance...

Tereza Vacková - Two characters, one live and one on camera, would it sway the audience's loyalties - towards the live person?

DB - Actors in the room go mute. "I can see you but i can't hear you"

AC - Hypothetical future where we're not constrained by these elements, but using them as a choice. Could see the show one night in Portsmouth and drive down to see it NYC another

DK - Reminds me of the exclusivity of going to see a real show.

MB - Nine separate audiences, each with a different story interlacing; group calls and break out calls; no-one gets the full experience.

DK - One on one chat functions. An opportunity to single out folk?

MB - Half of the players using headphones - limiting what folk can hear. Another functional thing to play with, when you want the audience to hear just you or everybody.

Rudy - shall we do a test ten minute piece? Something that would lend itself to these ideas Shakespeare?

TV - Love the idea of playing off the poor connection, 'Can you hear me?', mixed messages, makes me think of *Twelfth Night* for some reason.

DK - Specific elements of this sort of communication that are frustrated.Mute sign that flicks, but then the person is interrupted.

BC - The natural-theatre dialogue of Pinter, Beckett, Margaret & Suffolk asides scene at the end of H61

MB - Awkward pauses remind of Annie Baker.

Rudy - Mindful of rights in modern works

DK - Let's all mull on all this.

Throw all these on a whiteboard.

Next meeting: Monday 11th May, 9am EST; 2pm BST