Ritual #1: A Case Study in Collaborative Process

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

Zachary Crockett

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy

Alex Lubet

February, 2012
Acknowledgements

First and foremost I want to acknowledge my collaborators on *VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1)*: Vanessa Voskuil, David Mehrer, Cory Grossman, Nathan Hanson, and Solange Yvette Guillaume. I greatly admire Vanessa’s work and consistently identify in it many of the qualities for which I strive in my own; I look forward to many future collaborations with her. Additionally, as anyone knows who takes on big projects while in a committed relationship, Solange, in her other role as my wife, supporter, and sounding board, deserves extra special thanks and frankly some sort of heroism award.

The ultimate realized product of *VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1)* was one particular endpoint, but there were other branching possibilities that might have come to be. I extend humble thanks to those choreographers who were willing to take the first tentative steps with me down this path: Sara Shaylie, Maggie Bergeron, Harper Piver, and Heather Parker. All four surprised me with their unique visions and enthusiastic, committed responses.

Doug Geers, formerly at the University of Minnesota and now teaching at City University of New York, earned my gratitude especially for his work on the Spark Festival of Electronic Music and Arts. I was privileged a member of the team that helped him build that festival, and through that work I discovered a great deal about computer music and its communities that can only be learned through exposure to a broad swath of people throughout the field.

I am fortunate to have met and studied with Guerino Mazzola. Our minds work in similar ways, and for both of us, in music (and possibly beyond), gesture is everything. Thinking of him makes me smile, and my love for improvisation developed around the same time as our meeting and the formation of earWorm, an electroacoustic quartet of composer-performers of which I am a member.
Finally, Alex Lubet, my advisor, deserves a great deal more thanks and praise than he, in his modesty, is usually willing to accept face-to-face. He is the longest standing member of the composition faculty, and his wealth of historical perspective on the program has been a valuable, reassuring asset in a time of economic, administrative, and social instability. His own interdisciplinary work has encouraged me and several of my colleagues to pursue exciting collaborative projects despite daunting bureaucratic challenges. Alex consistently goes out of his way to generate real-world opportunities for his students; anyone who has tried to reach beyond the walls of the academy knows this takes a great deal of work and patient relationship-building. Thanks for sticking with us Alex.
Dedication

For Daddy, who keeps me real, and thanks to whom, whenever I hear someone talk in an abstract way about important historical figures (and this happens regularly) and the fine, grey, hairsbreadth line between genius and madness, I always carry with me an elaborately detailed, messy, and utterly concrete understanding of exactly what that means.
Abstract

After introducing historical models of interdisciplinary collaboration, I describe my process, laying out an example for future creators of collaborative arts performances. When I began this project, I felt like there was no precedent that gave a clear path for how to work. Even after consulting with various mentors, I was only made aware of one artist I could contact who had done something similar. I attempted to follow his model but knew from the beginning that I was working with a significantly more limited budget and different goals. With some experience I gave up on the initial idea and switched to a project that felt more conventional and pragmatic. Interesting elements of this new direction gradually took shape, and a graphically distributed identity of collaborators generated not only aesthetic content but also logistic solutions. The process of creating VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) facilitated deep artistic exploration and growth for me and all the collaborators.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Historical Precedent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Think Big, Take One</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Get Real, Take Two</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Conclusion</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A. Google Wave: Ritual #1 Notes &amp; Brainstorming</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B. VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) Program</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C. VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) Performance Video</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D. VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) Chorale Score</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E. VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) Bifurcation Score</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

3.1 VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) expenses ........................................... 8
Chapter 1

Historical Precedent

Artists in different media have worked together arguably for the entire history of civilization. However, three types of interdisciplinary interactions particularly illuminate the process that led to the creation of VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1). Since, from the beginning, this collaboration was between a composer and one or more choreographers, all trained in the Western academic tradition, we will examine collaborative models from that realm. The inclusion of multimedia and electronic elements also demand the investigation of particular antecedents. Lastly, we have the ultima Thule of interdisciplinary work—the genuinely collaborative flow that allows the incorporation of ideas from performers and other contributors beyond the designated design team. It is a rare successful collaborative group that contains more than two or three idea-contributing members. In VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1), this was, for me, the true goal—to push the limits of collaborative process yet maintain the clarity of apparent, emergent vision and the artistic unity of the product.

While no longer strictly true, it was long the case that choreographers needed composers. Thus, there is a long history of collaboration between the two groups of artists. Probably the most iconic such duo is George Balanchine and Igor Stravinsky, creators of Apollon musagète, Jeu de cartes, Orpheus, and Agon. “In seeing his music danced, Stravinsky came to appreciate his own work at a deeper level, to reexperience it and to gain new ways to expand it.” [1] p. 94] The composer himself said, “[Balanchine’s] choreography emphasizes relationships of which I had hardly been aware—in the same way—and the performance was like a tour of a building for which I have drawn the
plans but never explored the result.” [2] p. 25

Stravinsky and Balanchine are one example of what Vera John-Steiner calls integrative collaborations, “in which artists discover their complementarity, then push farther to forge a union.” [1] p. 96] The individual artists “combine their different perspectives and their shared passion to shed the familiar... Transformative contributions are born from sharing risks and challenging, appropriating, and deepening each partner’s contribution. Individuals in successful partnerships reach beyond their habitual ways of learning, working, and creating.” [1] p. 96] John-Steiner describes well the relationship between Vanessa and me.

The performance of VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) incorporated some technology. There was a foundation of composed electronic music undergirding the full length of the evening. Additionally, there were light sculptures by David Mehrer that the onstage dancers controlled during the show. In October 1966 Robert Rauschenberg and Billy Klver organized an event that has become the canonical historical reference point for artist-technologist collaboration. Ten New York artists worked with thirty engineers from Bell Labs to generate unprecedented artworks that incorporated cutting-edge technology at New York City’s 69th Regiment Armory.

With the advent of the personal computer, the internet, web 2.0 (creative power on the internet accessible to all, not just to programmers), and the rise of open source hardware (e.g., arduino) and software for audio and video editing, 3D modeling, and more, there is often no specific need for scientists or engineers on an artistic team. In VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) nearly everyone who participated in any way was fluent with the latest technological tools for the creation, sharing, and performance of sound, video, and lighting.

When I attempt to conceptualize a model for deep collaboration and flow in a group of multiple artists from different disciplines, gesture is everything. The language of gesture (in the broadest terms) is one that can be understood by visual artists, actors, theater technicians, dancers, choreographers, composers, and performing musicians alike. According to Guerino Mazzola, gestures are “first germs of abstract thoughts, and not only bodily utterances.” [3]
Chapter 2

Think Big, Take One

I knew from the start of this project that I wanted to compose music for dance. The idea that struck first was a process involving many choreographers. I talked to several local dancers and one colleague from Arizona, requesting from each of them a short improvised video of dance.

There were no constraints; I just wanted a simple starting point to which I could musically react. The plan was that I would then create some music for each video, and send it back to the choreographer who would create new movement in response to the music. I would discard my original ideas and create new music based entirely on the latest video, and we would continue this cycle back and forth as long as seemed interesting and productive. The emergent message of these works would evolve much like the message in a game of gossip/telephone.

At the end of this process, there would exist for each choreographer a set of short music and dance pieces that would have, I imagined, an asymptotic trajectory in the range of artistic intent. The process represents for me, as a computer scientist, something not unlike gradient descent on an objective function, where we seek an optimum joint artistic message, approached from our separate individual tastes/aesthetics. We each would have started with something that represented characteristically our own voices. With each iteration, we would come ever closer to some sense of a third character that represents the way that our artistic visions combine rather than either of us individually. This collaborative third voice would be different for each composer-choreographer pair.

Maggie Bergeron gave me the formal product that I expected—she set up a camera
in an empty dance studio and filmed herself improvising for about five minutes. Perhaps this is a sign that our communication had been especially clear, that the distance between my intended message and her received message was small. I began work on a musical response to her video in September 2007.

Initially I was watching her video, taking note of time points and notable gestures, and thinking in terms of live acoustic instruments—trombone and cello. I was writing music, notes on staff paper, not at all easily communicated to Maggie. I cringed at the thought of sending her MIDI files or audio generated from MIDI instruments. I wanted to have student musicians record the sketches so I could mix and master them for delivery. I got bogged down in this process. After several months it became clear that the only way rapidly to play the back-and-forth game was to make electronic music, but that is not what I was inspired to write—it is not what I thought of when I saw Maggie’s video.

At some point in 2008 or 2009 I switched gears and started working on Heather Parker-Westernlund’s video instead, not having sent anything to Maggie. Heather’s was easier for me to imagine as an electronic work. I made good progress, but never felt it was finished enough to send back. My sketch felt hackneyed in response to her gorgeous video. At some point I realized years had passed, and I had made almost no progress on my dissertation.

In November 2009 I had a composition lesson with Mary Ellen Childs. We looked at Heather’s video. Mary Ellen helped me explore the impact music has on how we perceive movement. She also introduced me to Matthew Smith, a Minneapolis composer who works with choreographers. Matthew was working intensely on a show that would open December 4, 2009. It was a collaboration with local choreographer Deborah Jinza Thayer called “Ode to Dolly, the Sheep, Inter Alia” and was advertised as “a dance installation.” My wife and I attended “Dolly” on December 11. It was helpful in expanding my idea of what Ritual #1 could be.

Matthew and I met at his studio on January 6, 2010, primarily to discuss his prior work Admittance. He had received a Bush Fellowship and had a budget of many tens of thousands of dollars. My budget for Ritual #1 was coming out of my savings and could not exceed more than a few thousand dollars. Matthew even went over his budget. He said personnel was the biggest cost, which was ultimately true for VOCA::Omni (Ritual
#1) as well.
Chapter 3

Get Real, Take Two

After the choreographer videos languished in my inbox for over a year, I decided I was unable quickly to create music in response to existing video, and that if I ever wanted to finish my degree, I would have to choose one choreographer with whom I already had a common vision.

I emailed Vanessa Voskuil on July 16, 2010 introducing the idea of working together on a project. We agreed on a basic timeline and her fee in the following weeks, and we had our first meeting on September 2nd at a local coffee shop called 2nd Moon.

When Vanessa and I met to discuss what our collaborative creation might be, it became clear to me that we needed a tool to keep track of the many ideas that emerged from our brainstorming. I suggested Google Wave. Neither of us had used it before, but I had the impression through the techie grape vine that it was a good tool for facilitating collaborative brainstorming as well as documentation of a process.

I setup a Wave for our project on September 6, 2010. Though we had not heard, at that point Google had already declared that it would no longer develop Wave as a standalone product. A Wave is a dynamic document that allows the inclusion of media, real-time discussion, and the ability to play back the history of Wave transformations. This fluid, flexible system is not easily captured in a fixed form, but there is a feature to export a momentary snapshot of a Wave. Such a snapshot is attached as Appendix A.

It became clear that, especially for Vanessa, the performance space would influence the work a great deal. We had to have a venue before specific ideas about movement
and costumes would really flow. We decided that given the target performance dates in March or April we needed to be inside—an outdoor venue would be too cold.

I attended a production at In the Heart of the Beast theater and decided the space was not right for us. It was not immersive or intimate enough. We both agreed that Barker 100 at the University of Minnesota would work well, but after several weeks of inquiries to the dance department and delays for meetings where they were to discuss the matter, I was told the space was unavailable, since other work took precedence there. We inquired at the Playwrights’ Center, which was also booked.

The best candidate as of mid-January was Antonello Hall at MacPhail Center for Music. It was very new and presentational. It was also somewhat expensive at $1000 for two performances plus $200 for an A/V technician. Sarah Howell, the Program Services Coordinator was very helpful in negotiating the price with me as well as suggesting other spaces.

Vanessa had suggested the studio rehearsal space at the back of the Ritz Theater in Northeast Minneapolis. Her description of the space did not intrigue me at first, but as our options dwindled, I began looking into it. At $100 per performance it was much more reasonably priced, and it actually suited our needs better. The flexibility of the space allowed us to experiment to find the best environment for the show. The space is a rectangle, about twice as long as wide; we initially planned to have the audience in one roughly square half and the performance in the other roughly square half. However, through our discussion and experimentation, we decided to change the orientation of the audience to be only a few rows along one of the long walls. The audience could also see themselves in mirrors along the other three walls, and we incorporated this multiplicity into the work rather than covering the mirrors.

The financial expenses (see Table 3.1) of the production were ultimately very constraining. Ticket sales constituted the entirety of the project’s $463 income. The endeavor had a net loss of $2,856.42. In future works, unconstrained by the timelines of a degree program, I will not embark on such a large project without first acquiring funding.

The real, physical manifestation of the performance did not begin to emerge until all the performers were finally together in the space. David Mehrer is a Twin Cities sculptor interested in light as a substance, with volume and weight. Light became the
unifying kernel of all concepts with which Vanessa and I were working, so David was a natural fit to invite onto the project. His glowing light barrels and fire and sink sculptures all emanated and poured light into the space in myriad shapes and hues.

In the light of his sculptures the play of white, flowing, and sparkling fabric immediately became essential to our costumes. We all, as movers on stage became moons, bright in ourselves, but really reflecting the glowing heat of other sources, the sculptures. We played with and on the barrels, directed in many exploratory exercises by Vanessa. We listened to the music and improvised on our instruments, sometimes freely, sometimes based on structures I suggested to the group.

The full group of performers had only five rehearsals in the space, primarily due to monetary constraints, but also because everyone was busy. In each rehearsal, the work changed a great deal. In my recruitment efforts, I specifically sought musicians who were comfortable both with improvisation and with moving on stage. We were all to be both musicians and dancers; there would be no pit, no curtain segmenting the two groups of performers. With each exercise in movement, music, and both combined, we all contributed to the outcome and began to understand the work we were creating together. Even the first performance felt like a rehearsal—it was all so new to us. The performance matured each time we rehearsed.

However, in the question-and-answer session on Saturday, April 2, 2011, an audience member who had also seen the Friday night performance commented on how surprised she was at the consistency from one night to the next. She had heard from us the previous night that the performance was improvised, so she assumed Saturday would be drastically different. The overall structure of the hour-long performance was quite consistent, but the moment-to-moment play within what Guerino Mazzola would call our graphically distributed identity was a living thing, breathing, changing, never the same as before. [3]
Video files of the first two performances on April first and second are attached as Appendix C.

Our collaborative efforts were not only limited to aesthetic pursuits. Logistic concerns were worked out in somewhat heated group discussions. We decided together practical matters like the contents of the program, and whether we would have an audience question session after the performances. The group members had greatly differing individual preferences on these matters. I, for instance, started the discussion with my very minimalist ideas: no program at all, no performers bowing at the end of the show, no discussion, just leave everyone to their own meanings, thoughts, feelings. The program used for the actual performances is attached as Appendix B.
Chapter 4

Conclusion

My goal in generating any work is to hallow space—to create a ritual enacted by skilled performers that makes watchers feel like participants. These ceremonies have common ground with religious practices. As a child growing up in various Protestant Christian churches, I certainly see the audiences of my work as parallel to the congregation—listening, thinking, feeling reactions to the performance, and feeling reactions to the other audience/congregation members around them.

The most important human activity is the creation of meaning. Our neural networks and social networks function to do many things but nearly all reduce to this: building meaning sets. Something strikes a chord in us, and we wonder why. We build a meaning around that event and all its semiotic connections. As we continue through life, each resonance with one of those meaningful symbols prompts the creation of more meaning.

The most potently meaningful internal signifiers then get exPressed—pushed out—transformed from something intuitive and abstract—essentially gestural—to something verbal and concrete. We discuss them with our friends or family. Conversations between two people serve a similar but higher-order purpose to the activation of one neuron by another. We send a signal; we receive feedback. Thus proceeds the grand human endeavor of knowledge creation and meaning building. How much more powerful then is artistic creation when it brings this collaborative element to bear—how much more likely the deeper resonance with audience members?

Each time I generate a new work, I strive to create a piece that does two things. First, it should be pregnant with as much potential meaning as possible, making use
of symbols and gestures that trigger in performers and audiences concepts like “deep,” “meaningful,” and “weighty.” Obviously, though, the particular symbols chosen (filtered from all possible meaningful symbols) must have a unity. Second, I want my work to be open enough to invite many interpretations. Each human audience member will bring a different background, different biases. I strive to allow them all to have an experience they might call holy.

I believe VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) achieved this goal. A few audience members, months later, have suggested they could write entire chapters of this paper for me based on how meaningful the work was to them, how much it opened their eyes, being unlike anything they had experienced before. The performers similarly all expressed gratitude and a desire to continue performing the work, growing together with it, through the Summer if an opportunity arose.
References


http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2010/08/update-on-google-wave.html
Appendix A

Google Wave: *Ritual #1* Notes & Brainstorming
Ritual #1 Notes & Brainstorming

To Do

Zac
- Pay Vanessa first $500 next time we see each other
- Apply for Live Music for Dance grant (Dec 15 postmark deadline)
- Look into venues:
  - Heart of the Beast not interested
  - Barker 100 denied
  - Playwrights' Center booked
  - Macphail auditorium
  - Ritz rehearsal space
  - UMN Opera rehearsal space, Zac not interested but will keep in mind

Vanessa
- Respond to the sketches posted below
- Contribute some media here... images? movement video? (Or we could get together in person)

Sketches

- Sketch 1: vlc, tpt, pno
  - October 16 flute and piano improv sketches, just started playing with the elemental ideas in mind, let me know your reactions
  - air-flute.wav
  - air-piano.wav
  - water-flute.wav
  - water-piano.wav
  - earth-flute.wav
  - earth-piano.wav
  - fire-flute.wav
  - fire-piano.wav
  - air-flute.wav
  - earth-flute.wav
  - water-flute.wav
  - And just for kicks, all of them at the same time :- )

Schedule - this works fine for me

- early Oct 2011, Zac re-applies for school, with this project as dissertation
- January 2011 heavy collaborative creation, hiring performers
- February 2011 heavy rehearsals
- March 2011 performance(s)
- April 2011 Zac dissertation defense

Common Interests

- spiritual power of performance (Prophet Commissions, Nature themes, "The creation of meaning is the most important human activity.")
- performance as ritual (liminal spaces, transition to other realm where performance happens, transition back to norm/life, what do people carry on the path?)
- beautiful pictorial writing (Arabic, Chinese)
- healing, grounding, awareness-enhancing power of movement (Aikido, Tai Chi, Qi Gong)

Themes

- Elements
  - Water (west, blue): connection, unity, shared experience, communication
  - Fire (south, red/orange): transformation, the phoenix, re-imagining, re-making, re-making, revolution
  - Air (east, white/clear): purification, flight, quickness, breath, lightness, freedom
  - Earth (north, black/brown/green): grounding, depth, solidity, inevitability, fate

- Seasons
  - Trees (I didn’t mention this, but I love trees. I know several types. I find them magical and awe-inspiring. They have personalities. I want to plant a magical grove some day.)
  - Spinal/Pranada gases, stone, axial movements, whirlpools, sunflower seed (in packing)

Universal sounds: see this whole Radiolab show http://www.radiolab.org/2007/sep/24/ but especially the first 5 minutes of the second segment "Sound as Touch"

Performance Spaces

Indoors

- Patrick's Cabaret - not very interesting space
- Red Eye - a possibility
- Southern - season already set
- Ritz - a bit expensive, rehearsal space in the back is a possibility/mirrors etc... could be an interesting integrated design element. not sure about the sound quality
- Love Power Church
- 1419 Washington (http://1419art.weebly.com/about.html)
- Intermedia Arts
- Open Eye - space booked through Apr 23

Vanessa: interested in a unique space to engage, thinks this is important to the work and its initial ideas. university setting?

Outdoors - kind of cold yet in march for a performance outside.

Me: I’ll think about the U, spend some time wandering around, and let you know if I find anything unique... nothing comes to mind... I also have several friends who teach at Inver Hills Community College. They have a big blackbox that I’m sure we could use. Not unique per se, but we could fly things there since there’s plenty of vertical space.

Vanessa: I will be out of town by that time. In Europe.

Me: When do you leave?

Vanessa: Late April
Hidden Falls Park
Stone Arch Bridge
Mill City Ruins
Somewhere farther away, quarry, mine, pasture, forest
The Arboretum
The Peace Garden / Rose Garden by Lake Harriet

Music

Instruments as Characters
- Celtic, water, 5-trhythms, metal, 7-th notes prominent
- Trumpet, fire, 3-trhythms, metallic, 7-tet, prominent
- Alto Flute, air, 2-trhythms, metal, 6th & 5th prominent
- Bass Clarinet, earth, 7-trhythms, metallic, 7th & 7th prominent
- Piano, Voices, Electronics, maybe Drums: omnipresent, omniscient, help fill out texture and detail, reinforcement

I wonder what the heart beat of each element is? I wonder about the manipulation of the traditional playing technique. I wonder how they try to sound like each other as they are unique in themselves but they all inform each other: what if they were the same thing but different colors of it... like light that is shown through a crystal and creates all the colors of the rainbow. how do they sound like one? how does stillness sound? what does sound sound like? how do they release in one note, or rather how does one come forward at times more than the other? how? how? why? why?

I'm thinking there might be some correlation between the elements/instruments/characters and some of the movement vocab. Could be obvious or subtle. The musicians should move, not be disconnected entities standing on the stage. Zac will keep this in mind when talking to/hiring musicians. More thoughts please!

Movement

I'm thinking there might be some correlation between the elements/instruments/characters and some of the movement vocab. Could be obvious or subtle. The musicians should move, not be disconnected entities standing on the stage. Zac will keep this in mind when talking to/hiring musicians. More thoughts please!

Lighting

Clearly very circumscribed by the performance space.

Costumes

Vanessa mentioned possibility of fabric as foundational prop, could be connected to onstage musicians. That's one idea, others:

still like this idea. I also like the idea of musicians being high in the space...up on ladders or suspended somewhere, releasing at times things to the ground to engage. I like the idea of emphasizing the holes of the instrument...where sound comes out...energy that projects from itself...the image of communication. I like the idea of a place of investigation, its darkness to be revealed. I like the idea that there is a potential instrument installation of partial instruments. They spin. I am a part of the ensemble and on occasion play one of these suspended instruments. My body creates sounds also. I like the idea of emphasizing the holes of the instruments, the sound comes out, energy that projects from itself...the image of communication. I like the idea of a place of investigation, its darkness to be revealed. I like the idea that there is a potential instrument installation of partial instruments. They spin. I am a part of the ensemble and on occasion play one of these suspended instruments. My body creates sounds also. I like the idea of stirring light...the sound comes out, energy that projects from itself...the image of communication. I like the idea of a place of investigation, its darkness to be revealed. I like the idea that there is a potential instrument installation of partial instruments. They spin. I am a part of the ensemble and on occasion play one of these suspended instruments. My body creates sounds also.
Appendix B

**VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) Program**
VOCA::Omni
(Ritual #1)

vocans omnibus
to be called in all things

Run time is approximately 45 minutes.

Conceptualized & Composed by Zachary Crockett
Conceptualized, Choreographed, & Performed by Vanessa Voskuil
Sculptural Set Designs by David Mehrrer
Music Performed by Zachary Crockett, Cory Grossman, Nathan Hansen, Solange Yvette Guillaume

Please join us after the performance for a brief Artist Talk.

Warm thanks go to the staff of The Ritz Theater, David Meherrer, Solange Yvette Guillaume, Tim Bertrand, J. Anthony Allen, Joshua Clausen, Justin Schell, Heidi Lauren Duke, and the Twin Cities Aikido Center.

Zachary Crockett is a PhD candidate in music at the University of Minnesota. This work forms the basis of his dissertation.

VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) is produced by Hypergolic Motion LLC. hypergolicmotion.com

ZACHARYCrockett is a coder and composer of dances and rituals who strives for the primal and reverent in his work. He believes the creation of meaning is the most important human activity. zacharycrockett.com

VANESSA VOSKUIJ is an independent choreographer, director, performer, designer, organizer, teaching artist and creator of interdisciplinary performances, dances, dance films, and music-theater. She has created more than twenty original works presented by theaters and universities throughout the Twin Cities. Vanessa is a recipient of a 2009 McKnight Fellowship for Choreography and has received two Minnesota Sage Dance Awards for Outstanding Design for productions, "The White Solos" (2006) and "en masse" (2009), which was additionally nominated for Outstanding Performance and received a 2010 City Pages Best of Award for "Best Dancer." www.vanessavoskuil.org

DAVID MEHRER holds a B.F.A. from Minnesota State University – Moorhead in Arts and Sculpture. As a student, he received two Excellence in Art and Design scholarships in addition to two student awards in Creative Quarterly Magazine. David was awarded a 2009 Minnesota Dance SAGE award for Outstanding Design for production "en masse" which was choreographed and directed by Vanessa Voskuil and presented by The Southern Theater and the Walker Art Center as part of Momentum: New Dance Works. His sculptural pieces have been additionally utilized by Voskuil in dance-theater piece "Forthcoming" presented by Macalester College in 2010. Intrigued by Buddhist and Shinto religious practices coexisting with modern city life, David has spent time living in a monastery with Buddhist monks in a Japan.

CORY GROSSMAN graduated with a BM from Lawrence University in 2009, and has since returned home to Minneapolis to pursue life as a freelance musician. He gigs on cello and electric bass in various groups ranging in styles such as chamber music, jazz, and hip hop.

For more than twenty years saxophonist and composer NATHAN HANSON has created music in a wide variety of settings. From concert halls to bowling alleys, churches, train stations, debutante balls and Soviet fallout shelters, Nathan has performed from New York to Slovenia, Milano to Mankato, and Rome, Georgia to Rome, Italy.

SOLANGE YVETTE GUILLAUME is collaborative and creative musician, whose work encompasses classical piano performance, musical theater direction, songwriting, and composition. As a pianist and Assistant Director of the new music group, Renegade Ensemble, Solange avidly supports the performance of modern compositions; in her songwriting, she marries a classical music aesthetic with thought-provoking and fantastical prose. This summer, she will be working with Stages Theater's summer music theater program and on a performance for the Fringe Festival in August.
Appendix C

**VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) Performance Video**

Attached are four video files, representing the first two performances, on April first and second of 2011. Additionally included are videos of the question-and-answer sessions following each of these two performances.
Appendix D

VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) Chorale Score

The following two pages of score are the only traditionally notated music given to the live musicians in VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1). They were the basis for a structured improvisation.
VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1)
Chorale

Zachary Crockett

each repeat at least 3x

Alto Flute

Tenor Saxophone

Violoncello

Piano

Copyright © 2011
Appendix E

VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) Bifurcation Score

The following page of text with a diagram was given to the musicians in VOCA::Omni (Ritual #1) as the instructions for a structured improvisation that, through our collaborative process, became the climax of the work.
Many natural processes approach chaos by period doubling. Additional energy causes the number of components to double suddenly at a fixed point.

Choose a simple gesture, and perform it slowly and gently. Gradually add energy. For example, increase tempo or loudness, or brighten the timbre. At the critical point, double the gesture and drop back to a more restful state. Doubling might mean playing double stops rather than single notes, or adding a grace note before each note. It might mean extending the duration and range of a melody. The increase in energy before doubling should be clearly differentiable from the doubling itself.

Repeat the process again of adding energy until a critical moment of doubling.