

Rhythm and Relation

The Choreographic Politics of Sound and Motion

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Abstract: Rhythm, as described by Deleuze and Guattari, is a transition, an in-between, a coupling and connection. From one condition to another, rhythm connects situations, movements, and bodies. Based on this concept of rhythm, the chapter will examine rhythm as a form of collectivity in movement. The essay will focus on the work of the group Nguyễn + Transitory, made up of the musicians and performance artists, Nguyễn Baly and Tara Transitory. Beyond uniformity and conformity, their performances *Bird, Bird, Touch, Touch, Sing, Sing* (2019) and *Symphony of Intimacies* (2022) are characterized by movements of touch, approach, and interference. What rhythms of closeness and care, as well as of difference and disorientation are produced by their musical and choreographic explorations? In what way do they turn their musical means into techniques of a choreographic politics that operates on the level of bodies and their rhythms?

Singing at Night

A child walks through the night, gripped with fear. They try to fight their fear by territorializing the vastness of the dark night surrounding its body. And how do they do it? By singing. They use the sonic rhythm to modulate the darkness. And by repeating their tune, they territorialize the night, allowing the body to navigate home.

When Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari tell this story, they describe the child's singing as a way to create a refrain.¹ For them, the song is a sonic modu-

1 Deleuze and Guattari tell the story to open their chapter on the refrain: "A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos. Perhaps the child skips as he sings, hastens or slows his pace. But the song itself is already a skip: it jumps from

lation of space. The sonic rhythm of singing modulates the darkness, turning it from an endless vastness into a walkable space. And by modulating the darkness, the child's voice also modulates movement. Their singing allows the body to walk calmly, to keep on walking, without being stuck looking over their shoulder. The calming effect of singing feeds into the movement of walking, territorializing it—step by step. The rhythm created by the singer walking at night is a transversal rhythm. It crosses the level of sound, movement, space, and experience. Without the perception of darkness, singing would be just another song. Without the vastness of the night, the movements just another walk. Only though the rhythm of singing-moving does the child avoid drowning in fear.

To think of singing as a way to territorialize darkness, to rhythmize and navigate the night, places rhythm at the very heart of our actions and perceptions. Rather than being an extra aspect to the way we walk, we see and we feel, rhythm makes our actions and perceptions happen. There is no walking without rhythm, no seeing and no feeling. Walking, seeing, and feeling are rhythms that make a situation. As Erin Manning writes: “To posit rhythm as extra to experience is to misunderstand how rhythms make up events. Rhythm gives affective tonality to experience, making experience this and not that.”² When the child begins to sing, they do not only add a tune to their walk through the night, they change the night as well as the walk. The rhythm of the entire situation becomes different, making it a different situation. What Manning as well as Deleuze and Guattari propose is something the singer already knows: Singing is more than just a sonic act. It is an immanent modulation of the spatio-temporal rhythms of our surroundings.

Tracing the rhythmic changes of the entire situation on all its different levels proposes a thinking that perceives this situation as a “rhythmic event.”³ Composed itself as the interplay of multiple rhythms, bringing them into relation, the event is itself part of a wider rhythmic field. No event is entirely self-enclosed, and each of its rhythms links to past and future occasions, to situations far and near, creating the rhythm of time as much as that of space. The fear of darkness brims with stories, imaginations, anticipated futures, and past

chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in danger of breaking apart at any moment. There is always sonority in Ariadne's thread. Or the song of Orpheus.” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 311.

- 2 Erin Manning, *Relationescapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 9.
- 3 Eleni Ikoniadou, *The Rhythmic Event: Art, Media, and the Sonic* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).

experiences. The rhythm of walking is inseparable from the desire for a place to arrive while singing connects sonically and rhythmically to the re-embrace of the past.⁴ As Eleni Ikoniadou is keen to point out: Rhythm cannot be reduced to linear time; to think of rhythm as a space-timely dynamic is to follow its multiple nonlinear becomings, its interferences and reverberations, its distortion and amplifications.⁵

The notion of the transversal rhythms of the situation explored here is a twofold one: On the one hand each situation is made of multiple rhythms, and their interplay create the situation's rhythm. On the other hand, none of the situations accommodate a rhythm in its entirety. Rhythms always feed into another situation, creating a rhythm of multiple situations. In this way they create a rhythmic assemblage or a nonlinear chain of situations. Walking at night / being at home / not wanting to go home / remembering to sing /etc. It is this second dimension that for Deleuze and Guattari is at the very heart of their interpretation of rhythm: "There is rhythm whenever there is a transcoded passage from one milieu to another, a communication of milieus, coordination between heterogeneous space-times."⁶ I will come back to this idea of rhythm as the betweenness of situation at the end of this chapter.

Rhythms of Touch

Another place, another night. This time: two bodies. Again, they use movement and sound to work the situation's rhythm. This time the place is a stage. Nguyễn Baly and Tara Transitory enter slowly. Droning sounds already establish the sonic space of *Bird Bird, Touch Touch, Sing Sing* (2019). Following each other's steps closely they circle the room until they arrive in its center. Preparations begin: First, they wind their right arms with silver wire and then moisten their hands, arms, feet, and faces with water from a bowl placed between their bodies.

4 Deleuze and Guattari are well aware that home is not an always already existing place: They continue their story: "Now we are at home. But home does not preexist: it was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space. Many very diverse components have a part in this, landmarks and marks of all kinds. This was already true of the previous case. But now the components are used for organizing a space, not for the momentary determination of a center. The forces of chaos are kept outside as much as possible, and the interior space protects the germinal forces of a task to fulfill or a deed to do." Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 313.

5 Ikoniadou, *The Rhythmic Event*, chap. 3.

6 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 313.

What opens the performance in a ritualistic manner soon becomes technical, when they connect cables to the spiraling wires of their arms. Soft, tender, and exploratory touches of each other's skin create an intimate relation between the bodies of the two performers. As if trying out what each form of bodily contact does, Nguyễn and Transitory bring together their feet, shoulders, faces, arms, and hands. The droning and pulsating sounds of the beginning are now accompanied by high pitched tones, sometimes appearing suddenly, sometimes slowly fading in and out.

The changing sonic landscape not only introduces a new rhythm on the performance's musical track, it shifts the entire experience: wire and water are no longer accessories of a ritualistic action but technical components of the performance's sound-machine. While the electronic instruments have been already present in the space from the very beginning, they then become an integral part of the sonic-kinetic situation. What you hear is the very sound of movement as much as the movement of sound. In the relational dance of touching each other's skin, of approaching each other's bodies and withdrawing in manifold ways, Nguyễn and Transitory co-compose the performance's rhythm.

The rhythm of *Bird Bird, Touch Touch, Sing Sing* is neither the danced rhythm of one individual body, nor of two. It is the transversal rhythm that precedes any attribution of the movement to one individual. It emerges in the relational movements, running through the bodies of the performers. When the performers touch, movement runs through their bodies. Movement circulates like the sound producing electronic waves through their arms and shoulders, runs from the leg to the feet, from there to the other performer's leg and into the torso. When Nguyễn pushes her arm against Transitory's shoulder, a movement moves through their collective body. In these relational movements, in the ways the performers touch, a rhythm is produced. Touch creates differences in movement. Relations come with distance. The act of approaching is inseparable from that of withdrawal. While closeness emerges between the performers' heads, their torsos stay at certain distance. This interplay of bodily touching, laden with closeness and distance, makes their movements rhythmic. It is the rhythm of relational movement made through the difference that touch creates, that is: it is play with distance. Rather than being locked in static proximity, the distance of touch can be described by Deleuze and Guattari as rhythm in the sense that it is the moving configuration of an interval:

Critical distance is not a meter, it is a rhythm. But the rhythm, precisely, is caught up in a becoming that sweeps up the distances between characters,

making them rhythmic characters that are themselves more or less distant, more or less combinable (intervals).⁷

In this quote, Deleuze and Guattari point towards another important aspect of rhythm, also key to the work of Nguyễn + Transitory. It is not only the relation between the two performers that creates a rhythmic movement; their characters and their bodies themselves become rhythmical. Each of their bodies is full of movement, full of tension, and full of touch. As much as they touch each other, they touch parts of their own bodies (leaving the question of what “own” means). An elbow touches the torso, one leg the other, the hand and arm and the arm the chest. As rhythmic characters, their bodies are assemblages of touch. They are relations of closeness and distance. Each body is full of rhythms. In the performance they compose with other rhythms and thereby compose other rhythms.⁸

Choreosonic Touch

In *Bird Bird, Touch Touch, Sing Sing* touch is not only visible, it is audible.

One of most influential and potent developments in western dance was the separation of sound from movement. While music already organized the realm of the sonic, dance was meant to stay limited to the visual. Only by clearing movement from its sound, could dance evolve as a form to visualize pre-composed music without sonic interferences. The synchronization of dance to music is based on the ignorance of the sonic composition that comes along with each movement and each choreography. Against this logic, Ashon Crawley proposes his concept of the choreosonic: “the always attendant and interconnected concept of movement and sound.”⁹ While the separation of sound and movement for him is closely linked to whiteness, he studies the emergence of the choreosonic in the practices of Blackpentecostalism. In these practices, the choreosonic is grounded in the “atheology-aphilosophy of blackness.” It is “Blackpentecostalism [that] utilizes choreosonics as a politics of avoidance that exists previous to aversive theological, philosophical thought.”¹⁰

7 Ibid., 320.

8 For a detailed discussion on touch as rhythm and relation, see Gerko Egert, *Moving Relation: Touch in Contemporary Dance*, trans. Rett Rossi (New York: Routledge, 2020), especially chap. 4 “Body Tremors.”

9 Ashon T. Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 93.

10 Ibid.

In shouting and whooping, a different tradition of dance can be traced—one that does not separate sound and music. But Crawley is careful to not conflate one with the other. In relation to the tradition of shouting he writes:

And this because the shout does not take place without making, taking, and breaking sound; the shout traditions are choreographic insofar as they are sonic, and are sonic insofar as they are choreographic. This portmanteau thinks the concept of choreography and sonicity together by breaking them apart.¹¹

Following Crawley's proposition on the inseparability of sound and music, touch becomes choreosonic. Even though the sound of touch is most often (and especially in dance performances) kept in the background if not eliminated completely, this elimination is nothing more than an illusion. Against this illusionary separation of movement and sound, Nguyễn + Transitory use the very means of music's technological production to amplify the multiple sounds inherent in each relation and movement of touch. Yet their work with amplification comes with a difference. When the performers use wire and water to make touch audible, the sounds produced are not a louder version of the barely audible rhythms produced by skin touching skin. The flow of electric signals conducted through the moist surface of the body, into the body, though the flesh, across the wires and into the speaker creates again a difference in rhythm and a different rhythm. It co-composes with the droning rhythms that make up the sonic space of the performance from its beginning, as well as the vocal sounds articulated by both performers with increasing intensity until its very end.

In *Bird Bird, Touch Touch, Sing Sing* rhythm is no one-way street. While the flow of electric signals through the wires, bodies, and the moist skin of the performers compose the technical sound machine, the rhythm of the performance cannot be reduced to electricity. Sound feeds back into movement: it creates a driving rhythm, animating the performers' gestures. It slows movement down, makes it tarrying, explosive or floating. The sound created through touch affects the performers' bodies and their movement, creating a feed-back loop of sound and movement. Again: this is not the linearity of a closed circle. One does not know in advance the way the sonic affects the body.¹² Like

11 Ibid., 94.

12 Brian Massumi terms this impossibility to pre-define how affect will transmit the "autonomy of affect," or its "openness": "The autonomy of affect is its participation in the virtual. *Its autonomy is its openness*. Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is. Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and

the movements of touch, affection is not caused by a linear transmission. The droning sound can create a turbulent movement or can have a calming effect. It can slow down the rhythms of movement or agitate them. In other words: the choreosonic rhythm of touch makes the performers' bodies part of the performance's sound machine, without pre-determining the way they move or sound. Their choreosonic rhythms link the movements of choreography and those of sonicity by breaking them apart, as Crawley reminds us. The differential rhythm of the choreosonic performance creates a field of relation. Touching the bodies of the performers as well as those of the audience in sonic and tactile ways, the performers compose (with) the sound of movement and the movement of sound: *Bird Bird, Touch Touch, Sing Sing*.

The Rhythm of Striation

Another place, another night. Darkness, again. Rhythm is already there. The space of a dark stage. On the ground, barely visible, run silver lines, creating an undefinable pattern. Their straight diagonal design looks like the wire pattern of a micro-chip. These lines striate the space visually. They give rhythm. They are rhythm. A spatial rhythm. This rhythm opens the performance *Symphony of Intimacies* (2022).

Three years after *Bird Bird, Touch Touch, Sing Sing*, *Symphony of Intimacies* continues Nguyễn + Transitory's choreosonic explorations into the field of haptic and acoustic forms of relation. Relation between bodies, between sound, between rhythms. Relations of space, of time and between situations. *Symphony of Intimacies* is performed by five people: a dispersed group of bodies that most of the time move scattered around the space—bodies meeting occasionally, creating moments of intense and intimate contact, while never vanishing in a homogeneous collectivity.

Each of the performers moves alone, measures the space with her steps, follows the lines on the floor, crosses them, ignores them. While moving, the floor pattern becomes a rigorous score, neatly followed with each step, or it is laconically ignored, barely touched, as if not seen. Yet all the steps play the lines like an instrument. And an instrument they are. Made of shimmering metal, each of the lines connect to the sound processor, extending the machine of music production across the entire stage. Touching the lines and connecting

cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect." Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 35.

them with one's body modulates the droning sound, which creates the sonic realm of *Symphony of Intimacies* from the beginning. It is a modulation of an acoustic rhythm through bodies which started with the wiring of the two performer's bodies in *Bird Bird*, *Touch Touch*, *Sing Sing* and extends into a spatial configuration, played by multiple bodies in *Symphony of Intimacies*.

Extending the sound machine across the stage produces not only the visual rhythm of a space striated by lines, perceptible from the very beginning. These lines also create a sonic rhythm, that cuts across the rhythm of the visual. Visually and sonically, the lines co-compose with the performer's movements, creating the rhythm of the performance: sonically, by modulating the sound through touch; visually, through shrouding the lines. When the focus of perception is shifted away from the dancers' individual bodies and their movements to the wideness of the space, the performance's background and foreground begin to blur and the space begins to blink. Cutting with their black clothes through the shimmering lines of the stage, the lines appear and disappear, allowing the space itself to create its own rhythm: a sparkling field of black and silver-gold. In this sparkling field, the repetitiveness of the pattern disappears. Rather than a static space, the stage becomes a rhythmic situation, inseparable from its durational dimension. Making the space sparkle and its sound shake does not mean that structure and striation disappear once and for all. The pattern and its striation of space appears and disappears and becomes part of the performance's rhythm. Deleuze and Guattari call this the transversion of space between smooth and striated, a space that only exists in the process of modulation: "smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space."¹³ One can call it the rhythms of striation at work in the performance: a rhythm of space as much as a rhythm of sound and movement.

The performers in *Symphony of Intimacies* compose with the rhythms of the space. Rather than moving upon a striated structure on the ground, they move *with* the lines. By touching the lines that extend the music machine into space, the sonic rhythm of the performance is altered and new rhythms are created. This rhythm is a co-composition of the performers' movements with the circuits and loops running through the space. Space and its architecture become co-performers in what Luciana Parisi and Steve Goodman have dubbed

13 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 474.

a “rhythmic anarchitecture.”¹⁴ Building on the fact that space does not consist of just one rhythm but of many, and that these rhythms constantly interfere and intersect with each other, they describe anarchitecture as “a method of composition which feeds off the vibratory tension between contrasting occasions. A rhythmic anarchitecture is amodal and atemporal. Rhythm proper cannot be perceived purely via the 5 senses but is crucially transsensory or even non-sensuous.”¹⁵ Transsensory also describes the multiple rhythms of *Symphony of Intimacies*: bodily, acoustic, and spatial. Together they create a situation whose very nature sits in the in-between: in-between occasions, in-between senses, in-between movements, and in-between bodies. It is the transition that makes the performance’s rhythm, rather than any of the individual elements mentioned.

Improvisation as a way to alter these elements without following a pre-existing score makes the performance’s rhythmic anarchitecture. And these performers do so in a radical way, that is: sound and movement do not deviate from a preexisting score. In this radical way, there is no order to deviate and improvise on. Improvisation here comes out of improvisation. In regard to the jazz ensemble, Fred Moten describes this radical form of improvisation by distinguishing between an improvisation based on a pattern’s upkeep (by what is often called the “rhythmic group”) and an improvisation of “shared responsibility.” In his words: “There is, rather, a shared responsibility that makes possible the shared possibilities of irresponsibility. More precisely, attuned and passionate response is given both in the capacity to walk and to walk away.”¹⁶

It is this “shared responsibility of irresponsibility” that keeps the *Symphony of Intimacies* together (apart). Without an underlying structure, a fixed ground, without a pre-defined separation of sound and choreography, the rhythm is produced in improvisation. In the collective rhythm of sound and movement any existing structure becomes rhythmic itself. The pattern on the ground, which might be perceived as a limiting and structuring striation at the beginning, shimmers and sparkles as soon as the performers start to move. They do not provide an ordering choreography, only the visual pattern of an extensive sound machine, calling for a choreosonic production of rhythm—a rhythm, that “performs variations on a fixity that is always already in trouble.”¹⁷

14 Luciana Parisi and Steve Goodman, “Extensive Continuum Towards a Rhythmic Anarchitecture,” in *Inflexions*, no. 2 (2009) (*Rhythmic Nexus: the Felt Togetherness of Movement and Thought*), accessed 29 September 2022, https://www.inflexions.org/n2_parisigoodmanhtml.html.

15 Ibid.

16 Fred Moten, *Black and Blur* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 106.

17 Ibid., 108.

A Rhythmic Ensemble

Without following a score that provides a structuring rhythm, the performance creates a rhythmic milieu through collective improvisation. The concept of the rhythmic milieu draws on Gilbert Simondon's¹⁸ as well as on Deleuze and Guattari's¹⁹ thinking of the milieu as a relational situation from which new process emerges. Through the interplay of multiple rhythms—sonic, haptic, visual—the movements of the performance are created. Instead of placing the origin of a movement in an individual idea or a preexisting rhythm, movements emerge as the product of a co-composition. In this sense, rhythm is always relational: an effect of the milieu rather than a repetition of a structure. Multiple rhythms feed into each other and create new movements and new rhythms. In this relational field of rhythms, the performers are coming together, moving together, and relating with each other, producing a collective of rhythms, or as Fred Moten writes: an ensemble of rhythmic feel/ings.²⁰ A feeling of intimacy that never loses difference and keeps open the wiggle room for diverging rhythms to continue.

Thinking of the performance as a rhythmic milieu shifts its notion from that of a composition of individual acts to a relational field. Yet, to think of the milieu only as the breeding ground for a collective to emerge would only grasp one side of the process at work in *Symphony of Intimacies*. The performer's rhythms are not only the product of the performance's rhythmic milieu. They are also part of the milieu itself: each movement, each sound, each sensation of touch alters the rhythmic condition of the entire milieu. Moving with the others is therefore as much the creation of a milieu as their movements simultaneously create new milieus to move in and to move with. Gilbert Simondon is keen to point out that this form of feedback (or better, "feed forward" as we will see) does not collapse in simple adaptation (which eventually would lead to uniformity and the creation of one overarching rhythm). As every new rhythm alters the milieu it emerges from, it also becomes immediately changed by this altered milieu.²¹ It is a process of constant alternation, in which neither the rhythmic milieu

18 Gilbert Simondon, "Culture and Technics (1965)," trans. Olivia Lucca Fraser and Giovanni Menegalle, in *Radical Philosophy* 189 (2015): 17–23; Gilbert Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, trans. Cecile Malaspina and John Rogove (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2017).

19 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

20 Fred Moten entitles his discussion of the ensemble in relation to Jazz music as "The New International of Rhythmic Feel/ings" (Moten, *Black and Blur*, chap. 6).

21 Simondon, "Culture and Technics (1965)," 21; see also: Gerko Egert, *Choreopower. On the Politics of Movement* (forthcoming).

nor the emerging rhythms attain enduring stability. It is a hardly predictable process, in which the improvising ensemble of performers moves.

Improvisation and the unpredictable rhythms of the choreosonic allow the dancers to relate in their shared milieu without being tied to a singular rhythmic structure.

But improvisation and unpredictability are characterized by their own form of power, as Parisi and Goodman stress in relation to their discussion of rhythmic anarchitecture. Often seen as a possibility to overcome the disciplinary powers of static structures, the relational rhythms of the milieu are no less a field of regulation and governing. To grasp the politics of the performance of *Symphony of Intimacy*, one cannot rely on its improvisational logic. Rather than attributing resistance to the relational and improvisational character of the performances rhythms as such, the question is: how do the relations and rhythms differ from those at work in dominant politics? One form of power Parisi and Goodman see very often at work in rhythmic milieus is topological power:

It is precisely such calculation of infinitesimal variations that has increasingly become an expression of a topological power, where the production of novelty becomes a priority of control. This is not just an illusion of ideology, but produces real effects. For instance, one expression of this we call ergonomic control, whereby physical and cognitive activities are pre-emptively modulated via the engineering of random algorithms into the morphology of blobjects.²²

How, then, should we think of ergonomic control and the forms of resistance to it in the creation of new rhythmic ensembles and milieus? Parisi and Goodman immediately state: topological control cannot be resisted “via the reintroduction of a Euclidean architectural order.”²³ For them a reworking of rhythms needs to happen on the way it distributes events in time and space. A rhythmic anarchitecture as the very possibility to resist topological power, therefore relies on the “spatio-temporal anomalies” and the “evacuation of here and now.”²⁴ How, then, do we move together to create a collective rhythm, in which collectivity exceeds the composition of movements in the rhythmic milieu of the already give now? How does one create a rhythmic milieu that produces “new singularities (which is to say new ensembles),” as Fred Moten would say?²⁵

22 Parisi and Goodman, “Extensive Continuum Towards a Rhythmic Anarchitecture.”

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Moten, *Black and Blur*, 117.

The Transsituational Politics of Rhythm

As much as every rhythm is of the milieu, it is not limited to the milieu. As argued above, rhythms are not created as an individual act or by a willful movement, they are the product of the convergence of multiple rhythms and how they interfere. In this sense, rhythms are closely related to their milieu. While the milieu is important in the way in which rhythms emerge, rhythm always exceeds the milieu. Coming back to the notion of rhythm as “a transcoded passage from one milieu to another, a communication of milieus, coordination between heterogeneous space-times”²⁶ as stated by Deleuze and Guattari, rhythms are always of multiple milieus. Rhythms relate milieus in a space-timely manner, making them part of the rhythms as much as rhythms are part of the milieu. It is this rhythm between milieus or what also could be called the “transsituational” logic of rhythm²⁷ which I want to propose as the politics at work in Nguyễn + Transitory’s performances. It is a politics closely related to pedagogy and rehearsal (rather than a politics of staging or representation).

Bird Bird, Touch Touch, Sing Sing and Symphony of Intimacies are both part of a series of situations creating a process that opens up a way to learn and rehearse, as well as to explore forms of relation and collectivity through touch and intimacy. Instead of being a presentation of a directed rehearsal process, the performances are situations in an ongoing process of multiple events, some of them happening in the space of a rehearsal studio, some of them on stage, others in the everyday lives of the performers. Outside of the theater, before and after the public performances, the rhythms of the performance process feed into the life of the performers, modulating the rhythms of their everyday, to use the words of Henri Lefebvre.²⁸ At the same time everyday experiences continuously feed into the work and are reworked constantly. This remodulating of the rhythmic feelings of the everyday, the proposition to combine them with other rhythms and to let them co-compose, allows for “spatio-temporal anomalies” as mentioned by Parisi and Goodman. It is here, in the moment of the interfering rhythms of artistic and everyday performance that a rhythmic anarchitectures is created and the possibility to resist the dominant habits of everyday rhythms emerge. During the process of working together, one of the performers states:

We are relaxed, but we have to be conscious of the fact that we are exercising an act of resistance as well [...]. In a collaboration, people having had

26 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 313.

27 Egert, *Choreopower*.

28 Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life* (London: Verso, 2014).

experiences, or life experiences, that deal with being excluded, because of, you know, sexual identity or sexual expression [...], or a particular race, you know being racialized of course or being in situations of being impoverished because of the social economic model in which we live.²⁹

Here, the relaxed dynamics of the performance process is not the creation of a collective situation free from any dynamics of power. The question it poses is rather: how can the dominant and ordering rhythms of the everyday, the alignment to certain choreographies and the exclusion of other modes of living and moving be challenged and modulated to allow for other rhythms to emerge and continue to exist?³⁰ Instead of imagining a space outside of the powers that organize the rhythm of the everyday, the rehearsals become a reworking of and with the experiences of exclusion in the everyday. This work feeds on the experiences of the performers as much as it feeds into the experiences of everyday living and the rhythm it creates. In this sense, *Symphony of Intimacies* is a rehearsal space. Yet, it is not only rehearsing the show, but the very singularities and ensembles it produces for everyday life. And it does so on the level of rhythm: the rhythm of sound and movement, of the choreosonic, as well as the rhythm of touch and intimacy. It explores the power of rhythm to go beyond the given situation to alter movements and create new modes of collective movement. With its power to re-compose between and across situations, it creates new refrains and gives constituency to emerging processes. This makes rhythm one of the performance's powerful operations.

To work on the level of rhythm means that you never limit the way you move and the way you move with others to the actual and the current situation. By co-composing with the rhythms of a situation, the milieu as well as your own movements are altered. This makes the politics of *Bird Bird*, *Touch Touch*, *Sing Sing* and *Symphony of Intimacies* a transsituational politics. Their rhythms work across situations, never limiting the movement and sounds to the actual event. It is through this transsituational rhythm that relations and collective movements gain consistency. The rhythms of the performance feed into future situations, co-composed with them and linking back to the collective experiences of the performances. Through these transsituational movements, new ensembles, new relations and new intimacies are created.

29 Quote from one of the performers of *Symphony of Intimacies*, stated in a documentary on the rehearsal process, accessed 29 September 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y68V3gs3TmY&t=1s>.

30 For a more extensive study of the politics of movement, see Egert, *Choreopower*.

