

WORKSHOP

COLLECTIVE VOCAL IMPROVISATION

And Rhythm with Signs



AN INVITATION TO BE PART OF AN IMPROVISED CHOIR, WHERE WE EXPLORE MUSIC, SINGING AND BODY PERCUSSION AS TOOLS FOR COLLECTIVE EXPRESSION AND CREATION.

The activity, lead by singer Aixa Figini, is based on the *Rhythm with Signs* method, a sign language that allows to conduct real time improvisation in order to create musical compositions and sound landscapes in a creative and playful way.

The Rhythm with Signs starts as a language but it soon becomes a musical game where each participant is encouraged to explore their individual musical resources by sharing these with the group and experiencing collective and creative music making. It is a tool that allows to develop our listening, creativity, coordination, appraisal of diversity, understanding of the roles and responsibilities in a group, and the ability to embrace mistakes as creative opportunities.

During the workshop we practice voice, rhythm and body percussion games and exercises, and learn traditional songs and rhythms from around the world to widen the musical repertoire in our improvisations. These sessions offer a dynamic space where participants can nurture and explore their own musicality, embracing new elements and resources in their music making, while enjoying the experience of collaborative music creation.

THE METHOD: RHYTHM WITH SIGNS

Rhythm with Signs is a musical sign language that allows the coordination of rhythmic improvisations for any kind of instruments or solely for voices. Created in 2005 by Argentine musician and multi-instrumentalist Santiago Vazquez for his group La Bomba del Tiempo, it soon became a phenomenon that transformed Buenos Aires cultural scene. It has since been adopted by numerous musicians and educators in over 30 countries due to its innovative character and pedagogical value.

By employing over 130 hand and body signs, the conductor leads the performing musicians to create a collective composition in real time. Each sign refers to different music parameters (rhythm, melody, harmony, structure, repetition, polyphony, unison, etc..), or suggests specific priorities or objectives serving as guiding principles in the creation of a musical piece.

FOR WHOM?

The activity can be organized and adapted to accommodate various groups and participants with or without musical or singing experience: professional musicians, amateurs or just those eager to experiment their musicality for the first time.

This method allows beginners to discover music through an immediate and playful experience, stimulates the more experienced to enhance their musical resources, and provides professional musicians with an ample range of tools to apply to their performances or to their various artistic, educational or therapeutic projects.

Due to its simplicity and effectiveness the Rhythm with Signs language can be used in very different contexts. Whether it's music education in schools, music therapy sessions, corporate coaching workshops, or various social projects centered around group dynamics, this method proves to be an invaluable resource.

STRUCTURE

The workshop can be organized and adapted to different context/groups. We present two different proposals as an example:

- 2-3 hours: Collective singing, vocal improvisation, and Rhythm with Signs - Introduction
- 6-8 hours (1-2 days): Collective singing, vocal improvisation, and Rhythm with Signs - Intensive Workshop.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

A big space to ensure participants have ample room to move comfortably. There is no need for microphones or a PA.



ABOUT AIXA FIGINI

Aixa Figini is an Argentine singer, musicologist and producer. She holds a Degree in Musical Arts from the Universidad de Buenos Aires, with additional studies at the Escuela de Música Contemporánea de Buenos Aires. Later, interested in arts management and production she studied a Masters Degree in Arts Administration and Cultural Policies at Goldsmiths University of London.

In Argentina, Aixa worked as a singing and vocal technique teacher for several years. She participated in various music projects as a versatile vocalist, in genres such as tango, Argentine folklore, Latin American music, and vocal improvisation. In 2012 she moved to London where she studied her masters degree, worked in the management and production of music festivals and orchestras, and developed her artistic projects singing tango and Latin American music.

Passionate about the multiple creative possibilities of music improvisation, she studied the music improvisation system Rhythm with Signs, created by Argentine percussionist Santiago Vazquez at CERPS (Centro de Estudios del Ritmo y Percusión con Señas, Argentina) and took part in several improvisation ensembles. She is a certified music trainer by Musicians without Borders, specialising in the utilisation of music as a tool for community building and social cohesion.

She lives in Lisbon since 2018, where she works as a musician, creator, producer and educator. She currently leads her own Latin American music trio and is the founder and director of CIRCULAR, a female vocal improvisation ensemble. In addition, she co-created À Beira do Cais - fado & tango, a show that seeks to build bridges between both urban music traditions. Aixa regularly conducts vocal improvisation and community singing workshops, sharing her passion for music and empowering others through collective musical expression.



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Aixa Figini



CIRCULAR Voices

