



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

# The Rhythm of Thinking: Immanence and Ethics in Theater Performance

av

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## Akademisk avhandling

Akademisk avhandling för konstnärlig doktorsexamen i scenisk gestaltning vid Högskolan för scen och musik, Göteborgs universitet, som med tillstånd av Konstnärliga fakultetens dekan offentligt kommer att försvaras

Fredagen den 16 september 2016 kl. 14:00  
Glashuset, Akademin Valands innergård  
(ingång från Chalmersgatan 4), Göteborg

Disputationen inleds med en offentlig visning av  
föreställningsdokumentationer samma dag kl. 09:30  
Bio Valand, Storgatan 43, Göteborg

Fakultetsopponent:  
Professor Maaïke Bleeker, University of Utrecht

# ABSTRACT

**Title:** The Rhythm of Thinking: Immanence and Ethics in Theater Performance

**Language:** English with a summary in Swedish

**Keywords:** artistic research, co-composition, collective processes, compositional structure, dramaturgy, ethics, hierarchy in collective creation, immanent collective creation, instant collective composition, multiplicity, music theater, performance philosophy, performative critique, process ontology, process philosophy, relation of non-relation, theater, theater directing, theatrical composition. Rosi Braidotti, John Cage, Gilles Deleuze, Brian Massumi, Mathias Spahlinger.

**ISBN:** 978-91-982423-0-0 (printed edition)

**ISBN:** 978-91-982423-1-7 (digital edition)

The dissertation *The Rhythm of Thinking: Immanence and Ethics in Theater Performance* is an artistic research project in the field of theater, with directing and theatrical composition and dramaturgy as its main points of focus. The critical exploration is based on the experience of conceptualizing and directing three different theater performances. The project is an attempt to explore the implications of the concept of immanence in the collective creative process of theater making. In particular, it is an effort to illuminate what might be called “processes of immanence” or “theater of immanence”. The research is built around a net of questions, observations, and thoughts ranging from the experiences of collective creative processes and collaborative work with the performers, to academic criticism on discourses related to the fields of performance studies, philosophy and performance philosophy, perception theory, and musicology. The unfurling of this net is intended to contribute to the ideas and theories surrounding the relationship between the structural specifics of theater – dramaturgically and compositionally – and the aspects of meaning and affect. This formulation encapsulates a number of sub-areas to which the investigation aims to contribute with problematizing insertions, areas broadly defined as: transforming theories into concrete compositional and processual measures; developing dramaturgical discourses beyond semantic language; problematizing a binary relation between composition/conceptualization and an intuitive, emotional creative force; discussing how to enhance a readiness for variation in the performers; problematizing hierarchical structures, both in regards to the hierarchy of expressions, as well as creative influence; mapping out a thought process for a directorial practice; and finally, searching for a possible reciprocity between compositional structures and ethics.

The investigated materials are theater performances but the critical treatment is mainly done through philosophical discourses, predominately represented by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995), the Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi (b.1956), and the Italian/Australian philosopher Rosi Braidotti (b.1954).