

# Dancing companionships in Ambient Jam Cymru (Wales)



## I'm trying to find words here....

And I keep deleting them and then re writing them.

There is something about that... place before I put the words out on a page.

It's that place I'm trying to speak of and to tell you of...

interdependence

possible

Perhaps of desire..

To reach towards you in some way and be

It's a sensory place, a place of rising potential and of communication.

reached to... in some way.

This place is a feeling place... It's the

world of the Ambient Jam.

Its....

The listening place

Words here on this little page...

In some way will attempt to tell you what happens in the Ambient Jam.

Words in some way can only get us close to the neighbourhood of what the Ambient Jam is. They can never describe it from inside.

The Ambient Jam for me is a place so unlike any other.

It's a place of impermanence and instability, of the unknowable and unnameable territories of sensation and of human to human relating and connection.

**In some way it's like trying to climb inside a poem.**

I have been thinking about the word companionship a lot in relation to Ambient Jam. The word "companion" comes from a late Latin word meaning "one who eats bread with another". I like that image of eating bread together. In some way it's really ordinary, and a really simple act of sharing an experience.

Ambient Jam is a way of being together. More than anything it's a learning to be together.

We attempt the act of togetherness on a weekly basis, by dancing.

Dancing and moving together allows us to feel each other in a way that language and words cannot. The participants who come to the Ambient Jam are adults who live in a languaged world. So the Ambient Jam is a place where we prioritise another kind of language.

One which is in some way formed by dancing together, it's emergent.

It's made up of how we meet each other's eyes, or not.  
It's made up of gestures, or screams at times, or big breaths, sighs, and laughter.  
It's made up of how we touch each other, and how we attempt to touch each other.  
It's in the skin that listens to the space between us.  
It's made of being deeply affected by each other.  
Mostly it's made of care.  
That in some way is the spine of this language.

How to care for each other.

*The musicians begin...*

*We lay on the floor, roll about... and we try to undo some of that doing.  
The participants enter and for the next hour we walk right through a membrane into another kind of world.*

*We say hello...*

*We welcome... each other...*

*there is vulnerability, there is tender awkwardness, there is this feeling of being catapulted out of your familiar ways of being. Thankfully.*

*Then something happens.  
We begin moving, begin meeting. We call this first bit  
ARRIVING...*

# Interdependence



*The question of how we arrive together and build this place, and the conditions where we can meet each other. The conditions of meeting each other mean slowing down. For us to move out of our uprightness, or cerebral way of navigating each other. To loosen our grip on our habitual ways of relating, and to be available to learn new ways, by listening to each other through our bodies.*

*N begins to rock and laugh. Slowly his laughter spreads through the space like a flock of birds, kind of touching everyone right in the eyeballs. So much so you see the spark in the eyes of everyone who delights in N's laughter.*

*Delighting in each other is care made visible.*

*To learn from each other's capacity to receive pleasure and joy, and for that pleasure to be contaminating, meaning that we catch it. We learn from each other's pleasure as well as displeasure and how we communicate those.*

***In a moment***

***The space stills***

***We are all resting***

*Three of the carers yawn in unison.*

*They are knackered. I offer a blanket and a cushion.*

*There is something about giving each other permission to rest.*

*In a culture that in some way refuses this, it's a radical unlearning.*

*In a way we step out of the performance of our responsibilities, de-robe for a moment and care for our own knackered-ness.*

*We remember that we are bodies, and our bodies remember what it's like to just be,*



and to be with other bodies  
that are also just being...

Its radically simple.

That's why it kind of feels dangerous.  
What if we all stopped trying to be so  
productive and could find a way of  
relating like we see the animals do.

I always pass a field of horses on the  
way to the Ambient jam, I wind down  
my window and hope that I can catch  
some of their magnificent presence.  
The way they graze around each  
other's bodies, how they play, and  
coax each other to gallop or trot  
alongside.

The music goes really quiet just

now...

There is a deep-sea dive moment of belonging, where we are all kind of shipwrecked from our  
habits, but we're OK with it.  
Actually enjoying being cast ashore with no idea of how we got here...

S takes deep sigh.... there is a letting go...  
In some way it takes 50 mins of something to arrive to this sublime place of being together.  
**De-robed, non-doing, Togethering.**

The Ambient Jam in some ways teaching us how to value difference, to celebrate it. To learn how  
adults with disabilities often navigate a world that so often disregards their ways of being and  
feeling the world.

Some people taste the world  
some touch it  
some people hear it  
some people feel their hands across it then enter it.

For a world that prioritises uprightness and cognition and linear ways of going about things,  
Ambient Jam does the opposite.

It disrupts those ableist modes of communication and lights up other ways of being in the world.  
It allows the possibility of intimacy and of slowing, and of dignity, in recognising the other modes of  
being and how we can attempt to learn from each other.

The Jam begins to wind down and there is the ending that seems to go on forever.  
Everlasting ending.

I catch the musician's eye, there is a spark.  
I look over and the other dancers are drenched in gold tinsel and one arm sticks out.  
I hold someone's foot, not sure whose it is. It doesn't matter.

One carer looks at S with what can only look like the eyes of great love and great care.

The carer, as he leaves, looks over to me and says,

'They love it don't they'

*He said it with a delight. There is a spark in his eyes too.*

*We say our goodbyes, thank all the participants for coming, saying each of their names at the threshold of the doorway.*

*We as a team gather at the end.*

*We take a breath and look at each other and hang out a few seconds more in that place.*

*That precious place.*

*Just before language...*