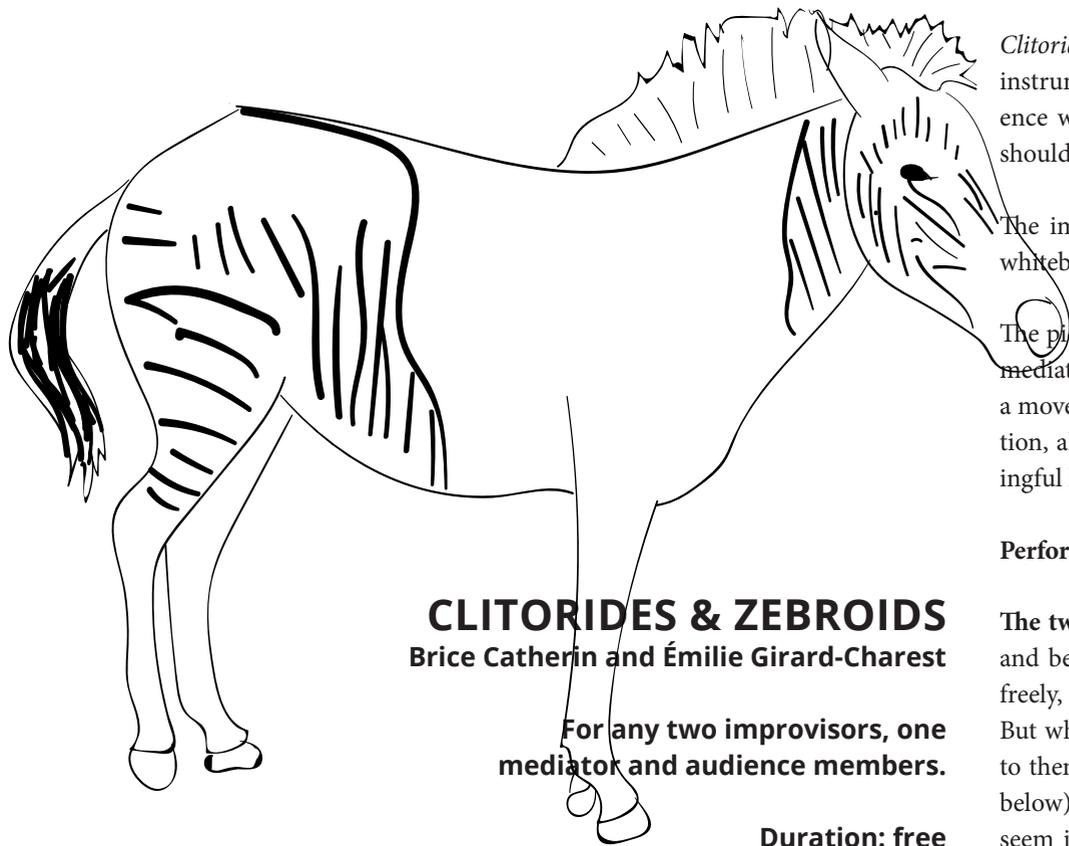




**CLITORIDES & ZEBROIDS**





## **CLITORIDES & ZEBROIDS**

**Brice Catherin and Émilie Girard-Charest**

**For any two improvisors, one mediator and audience members.**

**Duration: free**

### **Description and Duration**

*Clitorides & Zebroids* is a work for any two improvisors playing on any kind of instrument. Their improvisation is influenced by suggestions from the audience which are chosen, filtered and organised by a mediator. The mediator should be a composer, and/or an improvisor.

The improvisors, the mediator and the audience members share an online whiteboard (on their computer, tablet or smartphone) to communicate.

The piece is divided into as many movements as you, the performers and the mediator, wish. Each movement has a free duration. We suggest, however, that a movement shouldn't last less than five minutes. There is no maximum duration, although it seems that one whole day per movement would be a meaningful limit for a long version.

### **Performers and Tasks**

**The two improvisors** play any instruments. Their task is to improvise freely and beautifully, constantly and at all cost. They start each movement totally freely, and then they follow the suggestions of the mediator and the audience. But whatever the suggestions, the improvisors must have a musical response to them. This includes situations such as acrobatic body contacts (see details below), spoken moments, as well as any other extreme situation that might seem impossible to sustain a state of satisfying musicality. (And this is also why this piece requires practice.)

**The mediator** should be an improvisor and/or a composer, that is to say someone capable of making quick musical decisions. During the performance, the mediator is not *creating* material, but is choosing, filtering, and compiling the suggestions from the audience. (See below for details.) The mediator's role is similar to a wise elder or a village chief's role in a traditional tribe. All the members of the tribe have a say, but the chief has the experience, the wisdom, and the benevolence to recognise and choose the suggestions that will benefit the improvisation (and thus the audience) the most. Therefore, *Clitorides &*

(23.03.2019)

My two young girlfriends leave my bed and my room after we have spent the night together. In the dream, it is clear to me that we slept together but did not have sex. My ex-wife, who is still my wife in the dream, is standing at a corner of the bed. She looks at me without anger, but the shape of her eyebrows seems to be saying "you could have done this when I'm not here". I feel ashamed.

Our idea of beauty in this context: whatever you genuinely find beautiful; whatever sound you find something beautiful about; carefully and diligently crafted sounds, with commitment and devotion; producing sounds that are in your interest and in the interest of your partner; no "automatic", "banal", "already known" sound; each new sound is an exploration, and sometimes a discovery.



Most traditional chiefs also benefit from sexual privileges during their reign, but are beaten up and banished from their community if they do a bad job. We let you decide, about whether such traditions are best followed or ignored.

*Zebroids* is not pretending to be a mockery of direct democracy ("each vote counts, including the uninformed"), but an attempt to build a micro-society in which each individual serves the community at the best of their capacities. Two trained improvisors improvise; an experienced and benevolent mediator mediates; all the other members of the micro-society are invited to participate *or not*, freely, making it possible to share unforeseeable ideas with the performers. Note that the mediator also chooses the amount of suggestions shared with the improvisors, as well as the pace of this sharing. We consider that these choices are also of musical nature, and that each mediator will have a different sensitivity regarding them.

**The audience members** are invited to suggest parameters and ideas on an online whiteboard in order to guide the improvisation. (See below for details.) It is important to understand (and to explain to the audience) that their suggestions may or may not be taken into account by the mediator. Also, there might be a noticeable gap between the moment the suggestion is shared by an audience member and the moment it is possibly and eventually picked up by the mediator.

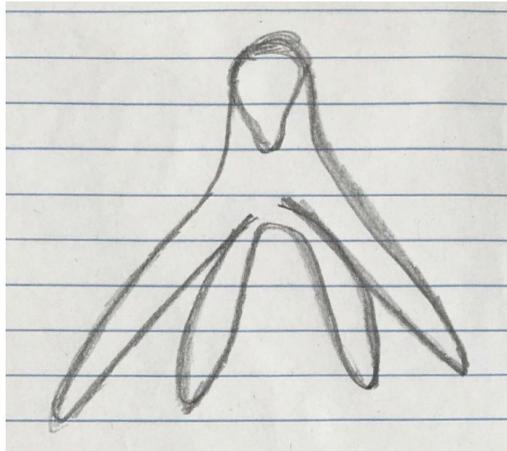
#### **The online whiteboard – how it works**

We, the composers, have selected a number of parameters that the audience members can choose from. We have arranged these parameters into three distinct movements for now. We will add more parameters in the future, but the total number of parameters per movement should remain the same: two to five parameters in each movement depending on how many one can fit inside one page. (See attached examples.) This means that our parameters can be chosen and rearranged differently for each performance, as long as each page is filled up, while some of them can be dismissed.

Each movement also has a blank space that the mediator shall fill before each performance. For the première, our mediator was Maria Sappho, who chose to add a "record/playback" option in each movement. The mediator may also choose a different parameter (or more than one) for each movement.

(03.04.2019)

Some kind of gathering of the music department of the university somewhere in beautiful green meadows. I don't feel too well. J and L, two (actual) musicologists happen to also be medical doctors. They examine me. They reach the conclusion that there is an undetected Siamese brother alive inside my chest. He's called Fat Mister Woodman ("Gros Monsieur Dubois" in the original version). He looks indeed like a tiny fat man in a suit.



Since there is no limitation to the number of parameters that the mediator might add, it means that some movements can be using only the mediator's parameters (as well as the "power to the people box" that we will explain below). The contrary is not allowed: there cannot be a movement with just our (the composers') parameters.

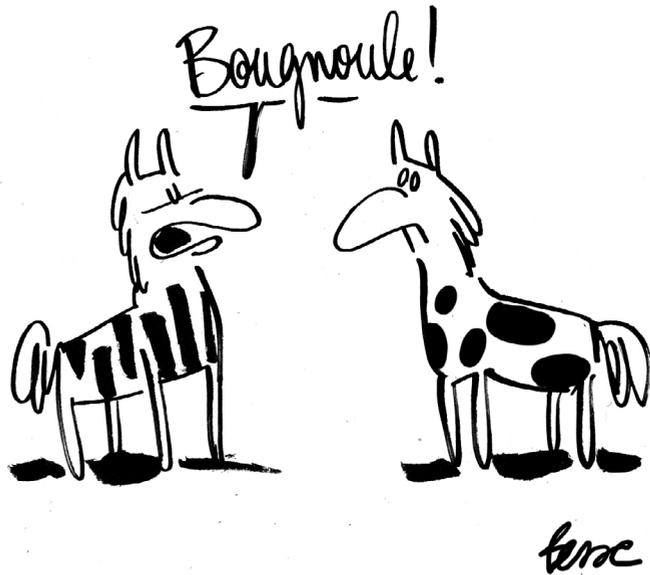
Each movement also has a "power to the people" box. This box is to be filled by the audience members during the performance. Just like with any other parameter, the suggestions in this box may or may not be taken into account by the mediator.

In practical terms, the improvisors and the mediator are invited to use any image editing software to rearrange the movements, the extra parameters we attached to this score, and the mediator's new parameters. Note that you should preferably not modify the size of the parameter picture nor the size of each movement picture, as they serve as practical limitations for the number of parameters per page.

The right side of each page (pink side) is the area where the audience members will share their suggestions. These suggestions can apply to Performer 1 (colour blue), Performer 2 (colour red) or both (colour green). We used these three colours just because they were available on the online whiteboard website we used. Change them at will according to convenience. You can also replace the indications "Performer 1" and "Performer 2" with the actual names of the improvisors.

The left side of each page (green side) is the area where the mediator shares the chosen material with the improvisors. Technically, nothing stops the audience members from overriding the mediator and writing directly on the green side. Yet they should be asked gently before the piece starts to not act like dicks just because anonymity allows much too predictable immature behaviours. (Phrase it in a less polemical way.)

Once you have done that, you can use any online whiteboard sharing website.



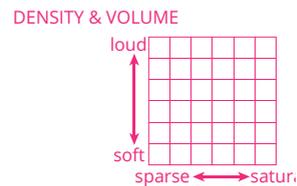
(We used [www.webwhiteboard.com](http://www.webwhiteboard.com).) The mediator shares the link with the audience, gives a number of explanations (see below), loads the picture of the first movement, and then the show starts. Between each movement, the mediator clears the board and loads the new movement. The moment the board is cleared also indicates to the improvisors they should finish their improvisation. The mediator may take as much time as needed before loading the new movement, since the Improvisors do not *need* the whiteboard to play.

### The online whiteboard – the parameters

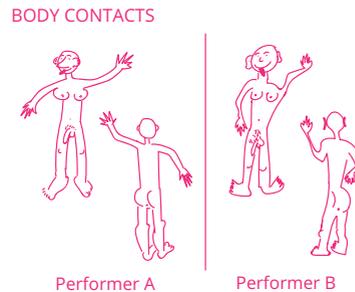
The following explanations describe the audience members' options, and how the improvisors and the mediators should react to them. [The explanations which only concern the improvisors and/or the mediator and should not be shared with the audience are in square brackets.]



Tick the box of your choice. Left side: the improvisors will use homogenous, continuous material that evolves organically. Right side: the improvisors will change hectically, constantly and radically whatever they are playing.



Tick the box of your choice. Upper line: the improvisors play loudly. Lower line: the improvisors play softly. Left side: the improvisors play very few, sparse sounds. Right side: the improvisors play constantly, not allowing a single silence or even the music to “breathe”.



Join two (or more) body parts together. They can be one part on each body or two parts of the same body. The performers will have to follow the body part connection(s) the mediator will eventually choose.

(27.05.19)  
I am committing hara-kiri. A friend is holding me from behind. It is unclear whether he is helping me to kill myself or if he is hugging me.

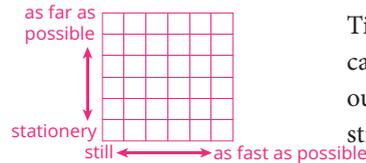


(29.05.19)

Someone tries to force me to wear a t-shirt that is not yet dry for a concert pretexting that it is the right color. So, I kill myself.



NUMBER OF INSTRUMENTS



WORDS TO CONNECT

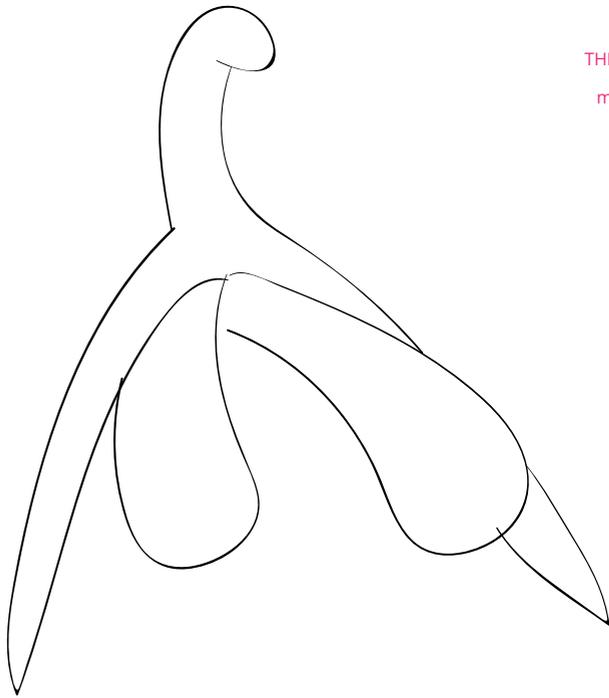
non-discursive zebra eyebrow  
 obsession sin  
 marrow clitorides decline halloumi meat  
 contact our lives in general karate  
 sledgehammer cunnilingus  
 vivid impulse heart physicality  
 comeuppance  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (your word) Montevideo

Tick the box of your choice. Left side: the two improvisors are playing the exact same thing (as much as possible). Right side: the two improvisors play things that are as unrelated as possible. [Mediator: note that ticking different boxes for each performer might generate contradictory – and therefore interesting – situations.]

Write down the number of your choice. The improvisor will use that many instruments. [Before starting the piece, the mediator will inform the audience of the number of available instruments. The number of available instruments does not include the voice, the body, the objects – such as chairs – in the space, nor the building itself – floor, walls, etc. – even though the latter are available too, *de facto*. The box shows the total number of instruments. So, for example, if this number is 3, Performer A can play two instruments, and Performer B one instrument. The instruments can be played simultaneously or not, this is the performers' decision. If the mediator chooses a number higher than the maximum number of available instruments, the performers deal with it.]

Tick the box of your choice. Top line: the performers go as far as they can within the venue. Bottom: the performers move their bodies without leaving the spot they are on. Left side: the performers are totally still. Right side: the performers move as fast as they can. [Mediator: note that ticking the top left box triggers a contradictory – and therefore interesting – situation.]

Connect two or more words that inspire you. You may also add your own word.



(22.04.19)

My nose bleeds and the guy next to whom I am sleeping tells me that I do it like a lama.

(Somewhere around 2012)

A friend of mine is disguised as a groin. He is wearing beige clothes to make his whole body resemble a leg, his dark beard is evoking the pubic hair and the little red dots and young regrowth around it, a not so fresh bikini waxing.

Tick the boxes of your choice. Left side: the words you previously connected are missing from the improvisation. Right side: they are omnipresent in the improvisation. The words are used as the theme of the improvisation. [Improvisors: you may use the words as inspiration for some symphonic poem, or literally, by using them as a theme for a speech.] Or the words can be used as sonic material. [Improvisors: again, you may imitate the sound of a “non-discursive eyebrow” – for example – on your instrument, or you can use the sounds of the words “non-discursive eyebrow” as sonic material for a vocal improvisation. One last important word: whenever you speak, never forget to carry on making beautiful music, not just a speech, even if you are “just” speaking. The focus is always more on the musical quality of the sonic output than on anything else (meaning, for example).]

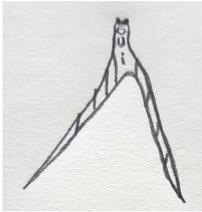
### Explanations before the piece begins

Of course, before the piece begins, the mediator needs to explain how it works to the audience. Here is how we suggest proceeding:

- Share the link to the online whiteboard with the audience. This might even be done beforehand, for example before the concert or before an intermission, to allow enough time for people to connect to the Internet and look for the website.
- Explain to the audience that *Clitorides & Zebroids* is a free improvisation. The role of the audience members is to make suggestions that may or may not be chosen by the mediator. No one is obliged to participate. Participating, on the other hand, is not a guarantee that the suggestion will be taken into account. But if it is, then we thank the participants for their excellence. At this stage, you may choose freely if you are going to talk briefly about the modern human’s (lack of) ability to not be in control, to accept a situation as it is, and to follow the path of the Bodhidharma.
- The audience members are welcome to write on the right side (pink side)

(29.03.2019)

There is a BBQ party in the beautiful garden of what seems to be our beautiful house in the countryside. (A bucolic version of our real house in our Yorkshire suburb.) My housemate A is taking care of the BBQ. B, who I have a crush on in real life, goes to him and shouts angrily "You piss me off! I don't want you to move in with me anymore". Then, she comes to me, and still with an angry tone almost commands me "Brice, you will move in with me". I wake up disappointed and anxious.



(14.04.2019)

I come home with a new girlfriend in the evening. There's a guy I don't know sleeping in my bed, but I know it's normal because we're many people in the house and we share beds. We start making out with my new girlfriend when two cops barge in. They scream at me, accusing me of something unclear. I tell my girlfriend, but also to myself "cops are damn stupid" ("qu'ils sont cons ces flics"). Eventually, they grab my concert overalls (some kind of plumber overalls I use for performances) and throw them with rage on the floor. The guy in my bed is still asleep. The cops leave in their police car, and leave me behind, even though I'm under arrest. A third cop in a civilian outfit who seems to be more of a detective shows up. He needs to check something on my computer in the room next door. I hear him struggling. He needs some kind of plugin, or at least some kind of help to do what he needs to do. He calls a hotline in vain. I think to myself again "cops are damn stupid". He leaves the house to get "urgent help" on a crappy bicycle. I think one last time "cops are damn stupid".



of each board. The left side is for the use of the mediator only. It would be considered "inappropriate" and "mean" from an audience member to directly write on the left side of the board.

- Explain the colour code: the blue pen controls Performer A, the red one, Performer B, the green one, both at the same time.
- Then explain all the parameters of all the movements.
- Once you are done, load the picture of the first movement. At this exact moment, the improvisors start improvising. Give them your first instructions when you feel it is the right moment.

### Thank you section

Brice Catherin wishes to thank Moss Freed, from whom he stole the idea of "free improvisation + stuff" in the first place.

The composers wish to thank all the people who offered their illustrations of clitorides and zebroids:

Cover page: Gabriel Dharmoo

Page 2: Brice Catherin

Pages 3 and 4: Émilie Girard-Charest

Page 5: Camille Besse

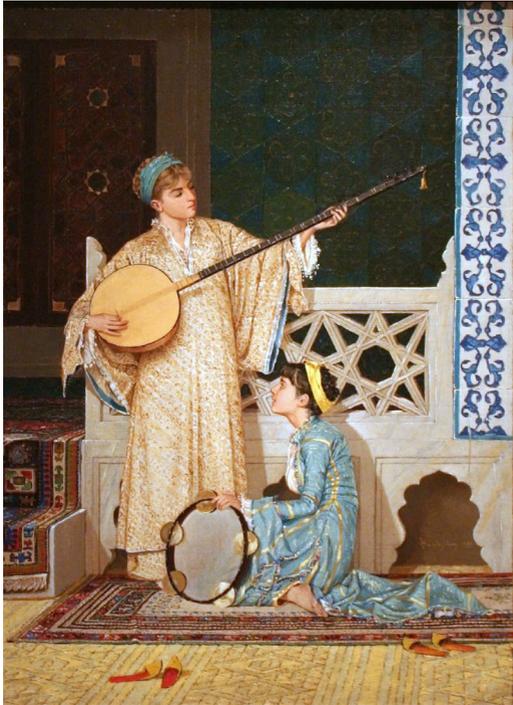
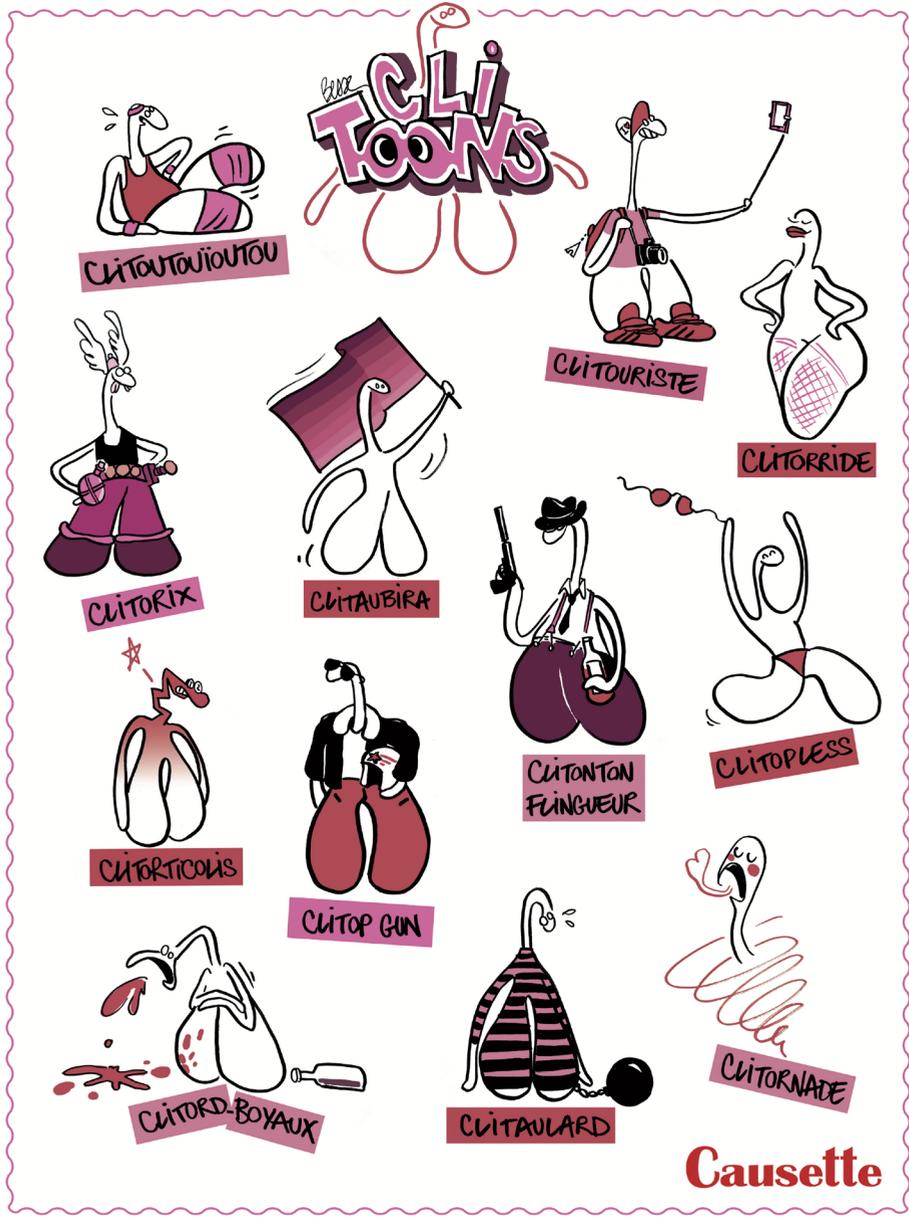
Page 6: Justine Eckhaut

Page 7: Brice Catherin

Page 8: Lieke van der Voort

Page 9: Camille Besse

February - June 2019, Huddersfield (UK), Berlin (Germany).



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The two composers. Photography by Anna Benzakoun (2018).