

# Embodied Rhythm: The art and influence of live musicianship in Ecstatic Dance

Written component for the Global Music Master's Degree, Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts, Helsinki.

Mikko Heikinpoika Neuvonen, 2023

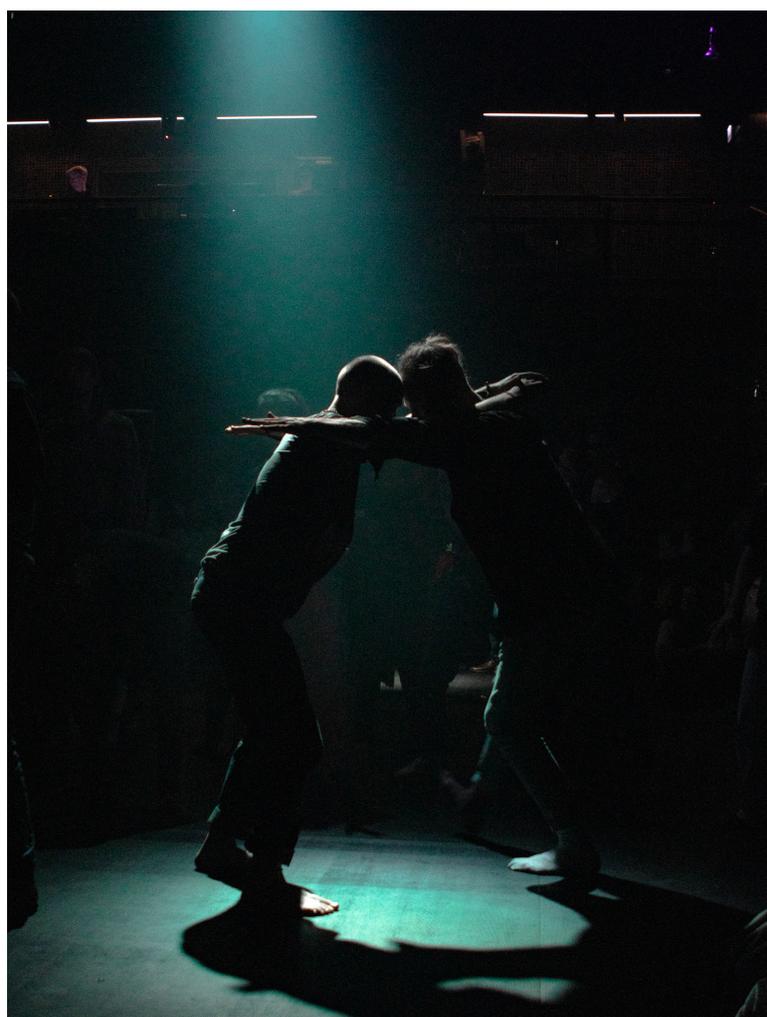


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## The abstract

This written work is an artistic study, that looks into the emerging culture of Ecstatic Dance, which started in Hawaii in 2000 and mixes free-form movement, community building, and a wide range of music. The focus is on my related musicianship, as well as the dance's presence in Finland, where it remains relatively obscure in academic discourse and media coverage. As a Finnish Ecstatic Dance DJ, performer, and facilitator with several years of experience, I offer a unique insider view. The goal is to explore and define the subtleties of Ecstatic Dance and how it differs from other dance styles and typical clubbing scenes, as well as how I operate as a rare live musician in the Ecstatic Dance scene.

In addition to my own observations, the study is based on a literature review that looks at the history of Ecstatic Dance and how it is practised today using secondary data analysis. The artistic study looks into what makes Ecstatic Dance unique, the skills and traits that have helped me to gain proficiency in this scene, and how this involvement has affected my other musical and artistic activities. The following chapters use first-hand experience to further capture the nuances of Ecstatic Dance and place personal perceptions into the bigger picture of this phenomenon globally. In the conclusions chapter I explain how my relationship with pre-planning and improvisations has evolved as a live musician, and the subtle nuances one should consider in order to thrive as an Ecstatic Dance performer. I will also shed light to my current view and understanding of what Ecstatic Dance is and what it can be. The goal is to share understanding about the culture of Ecstatic Dance and provide easier access for participants and musicians alike.

Keywords: ecstatic dance, trance, altered states of consciousness, dance, live musicianship, intuition, intention, full-improvisation, live electronics, live looping, spirituality

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## CHAPTER 1 - introduction

In the year 2000 Hawaii gave birth to an emergent culture and dance trend called Ecstatic Dance, which seamlessly intertwines free-form movement, community connection, rich and diverse musicality, dance and embodied movement. Participants are encouraged to forge a deep bond with their bodies and emotions, synced with the pulsations of music and rhythm. It promotes and prioritises personal expression, improvisation, and introspective journeys over fixed routines or choreography.

Ecstatic Dance is currently most often led by DJ's, and as a rare live musician I will write about my experiences and insights about how I cultivate my musicianship in the context of Ecstatic Dance.

Despite its rising global prominence, modern Ecstatic Dance remains an underrepresented phenomenon in Finland, largely absent from academic discourse and media coverage. As of yet, neither the national nor local government has acknowledged its potential benefits as a subsidised recreational activity. Its very name might deter potential enthusiasts, with the term "ecstatic" occasionally associated with drug use, while Ecstatic Dance in principle is a substance free activity.

Ecstatic Dance, in its present incarnation, is still blossoming in Finland, having made its debut in 2014. I was first introduced to it around 2015. Since 2018, my involvement has been consistent, and today, I can safely claim to be one of Finland's most experienced Ecstatic Dance DJs, performers and facilitators among Milla Linna and DJ Forest Soul. I have followed and been involved with the scene for years and know it intimately.

**Note:** When spelled with capital letters, "Ecstatic Dance", I am referring to the contemporary culture movement that was born in Hawaii in the year 2000. When spelled with lower case, "ecstatic dance" is used as an umbrella term to capture a plethora or related practices ranging from ancient religious rituals to some more contemporary dance meditation methods, like 5Rhythms for example (Roth 1998).

## **Aims and Objectives**

An uplifting trend I've observed in Finland is the inclination towards substance-free clubbing among diverse age groups. Ecstatic Dance extends beyond this, offering a haven to dive deep into one's complete, embodied existence. With my written work here, I am attempting to dissect and understand the distinct nuances that set Ecstatic Dance apart from conventional clubbing scenes and other forms of dance. My objective is to deepen my comprehension and subsequently spread this knowledge, fostering easier access and immersion into the culture of Ecstatic Dance for both participants and musicians alike. Finland's written records on Ecstatic Dance are sparse and consist of not much more than a couple of news articles, and even more so from an insider's perspective who is analysing and describing the practice in a more academic fashion ("Milloin Viimeksi Tanssit Sydämesi Kyllydestä? Ekstaattisessa Tanssissa Saa Tanssia Miten Haluaa," 2023).

## **Research Questions**

This investigation revolves around the following pivotal questions:

- What attributes define Ecstatic Dance, and how does it stand apart from other dance genres?
- As a musician entrenched in the world of Ecstatic Dance, which essential skills and attributes have propelled my journey?
- How has my work both as an Ecstatic Dance facilitator and musician enriched and influenced my broader musical and artistic pursuits?

## **Methodology**

This artistic exploration primarily hinges on observation and the analysis of secondary data. My literature review will draw from resources that sketch the contemporary landscape of Ecstatic Dance, taking a look into its beginnings and its different forms across human history. Following on from the literature review, I focus on chapters that carry a deeply personal imprint, chronicling my firsthand observations and insights.

As an artist deeply involved in the world of Ecstatic Dance, I believe firsthand experience is invaluable. Direct observation allows me to capture the nuances and subtleties of the dance and its impact on participants, something that may not be adequately documented in existing literature. By grounding my research in my own lived experiences, I ensure that the findings are both authentic and personal. My observations will be supported by analysis of secondary data. This approach provides a broader context, allowing me to situate my personal experiences within the larger tapestry of Ecstatic Dance as a global phenomenon. By examining various sources—ranging from academic papers to articles—I gain a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of Ecstatic Dance, its roots, and its various manifestations throughout history. It offers a balanced view, ensuring my work is both subjective (based on personal experiences) and objective (grounded in established facts and studies).

## **CHAPTER 2 - literature review**

### **History**

From its origins in early communities to its integration in modern-day society, ecstatic dance has evolved, representing a variety of dynamic and transformative physical and psychological practices. The turn of the millennium has witnessed an unprecedented resurgence of these practices in the form of organised ecstatic dance events worldwide. In its modern incarnation, the Ecstatic Dance events have become popular in urban centers around the world, notably in North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia. These

events typically take place in community halls, yoga studios, or outdoor spaces and can attract dozens to hundreds of participants (Ecstatic Dance, 2023).

The practice of reaching ecstatic states through dance rituals can be traced back to early societies but has gathered increasing attention and investigation in recent decades as an innovative form of expressive therapy and communal bonding, or even just a recreational pastime (Stromsted, 2001). In the contemporary context, defined as a form of free movement, Ecstatic Dance invites participants to connect deeply with themselves, others, and the surrounding environment in a judgment-free atmosphere, often leading to an altered state of consciousness (Teaters, 2016, pp. 42).

For the aims of this artistic study and to give it context, this chapter aims to analyse the practice of modern Ecstatic Dance, describing its principles, techniques, and potential benefits as an expressive art form and therapeutic tool.

As a cultural movement Ecstatic Dance maintains distinctive characteristics. In contrast to structured dance forms, this practice does not follow choreography or fixed steps. Instead, it encourages spontaneous, free-form movement, allowing the individual to navigate their physical and emotional landscapes through self-directed kinetic exploration. Modern Ecstatic Dance events are framed within a "container" of clear guidelines, creating a supportive space for participants to explore their movement and emotions. These guidelines typically revolve around free expression, respecting the other dancers, consent, and discouraging verbal communication on the dance floor, fostering an atmosphere of non-verbal, embodied interaction (Ecstatic Dance 2023).

Ecstatic Dance sessions generally begin with a warm-up period, followed by a progression of rhythmic, typically electronic music that varies in tempo and often has influences from many ethnic music traditions. The music tracks and songs are sequenced in a way that has the intention to facilitate the participant's journey into ecstatic states. The dance reaches a crescendo, followed by a cooldown period, before concluding with a period of silence or gentle sound to facilitate personal reflection and integration. Some events also include a sharing circle afterwards, where participants can share their experiences verbally with the group, reinforcing the sense of community.

The modern movement of Ecstatic Dance, as we know it today, can be traced back to the year 2000 in Hawaii. Its genesis is often linked to Max Fathom, a movement teacher from Austin Texas, who was establishing the first known ecstatic dance community on the big island of Hawaii around the year 2000. This community became a vibrant hub for dancers seeking a space to express themselves freely, devoid of the standard structures or styles of traditional dance. (Ecstatic Dance 2023)

Even before Max Fathom, Tyler Blank, and other people who are deemed as the founders of modern Ecstatic Dance, it's roots can be further traced back to New York, where Gabrielle Roth was developing her 5Rhythms dance practice, which became a major influence on the development of Ecstatic Dance (Roth 1998). The 5Rhythms (Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical, and Stillness) offer a structured pathway to creative expression leading to cathartic dance experiences, which has influenced Ecstatic Dance DJ's and musicians worldwide. (Golden 2017)

The ethos of modern Ecstatic Dance was founded on simple guidelines that form the structure of these events. The phrasing and number of guidelines can vary across different dances, but Ecstatic Dance Helsinki uses these 3 core guidelines, for example:

1. Move however you like
2. No talking on the dance floor
3. Respect yourself, each other and the space

The dance space was intended to be a judgement-free zone where individuals could explore movement freely and uniquely. As such, the practice began attracting a wider variety of participants seeking an alternative, more expressive form of movement and connection.

In the late-2000s, Ecstatic Dance began to spread to the mainland U.S., with communities cropping up in California and later in cities like New York, Austin, and Portland. The movement also started to expand internationally, reaching places like Berlin, London, and Barcelona. This global spread was facilitated through both the

physical relocation of practitioners and the rise of the internet, allowing for greater connectivity and exchange of ideas. (Ecstatic Dance, 2023)

Ecstatic Dance was introduced to Finland in 2014, when two of the founding members of Ecstatic Dance Helsinki, Milla Linna and Viivi Jokela experienced it for the first time at Ecstatic Dance Oakland and brought back the inspiration to Helsinki, Finland. In 2014, Milla Linna and her friend Samuel Aarnio organised the first Ecstatic Dance in Finland. (Linna M. Personal communication July 23, 2023)

Over time, Ecstatic Dance has evolved internationally, taking root in many countries, embracing a broad range of musical styles and movement practices. Yet it maintains its core principle of fostering an environment for free-form expression and the creation of a supportive, non-judgmental community, connecting a diverse array of individuals through the universal expression of dance.

Ecstatic Dance, distinct from conventional forms like ballet, performance, and social dancing, is a participatory group activity aimed at emotional release, altered consciousness, community interaction, and enjoyment. It doesn't require rehearsal or choreography, and differs from social dancing as it is not a cultural conserve. Throughout history, ecstatic dances have been used to connect with the divine, often through trance-like group experiences, a concept seen in practices like the Elusion mysteries, Tantrism, and Sufism (Teaters, 2016, pp. 42-46).

The 5Rhythms model by Gabrielle Roth, found useful by Ecstatic Dance DJ's and musicians provides a useful framework for Ecstatic Dance facilitators and DJ's, guiding practitioners through a dynamic cycle, comparable to an oscilloscope's sine wave representation of energy. This cycle begins with a phase of "flowing" where movements are gentle and slow, embodying a concept of gathering in and gestation. The energy then evolves into "staccato," a punchy, linear rhythm signifying boundaries and outward energy projection. The continuous intensity of staccato culminates in "chaos," a frenetic phase where concepts collapse and surrender occurs. Following this peak, the rhythm transforms into "lyrical," a phase of lightness and release, before finally returning to stillness (Roth 1998).

Ecstatic Dance can be seen as a discipline similar to yoga that encourages self-growth and expands physical and mental acuity over time. The repetitive cycle helps to center and ground the body, while encouraging the free flow of energy, which contributes to overall health. Historically, humans have often centered their communal and spiritual lives around dance (Wilford, 2001). The altered consciousness it provides has been experienced in ways that lead to transformation and a personal experience of the divine, regardless of the outer form of the particular religion or spiritual practice in question. (Wilford, 2001)

Among the general population, the concept of ecstatic dance might be often confused with the drug-induced state experienced by some participants in raves. However, the ecstasy in non drug-induced ecstatic dance stems from a natural response to energy moving through the mind-body, brought on by physical movement, music, rhythm, and group interaction. (Teaters, 2016, pp. 48) Modern Ecstatic Dances are substance-free in principle. (Ecstatic Dance, 2023)

The word "ecstasy" originally comes from the Ancient Greek "ἔκστασις" (ekstasis), which was derived from the verb "ἐξίστημι" (existēmi). "Existēmi" can be broken down into "ex" (out of) and "hístēmi" (I stand), so in its most literal sense, "ekstasis" means "to stand outside oneself" (Hornblower & Spawforth, 1999 p.505).

In ancient Greek, "ekstasis" was used to describe a state of being removed from one's usual self or mental state, often because of extreme emotion or religious fervor. The term was used in religious contexts to refer to the trance-like states achieved by prophets and mystics during religious experiences. The word found its way into Latin as "ecstasis" and carried the same meaning. It was used in the Middle Ages by Christian mystics to describe the rapturous state of being in the presence of God (Björkqvist, 1982).

## **Music**

Music selection plays a critical role in ecstatic dance, deeply affecting the emotions of the dancers. The visceral nature of music, bypassing cognition, can access the most primitive aspects of our brains and bodies. As such, it can be a powerful tool for therapy and has

been used as a healing modality throughout human history. For the facilitators of Ecstatic Dance, an understanding of how music influences movement is essential. Cognitive science research has revealed that certain areas of the brain activate emotions stimulated by music, with music entering the whole body, producing vibrations felt by the dancer. A strong correlation between rhythm and audience engagement was observed, with rhythm selection being deemed vital in ecstatic dance facilitation (Teaters, 2016).

Music, considered to exist before language and functioning as a language itself, plays a crucial role in the identity of human species. It resonates with different aspects of our being, from friendship, to religion, to love (Moore, 2012). Facilitating Ecstatic Dance primarily involves selecting music with simple or complex rhythms, typically devoid of words, to avoid distracting the dancers into a cognitive, story-oriented mind. Research indicates that the mechanism connecting music and emotions is located in the prefrontal cortex, the same area that is argued to generate art and language (Mansouri et al., 2017). When the musical tones are associated with strong emotions, they enhance the ecstasy in dance. However, the intellectual realm should not interfere with the physical experience of dance, which is fundamentally about felt music, hence the guideline for limiting verbal communication during an Ecstatic Dance. Finally, understanding one's emotional landscape is a key factor in how music can be used to prepare a setlist, focusing on re-embodiment and the ability to induce a trance state.

Even if Ecstatic Dance as of yet has not been studied extensively, some studies have documented the therapeutic potential of Ecstatic Dance. Participants often report feelings of liberation, catharsis, and emotional healing. The process of dancing ecstatically has been associated with the release of inhibitions and increased self-awareness, potentially leading to enhanced emotional, cognitive, and social integration (Teaters, 2016).

Studies suggest that dancers are often better at recognising emotions compared to non-dancers. Engaging in ecstatic dance may enhance one's ability to identify their own emotional states and discern the emotions of others (Bojner Horwitz, Lennartsson, Theorell, & Ullén, 2015). By focusing on the felt experience of the moving body, the dancers become more attuned to their internal states, cultivating a deepened self-presence (Stromsted, 2001).

Neurobiologically, the experience of dancing, drumming and singing is proposed to facilitate the release of endorphins and oxytocin, hormones associated with pain relief, pleasure, and social bonding (Dunbar, Kaskatis, MacDonald, & Barra, 2012). This physiological response might be the basis of the reported feelings of joy, connectedness, and transcendence often associated with the practice of Ecstatic Dance.

Ecstatic dance offers a space for self-exploration, interpersonal connection, and catharsis. Its utility as a therapeutic tool is supported by psychological and neurobiological research, although further controlled studies are required to fully understand its potential benefits and applications. It serves as a reminder of the power of expressive movement as a pathway to self-discovery and healing, inviting us to reconsider the role of dance in our individual and collective well-being. (Teaters, 2016)

## **CHAPTER 3 - analysis of artistic practice**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses my personal journey and process of approaching musicianship within the context of Ecstatic Dance, and how I use intention and intuition during my live sets. I will write about the combination of pre-planning and full improvisation in my performing and also expand on what I mean by these terms. Overall, this chapter offers insights into my approach to facilitating and performing music for Ecstatic Dance and how technology and musical expertise combine in my artistic practice. I will also describe on a general level how my custom live looping rig and software work together, as well as how I have developed my musical expression and technique, allowing me to improvise and respond musically within the context of Ecstatic Dance.

### **The seed**

In 2018, on the grounds of a park called “Pikku Huopalahdenpuisto” in Helsinki, was the first time that I had my own personal peek into the transformative power of Ecstatic

Dance. It was an open-air Ecstatic Dance event organised by Ecstatic Dance Helsinki. It was a communal gathering of rhythm, movement, and spontaneous expression. As a participant, still relatively new to the Ecstatic Dance scene, I took part in this journey with a curious and open mind, dipping my toes into exploring my personal, rather uncharted territories of movement and self-expression.

The dance was a playful adventure into myself, an enjoyable and fun dialogue between the body and the music. Each rhythm seemed to permeate my being, inviting an inner energy, inspiring a sense of euphoria, and elevating my mood to a new high I had not felt before while dancing. I was not just dancing; I was embarking on a journey of self-discovery, of connection, of liberation.

After the dance, I found myself in the quiet solitude of my university's rehearsal rooms, where I had scheduled a rehearsal session for myself. As I started to engage with my live looping rig, it was as if a dam had been broken, allowing a torrent of creativity to flood forth. Music seemed to pour out of me, effortlessly, organically, and without reservation. The rhythms and melodies flowed, not as if they were being constructed, but as if they were being channeled through me.

I had first experienced something like this, when I was riding the wave of improvised psychedelic rock in the late 2000's with my then current power trio of like minded musicians. I was the guitar player, channeling my inner Jimi Hendrix and Petri Walli, transcending the mere electric guitar into becoming a multi layered granular rainbow of sound with all the effects pedals I had gathered.

During the solo rehearsal at my university, like back in my psychedelic rock days, I didn't second guess myself, didn't halt to dissect or analyse. I trusted my intuition, and it led me unflinchingly to the right sounds and rhythms. It was a moment of revelation, a crystallisation of my musical journey, connecting the dots from the ecstatic dance in the park to this solitary creative session. The inspiration I had soaked up from the dance seemed to seep into my music, enriching and empowering it.

This moment was pivotal, a clear signpost pointing the way towards my future immersion into Ecstatic Dance. It was an experience that highlighted the transformative potential of Ecstatic Dance, not just as a physical activity, but as a source of inspiration, a catalyst for

creativity. It sowed the seed that would bloom into my deep connection with Ecstatic Dance, guiding me on my journey to becoming a part of the Ecstatic Dance Helsinki team, and further deepening my commitment to the concept of full improvisation in my musicking (Small, 1998).

### **Full improvisation and pre-planning**

"Full improvisation," as the name suggests, goes beyond rhythms and melodies that have already been written down. It's a transcendent state of musical expression, a deep dive into the present moment, where I become a channel for emotions and instincts that manifest themselves as music. The idea works best when I am willing to give up control and accept the unpredictability and spontaneity of the present moment.

During a moment of full improvisation, I might become very aware of the room's atmosphere and the audience's subtle changes in mood. The music becomes a living, changing thing that responds to and amplifies the mood of the space as a whole. Like a painter who uses different brushes, colours, and strokes to capture a scene, I use a wide range of sounds, rhythms, and harmonies to create an auditory picture of the room's mood, which can be lively or calm, or anything in between and beyond.

Full improvisation is beautiful not only because it is spontaneous but also because it takes me on a deep personal journey. Every rhythm and note played is a reflection of my journey, the years of practise, the different influences I've been exposed to, and the many experiences I've had. For example, having played music for everything from yoga and breath work sessions to shamanistic ceremonies, each one has left a permanent mark on my musical language and intuition.

When I am in a state of full improvisation, I feel like I am the music. The line between me and the performance blurs, allowing me, the audience, and the music to talk to each other in a harmonious way. Full improvisation is all about this fluid exchange of impulses, this mutually beneficial relationship. It's an investigation, a journey, and a pure celebration of the present moment.

Even though full improvisation is a big part of my Ecstatic Dance sets, planning is also a very important part of how the whole thing turns out. Planning ahead makes sure that my music fits smoothly into the Ecstatic Dance, making the dancers' experience better by giving the dance wave a structure that can be changed.

Part of this planning is to know how the dance wave goes from one step to the next. Usually, the wave builds up slowly at first, peaks with intense rhythms, and then calms down again. During a dance, there may or may not be more than one wave. As a live Ecstatic Dance musician, it's my goal to perform music that goes with this wave. For this process to work, one needs to have an embodied understanding of the ecstatic dancers' journey and be able to predict and react to changes in the room's dynamics on a psychological and technical level.

The movement meditation practise of 5Rhythms is one of the important tools I use for pre-planning. As mentioned earlier, it has five different states: Flowing, Staccato, Chaos, Lyrical, and Stillness. Each rhythm has a specific purpose and is connected to certain emotional states. By knowing how these rhythms change and how they relate to each other, I can create a sound journey that goes along with these stages and can somewhat consistently provide a good platform for ecstatic dance experiences.

In my pre-planning, I also use elements from my own compositions. These could be melodies, rhythms, or even words that I've written ahead of time. They are like a toolbox for sounds, giving me a wide range of sounds and phrases to use in my performances.

These parts that have already been put together are not set in stone. Instead, they are flexible modules that I can change and shape on the spot. They give me a kind of "safety net" that lets me try new things while knowing I can always fall back on these tried-and-true musical elements. They can be used as jumping-off points for improvisation, giving me a familiar place to start from, which can then lead to creating something new.

In the end, planning ahead is not the opposite of improvising on the spot. Instead, it goes hand in hand with it. It gives improvisation a structured framework in which it can grow. By understanding the dance wave and 5Rhythms and adding elements from my own compositions, I can walk the thin line between structure and spontaneity, planning and improvisation, and create a rich, immersive, ecstatic dance experience.

## Intuition and intention

My ongoing efforts to develop my intuition and understanding of Ecstatic Dance involve learning from different sources, observing the effects of different actions, and developing a natural sense of how to make a successful and enjoyable musical journey.

In the context of Ecstatic Dance, I've been working on developing my intuition by learning about the 5Rhythms method, paying close attention to how ecstatic dances progress with different DJs (including myself), and staying open to the effects of different actions I or others take during these events. By doing this, I'm practising my intuition for times when I won't have time to think about what to do next. Instead, I will have to rely on what I already know about the situation. Through this, I get better at making good decisions quickly and with confidence, even when I don't fully understand what I'm doing or why. As I became more involved in the world of Ecstatic Dance, I became more aware of how it works. This intuitive knowledge helps me a lot when I have to make decisions in a split second that can have a big effect on the dance.

Even with my humble understanding of the 5Rhythms method, I have gained insight into the different stages of a dance and the emotions and energy shifts that participants can experience during ecstatic dance. This knowledge helps me make more informed decisions about the music and atmosphere during my performances at Ecstatic Dance events. The flow of 5Rhythms makes sense to me on a deep level as I have embodied it through dancing the phases of it myself many times and applying my understanding of it in my own DJ sets and live music performances. It makes sense to me, why so many Ecstatic Dance DJ's use 5Rhythms as a foundation for their set building.

I am not an expert on 5Rhythms and to learn more about it, I recommend taking classes. Here is the 5Rhythms wave explained briefly and how it relates to Ecstatic Dance:

As people dance through the rhythms, from Flowing to Stillness, they transition through an emotional wave that many DJs and musicians attempt to recreate in their ecstatic dance sets. 5Rhythms can give their sets a structure, starting with the grounded energy of Flowing, moving into the sharpness of Staccato, diving into the wildness of Chaos, getting lighter with the airiness of Lyrical, and then settling into the meditative embrace of Stillness. This helps keep the audience interested by taking them on a journey that feels

natural and hits them on an emotional level. Also, as the different stages of 5Rhythms are so distinct from each other, the framework quite naturally encourages the use of different musical styles and tempos, which keeps the dance experience fresh and full of variety.

Even though it's true that understanding the 5Rhythms can add depth to Ecstatic Dance, it's also important to remember that at its core, Ecstatic Dance is about a deep connection with oneself and others through music and movement. The 5Rhythms framework can help and guide this exploration. It provides a deep and somewhat flexible structure that lets you move clearly through different energetic and emotional states. Yet, one does not have to understand this to get the benefits of Ecstatic Dance. An individual participant doesn't need to know a lot about the 5Rhythms in order to take part in Ecstatic Dance and to enjoy it. The dance floor is a place where everyone is welcome, no matter how much they know or where they come from.

That said, facilitators, musicians, and DJs who create and hold space for Ecstatic Dance, can benefit from an embodied understanding of the 5Rhythms.

For those seeking to deepen their practice and understanding of ecstatic dance in general, there are multiple routes to explore. Other ways of moving, like contact improvisation, different kinds of couple dances that give tools and structure for connected improvisation, West African and South American dances, and more, have provided additional tools and perspectives for me. Each of these practises has its own way of moving the body and making connections, which can be found to be beneficial by many who want to enrich their expression.

No matter how much I know about or have done these different types of dances, I feel that the key to ecstatic dance is being able to listen to my body, be in the moment, and get ideas from the music. When I give in to the flow of the dance, led by the music and my own physical instincts, I can fully immerse myself in the transformative experience that is ecstatic dance. I can feel free, learn about myself, and feel deeply connected to myself and those around me.

Being a facilitator, my main goal is to create a space for embodied exploration. I imagine Ecstatic Dance Helsinki as a refreshing oasis in the middle of a city, a place where people from all over the concrete jungle can come together. There, the dancers are encouraged

to renew their spirits, regain their energy, work through some personal issues through dance, or just have happy, carefree fun.

As a performer, I am acutely aware that my role is not centred around myself but is fundamentally about what I can offer to the community. My goal is not to be in the spotlight, but to light up a shared space where people can connect, express themselves, and transform. My actions and choices on stage come from a desire to improve the experience for everyone and encourage a deeper engagement with the dance. I hold myself responsible for running the community with grace, care, and a strong desire to keep the Ecstatic Dance culture alive. My goal is to create an Ecstatic Dance environment that meets the high standards we have set for ourselves in order to respect and honour the essence of the practise.

Ecstatic Dance is more than a sober alternative to clubbing; it is a deeply profound experience that transcends temporal boundaries. It facilitates a reconnection with our ancestral roots while simultaneously reforming and revitalising these ancient practices for our modern society. It provides a bridge between the past and the present, an opportunity to engage with timeless rituals in a contemporary context.

As I prepare for my performances, I am constantly reminded of these core values. By keeping these principles at the forefront of my mind, I am able to align my intentions with the task at hand. This alignment, in turn, nurtures my intuition, guiding me towards a performance that is not just an act, but a genuine embodiment of these values. By doing so, I hope to ensure that my performance flows seamlessly through the right channels, resonating with the audience and amplifying the communal experience of Ecstatic Dance.

### **My setup as a live musician**

As a live musician who performs during Ecstatic Dance sessions, my tool of choice is a custom live looping rig, which I leverage to generate an evolving auditory experience for the dancers. By nature, each performance is one-of-a-kind as each piece is conceived in real-time and reflecting the current fleeting moment.

'Dynamic' could be used to describe the fluidity and adaptability of the soundscapes I construct. My music is not static or predetermined but continuously evolving, rising and falling, echoing the ebb and flow of the dancers. It fluctuates in response to their movements, the overall vibe of the room, and my intuitive sense of what the moment requires.

To ensure this dynamic and unique creation of music, I require my rig to be as intuitive and responsive as possible. It should serve as an extension of my own senses, allowing me to react effectively to shifts in the dance floor's mood or subtle nudges from my own intuition during my performance. This degree of responsiveness helps me maintain a deep, harmonious connection with the dancers, and together, we co-create the rich, immersive experience that is ecstatic dance.

Central to my setup is the RC 505 mkII hardware looper, a crucial component that enables me to craft multi-layered compositions by creating loops in real-time. Augmenting this live looping functionality, I utilise a computer equipped with Ableton Live. This software in combination of various VST instruments unlocks a broad spectrum of sounds, effects and backing tracks, empowering me to enhance and diversify my soundscapes.

I have ventured into integrating a fully software-based looper into my setup, but it has yet to offer the same intuitive control and ease of use that my current hardware looper delivers. Therefore I am at the moment using the hardware looper of my choice, as it is reliable and in stock within many music stores world wide in case of a catastrophic event, where my computer would brake or my equipment would be lost or stolen. However, I am actively attempting to figure out a way to phase out the hardware looper and apply software based looping as my main tool of choice.

Complementing this setup, I employ two distinct microphones, both routed through Ableton Live and manipulated with various effects. This approach allows me to experiment with a wide range of vocal and instrumental textures. One is a RODE M1 dynamic handheld microphone, which I utilise for vocals, jaw harps, flutes, and small hand percussion instruments. For me, this microphone has replaced the SHURE 58 microphone, because it seems to be as robust with a much more pleasant and balanced frequency response to my taste. The second is a highly sensitive DPA microphone that I

am using for capturing the unique sounds of a slide didgeridoo, other acoustic instruments like the Tuvan fiddle known as an igil, and sometimes even acoustic percussion.

Further enhancing my sound palette, a MIDI keyboard and a percussion pad are connected to Ableton Live. These tools enable me to utilise diverse sound libraries, compose melodies, construct harmonies, trigger percussion samples, and devise rhythmic patterns. The control of Ableton Live is facilitated through a combination of hardware and software controllers. The software MIDI controllers, operated on a tablet computer, offer the advantage of full customisation to suit my specific needs. The software I use for this purpose is the TOUCH OSC.

However, such a complex setup demands regular maintenance, which can range from fixing broken cables and connectors and updating software versions to replacing unsupported software, like the previous MIDI controller software, Lemur, that I used to use. This kind of a setup can also be somewhat fragile for technical malfunctions or accidents. The computer breaking down is one thing, but even the breaking of a single cable could prove critical in operating my live rig. Careful preparation ensures that my technological setup is fully integrated, optimally configured, and operates smoothly during my performances.

## **Tempo**

Changing tempos with a setup like mine, which relies on MIDI sync to connect multiple digital software and hardware devices together, can be quite challenging. One of the biggest hurdles is ensuring that all of the devices are running at the same tempo and are in sync with each other. Even slight variations in tempo can cause the loops and backing tracks to fall out of sync, creating a disorienting and confusing experience for the dancers. In order to achieve seamless tempo transitions, I need to carefully plan and rehearse transitions, work through the technical challenges paying close attention to the timing and tempo changes throughout the set. This requires a great deal of concentration and attention to detail, as well as a deep understanding of the various devices and software programs that I am using.

While changing tempos during a performance can be challenging, it is not always necessary or desirable. Holding a steady tempo throughout a longer stretch of the dance can be a powerful tool for inducing trance states and deepening the experience for the dancers. In fact, research has shown that a steady beat can help to entrain the brain and through this, possibly help in promoting a sense of relaxation and heightened awareness (Nozharadan, 2014). For this reason, I often sustain the same tempo for 30-45 minutes during my performances, allowing the dancers to fully immerse themselves in the rhythms and move more deeply into their own experience.

In addition to the research on brain entrainment, I have also received feedback from dancers that sustaining a steady tempo can be incredibly helpful for their own journey. Many have commented that the consistency of the beat has allowed them to let go of their inhibitions and surrender to the music, leading to profound moments of release and catharsis. While I do sometimes change tempos during my performances, I am always mindful of the impact that these shifts can have on the dancers and the overall dynamics of the space.

## **CHAPTER 4 - discussion**

### **Developing intuition**

Enhancing my skills as a live musician in intention-setting and intuitive response has greatly allowed me to connect more deeply with Ecstatic Dance participants. To summarise, here are some of the personal steps I've taken to enrich the dance experience for everyone involved:

1. Exploring movement practices: I have experimented with various movement practices like 5Rhythms, contact improvisation, even Brazilian Zouk to understand the emotions and energy shifts that dancers go through. This has helped me to create music that enhances and supports their journey during an Ecstatic Dance. Personal embodied experience is crucial to understand the levels of experience a dancer can go through during an Ecstatic Dance.

2. Honing active listening skills: Through developing my active listening skills I can respond intuitively to the subtle shifts in energy and emotion that occur on the dance floor. This has enabled me to meet dancers' needs more effectively and in real-time. The listening can happen in an explicit way, where I am able to grasp with my consciousness, what input is affecting my expression, but also implicitly, where I am listening more peripherally and trusting that the impulses I get are connected to the space where the dance takes place and the people within it.

3. Practicing improvisation: By regularly working on my improvisational skills, attending jam sessions with other musicians, joining improvisation workshops, or simply dedicating time for solo practice. This has boosted my confidence in spontaneously creating music that aligns with the dancers' energy and intentions. For me, improvisation has come easily most of my life as a musician, so actually the challenge is to practice routines, chord progressions, rhythms and other tools that I can then incorporate into my improvisation, so that my expression does not become too predictable or too repetitive.

4. Setting intentions before performing: I try to take time before each performance to reflect on my intentions, whether that's facilitating deep emotional release, fostering a sense of unity, or encouraging playful exploration. This helps me stay focused and be more responsive to the dancers' needs. Being present with my intuition also helps me to remember my responsibility as the musician, who is holding the space, as the emotions and experiences that the participants go through can be quite strong. Often times with art we are taking shots in the dark, hoping that something will emerge through the creative process. Expressing the human experience, throwing paint on the wall, hoping that something meaningful will form through this practice. With intention, we can try to shine some light in the room and hope that it will translate to the experience of everyone involved.

5. Cultivating presence and mindfulness: To develop greater awareness and presence I've integrated meditation, breath work, and other mindfulness practices into my routine. This has made it easier for me to be fully present during a performance and respond intuitively to the dance experience.

6. Reflecting and refining: After each performance, I take the time to reflect on the experience and gather feedback from dancers and fellow artists. This helps me identify areas for improvement and growth, allowing me to continually refine my intention-setting and intuitive response skills. I try my best to record every set I play for now, so that I can listen to them for reflection and learning purposes.

## **My mission**

My ambition is to progress towards a point where I can comfortably orchestrate full two-hour ecstatic dance sessions, largely improvised, with minimal premeditation. In this approach, I lean heavily on my intuition, coupled with my accumulated musical knowledge, to spontaneously guide the direction of my performance.

Currently, the presence of live musicians in Ecstatic Dance is a rarity. While there might be an occasional accompaniment of percussion, flutes, or other melodic instruments, or a DJ might weave live instruments like the didgeridoo into their mixes, it's seldom to find musicians who deliver an entire Ecstatic Dance set through live music. This unique form of dance culture presents a challenge for musicians. It demands not only an elevated level of musicianship but also a profound understanding of the Ecstatic Dance culture and its nuances. Presently, the culture remains somewhat niche, particularly in places like Finland and other countries with smaller communities, limiting opportunities for its evolution and growth. Yet, I've embraced this challenge. I am committed to pioneering this niche, shaping its future, and ensuring its place in the broader cultural consciousness.

By creating a supportive space for participants to explore and express themselves through movement and music, we can help them to connect with their bodies, emotions, and inner selves in a powerful and transformative way. This value can be seen in the feedback and testimonials of participants, who often report feeling more grounded, centred, and connected after an ecstatic dance experience. The way we ask for direct feedback during our sessions over at Ecstatic Dance Helsinki, where I am based, is that during the closing circle after the dance we open the circle for people to share in not any kind of order but freely and with few words, what is present in their experience at the moment. Recurring themes are freedom, empowerment, connection, and community.

I value Ecstatic Dance for the effects it has on my understanding of the power of intention and intuition on the creative process, as well as the transformative value of the practice for participants. By cultivating these skills and creating a supportive environment for participants, we can continue to push the boundaries of what is possible in the realm of Ecstatic Dance and promote positive change both on and off the dance floor, which will result in enabling this sustainable form of culture to become more accessible to people outside the conventional ecstatic dance demographic. The usual demographic that I have witnessed in the events I have attended and the image I have received from talking to Ecstatic Dance DJs and facilitators internationally suggests that Ecstatic Dance draws a diverse range of participants, often skewing towards younger to middle-aged adults. In Helsinki people identifying as female are in the majority, and while many have backgrounds in dance or yoga, most do not have any formal training in dance. Many attendees are attracted to it for its spiritual or meditative aspects, blending interests in new age practices and wellness. In regions with a strong alternative community, like parts of California or Bali, the practice is particularly popular. Music plays a central role, pulling in fans of genres such as global bass and trance. As the dance spreads, its participants profiles continue to evolve.

## **High culture**

There are different ways of defining high culture. One popular impression of high culture is that it is something enjoyed by the cultural elite, or something deemed superior to other forms of culture.

When I started my studies in the Sibelius Academy, I came to a personal understanding of the concept of high culture in a new light. I realised that high culture doesn't necessarily have to be a way of ranking or categorising different forms of culture as superior or inferior to others. Instead, it refers to cultural forms that require a relatively high amount of financial resources and support to maintain their existence.

One example of high culture is opera, which in Finland is heavily subsidised as it is not financially self-sufficient (Heikkinen & Kangassalo, 2015). Most of the price of a ticket to an opera performance is subsidised, as we as a society deem this form of culture to be

important for the development and refinement of human potential. As a collective culture, we invest in opera because we believe it is worth the resources to uphold and develop a cultural form that is not self-sufficient.

A live musician performing in the context of Ecstatic Dance is another example of high culture. The reason for this is the level of demand it places on performers to achieve excellence. A live musician who delivers the full spectrum of the ecstatic dance experience must have a depth of expression that requires years of practice, sensitivity, and intuition. They must be able to read the energy of the dance floor and respond with music that perfectly matches the moment, creating a seamless flow of energy and emotion.

The level of musicianship required for live performed Ecstatic Dance is on par with the level of expertise required for other forms of high culture, such as opera, ballet, western classical music, Carnatic music and balinese gamelan music to name a few. It demands a high level of skill, creativity, and expression from performers, and can be seen as a testament to the human potential for artistic expression.

High culture is not about ranking or categorising one form of culture as superior or inferior to another. Instead, it is about recognising the value of cultural forms that require significant resources and support to maintain. Ecstatic dance is a form of high culture that demands a high level of musicianship, which is clearly beneficial for society and I believe it should be valued and supported accordingly.

## **Spirituality and religion**

One of the benefits of Ecstatic Dance is that it can be a strong mystical practice. The decision to avoid spiritual and religious iconography in our Ecstatic Dance facilitation over at Ecstatic Dance Helsinki is a conscious one, rooted in the desire to make the practice accessible to people from all walks of life. By removing overtly spiritual or religious elements from the practice, an inclusive space is created where participants can feel comfortable exploring their own unique relationship to the practice without having to negotiate their own relationship with a belief structure they might not subscribe to. Unlike

many spiritual or religious practices, in Ecstatic Dance there is no strong meme complex guiding one's experience. In other words, there is no preconceived set of beliefs or ideas that participants are expected to adhere to in order to experience the benefits of the practice. Instead, the focus is on the embodied experience of dancing and the non-verbal state.

One could say that the goal of Ecstatic Dance is to provide a space where participants can access ecstatic states and use the insights gained to advance their understanding of the world and the web of interactions around them. Remaining politically and religiously unaligned can help ensure that Ecstatic Dance remains accessible to all and that participants are free to explore their own unique relationship to the practice without any external constraints or expectations. This helps to create a sense of community that is based on the shared experience of the practice, rather than any specific religious or political affiliation.

## **Chapter 5 - conclusions**

In this exploration, I've opened up the realm of Ecstatic Dance, examining its influence on me as a live performing artist. A significant portion of this written work is constructed from my personal experiences, perspectives, and insights. While I've reinforced my understandings with a range of sources - scientific literature, blogs, books, and interviews - the scope of this study, by its nature, has limits and boundaries. Personally I would like to see more research on Ecstatic Dance, especially the effects of live music to the engagement and experience of participants, be it fully live performances or live music elements, such as percussion and flutes in contrast to DJ-sets that do not incorporate any of the previously mentioned elements. Ecstatic Dance can provide a powerful place to connect deeply with music and movement. Based on what I've seen, live music in this setting often adds a special level of sincerity and energy. Live music is full of energy and unpredictability, and it becomes a unique experience for those who attend.

The ebb and flow of live music has an obvious charm, but it might be challenging to measure or fully capture this experience in studies. Are people more interested in live elements? Does it make their dance journey or emotional release stronger? My work gives you a glimpse into these questions, but there's still a huge area to be studied. Surveys, conversations, and even measuring people's biometric data while they dance could offer invaluable insights.

Furthermore, embracing and encouraging collaborations between DJs and live musicians could create a new synthesis in Ecstatic Dance, marrying the best of both worlds. It's a frontier ripe for exploration, where technology and tradition intertwine, crafting experiences that are both fresh and timeless.

In a world that changes quickly and where digital exchanges often take precedence over real ones, places like Ecstatic Dance are even more important. They provide a place for embodied human connection, expression, and relief. As more artists and researchers explore this area, I hope that the deep layers and transformative power of live music in Ecstatic Dance will be better understood and appreciated by more people.

For inspiration to this written work I had three main research questions. To conclude, I will go through them once more reflecting upon them.

**“What attributes define Ecstatic Dance, and how does it stand apart from other dance genres?”**

Ecstatic Dance can be seen emerging from plethora of ancient and modern practises that have been practiced across countries and time periods. It's various incarnations have taken people into different states of mind, where the physical, emotional, and even spiritual can meet. Non-judgemental space is a key aspect in Ecstatic Dance, and expressing oneself without the constraints of external expectations is rare in the general dance scene, where most styles of dancing hold regular competitions. One cannot compete in Ecstatic Dance. It emphasises introspection and internal focus instead of

external appearance. When it comes to musical variety, I personally have not encountered another dance culture, that has as diverse music as the Ecstatic Dance scene. Of course trends form and some artists and genres become popular, even cliché, yet on average a generic Ecstatic Dance set has usually great variety in song selection, ranging from classical music to psytrance.

Another special aspect of Ecstatic Dance is that in many of its organised forms, it emphasises a substance-free environment. The name "Ecstatic Dance" alludes to achieving a state of ecstasy or heightened emotion and consciousness. By keeping the environment free of external substances like alcohol or drugs, participants can be assured that any feelings of euphoria, connection, or introspection are genuinely stemming from the dance and music, not chemically induced. Also, without the influence of substances, there's a reduced risk of unwanted behaviours or incidents that might make other participants feel uncomfortable. The shared experience of dancing in a substance-free environment can foster a strong sense of community. Participants know they're in a space where everyone is present in their sober form, often leading to genuine connections and mutual respect.

Looking to the future, there is a likelihood that the Ecstatic Dance movement will grow. As society becomes more connected through technology but less connected emotionally, people will be hungry to find settings that encourage personal connection. Ecstatic Dance is an oasis of being present and fully embodied in a world of distractions. It's a powerful reminder of how much we can connect with, communicate, and be with other people.

**“As a musician entrenched in the world of Ecstatic Dance, which essential skills and attributes have propelled my journey?”**

For me, full improvisation in music is a deep and immersive process that shows both my soul as a performer and the way I was raised. It's about letting go, giving in to the moment, and letting creative things happen on their own. I feel like this way of making music has made me more aware of the rhythms, mood, and subtleties of the place where I'm making music in the moment. This personal journey has made my musical intuition

stronger, so I can make music that not only entertains but also creates a place for life-changing experiences.

Along with full improvisation, planning ahead is also very important, especially for Ecstatic Dance sets. By planning ahead, I can make sure that my music flows smoothly with the changing rhythms of the dance and lead the dancers through the phases of the session. The key to doing this is to understand how the dance wave evolves through its peaks and valleys and to match this in the music. The 5Rhythms also gives me, as an Ecstatic Dance musician, a structured path to follow.

The use of self-composed sounds, rhythms, and melodies has given me a pool of sounds, rhythms, and melodies to draw from. Even though these parts were planned ahead of time, they can be changed as the show goes on. They help bridge the gap between structured writing and improvised music, making for a well-rounded, musical experience.

When it comes to Ecstatic Dance, the art of musical performance is a careful balance between the freedom of full improvisation and the power of planning ahead.

Even though the 5Rhythms framework gives deep insights into how to structure a dance journey, it's important to keep in mind that Ecstatic Dance is all about free expression and connection. Even though I've experienced how understanding about aspects of 5Rhythms can make the experience better for facilitators, the dance is still open to everyone and doesn't require Ecstatic Dance participants to know about it.

Also, there are many other types of dance, each with its own style, that dancers can try to expand their range of ways to show themselves. But the most important part of Ecstatic Dance is being able to get lost in the music, being in the moment, and getting into your own physical rhythm. Immersion like this gives dancers a sense of freedom, self-awareness, and a deep link to the dancer community.

When I first tried Ecstatic Dance, I thought it was an interesting way to combine my love of music with a transformative practice. As time went on, I realised how much it had changed how I thought about music. Dancing started to loosen my rigid body and mind and as the process of immersing myself into the rhythms I heard, embodying them and

fully surrendering to Ecstatic Dance, it was much more intuitive for me to create rhythms that would have inspiring effect on me as well as others. It became much easier for me to become one with music.

Ecstatic Dance has become the place to express my creativity. Tuning into the dancers by watching how they move with grace and fluidity, and adapting my playing to support this and creating invitations for the dancers to move into. This lively exchange feels like its own kind of dance, challenging my adaptability and refining my improvisation skills.

I was first primarily a live musician, but when I started to organise Ecstatic Dance I also learned how to DJ. It came to me very easily, as I was already familiar with electronic music production and using music related hardware and software. This transition was very meaningful and far-reaching, as it broadened my understanding and appreciation of music. I had to collect a library of music for playing as a DJ and through this process I started to listen to music with different ears. Through experience playing in Ecstatic Dance events as a DJ, I developed a skill to hear very quickly from an individual track, how it would work in the context of Ecstatic Dance and which part of the wave it would serve the best. With this experience I can as a DJ somewhat effortlessly preplan soundtracks for Ecstatic Dance journeys, and even if I'd have to deviate from the pre-made plan, I could do it choosing from the considerable library of curated music I have gathered. When I perform as a live musician, I need to rely on my own expression and technique, which in some ways limits me, but in other ways makes my performances unique and non-replicable. Many DJ's I have talked to are worried that others will copy their playlists, but as a live performer I don't have to fear that.

As artificial intelligence might become increasingly integrated into music creation, we're left pondering the value we place on human spontaneity and creativity. Being a live musician in a scene dominated by DJs challenges me to elevate my craft, to become unparalleled in my uniqueness, essentially a virtuoso. This journey demands dedication and opportunity, and the latter isn't always readily available unless crafted or sought after. Several Ecstatic Dance organisers that I personally have spoken with, have opted for DJ sets over live musicians, believing that the diversity and precision of a DJ set can't be replicated live performing musicians. While I empathise with this perspective, I believe that for live musicianship to flourish in this domain, opportunities for live performances are important for the health and future of the scene. Currently, the Ecstatic Dance community

is relatively niche, making it challenging to rely on it exclusively for livelihood, especially as a live musician. Nonetheless, I remain deeply invested, driven by the sheer joy and fulfillment it brings me.

**"How has my work both as an Ecstatic Dance facilitator and musician enriched and influenced my broader musical and artistic pursuits?"**

In the job of facilitator, the focus is not just on running an event, but also on creating a sanctuary in the middle of a busy city. Ecstatic Dance Helsinki, our community, is like a metaphorical oasis. It serves the many different people who live in Helsinki and the area around it, giving them a place to go for spiritual renewal, energy renewal, and joy.

Also, Ecstatic Dance is more than just a fun thing to do for fun. It is a bridge between the modern and the ancient, allowing practises from the past and the present to talk to each other. From this point of view, the performance goes from being just a show to being a true representation of timeless ideals.

By building these core values into the performance process, there is a balance between what is meant and what is done. This makes sure that the flow of the music fits with the idea behind Ecstatic Dance. It also creates a dance journey for the whole group that is both timeless and current.

Witnessing time after time the effect of going through an Ecstatic Dance journey can have to individuals, has left an imprint on me. I've seen rigid men soften and beam, cathartically crying people reborn and with a wide smile sitting in the closing circle of a dance. Sometimes if I happen to visit a more conventional rave or a clubbing event, I often can't help but to think to myself, that "these people do not know what they are missing...". My taste in music had broadened, as in Ecstatic Dance there are really no limits to genres. From classical music to balinese gamelan tracks, from psytrance to heavy metal, it is more about what serves the wave of the dance. Before I started my journey with Ecstatic Dance, my taste was much more limited.

Somewhere along the line I started to call myself a “ritual musician”, as it felt more natural to me to describe what I do. I certainly see Ecstatic Dance as a modern day ritual. It is an intentionally created space for communal connection, purifying emotional release and personal trance experiences that can be transformative on an individual level. I see and understand the responsibility that comes with this, and I feel that as musician I need to have integrity and empathy, as when I am performing, I am providing the soundtrack for possibly life altering experiences. This is something I feel artists often overlook and art is seen mostly as the expression of the individual artist. For me, music can be seen as a tool to facilitate these powerful experiences.

Ecstatic Dance is not just about the dancing and having fun; it also has a strong emotional side. I have found great sense of purpose for my art in witnessing how people who dance to the rhythms and soundscapes I create, often go deep into their feelings and can have transformative experiences through the dance.

The intertwining that has happened with Ecstatic Dance and my own path as a musician feels less like a professional choice, rather a deep calling. As its popularity grows, I'm riding the wave of this cultural phenomena, providing space and journeys for these potentially transformative experiences. Each beat, each note is a shared experience, a fusion of my musical explorations in synergy with the dancers. It is not just about playing music anymore; it is about co-creating magic.

## Appendices

First wave - Live Ecstatic Dance by Mikko Heikinpoika

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