The background of the slide is a soft, ethereal blue mist or smoke that flows and swirls across the frame, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors range from light, airy blues to slightly darker, more saturated tones, giving it a dreamlike and organic quality.

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VOICE IMPROVISATION AS A RESEARCH METHOD

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The sounds of silence belong not only to the past. They are all in all of us. They are just waiting to find their way out. Start, for example, with a soft hum, like you were looking for something. You will notice, how they find their way out, little by little. You will notice, how they have something to say, how they possess. They have neither beginning nor end: they are like a dream or eternity.

Heikki Laitinen (2003)

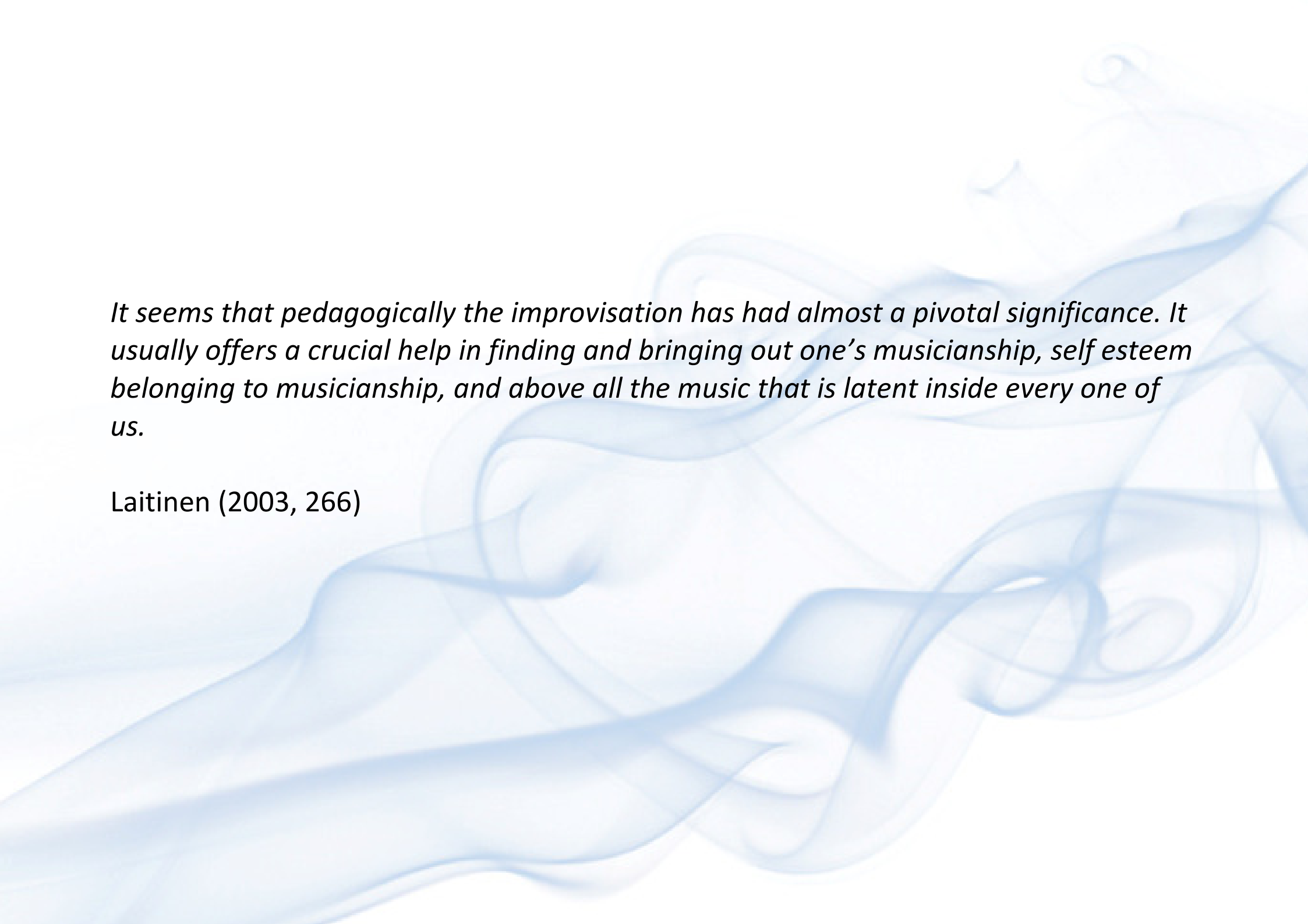
Music by Unui (Alkumeri / Primeval Ocean)

VOICE IMPROVISATION

- Consists of whatever sounds a human can make with his voice
- Includes all the possible sounds belonging to any language (phonemes, syllables, words, sentences etc.)
- Includes the musical sounds as well (singing, humming, rhythms etc.)
- Includes also all the sounds *not* belonging to the fields of language or music (affective human cries, murmurs, mumbling etc.)

- “Improvisation is the practice of [...] making and creating, in the moment and in response to the stimulus of one's immediate environment and inner feelings.”
(Wikipedia)

- Voice improvisation has artistic, pedagogical and empowering aspects

The background of the slide is a light blue, abstract, wavy pattern that resembles smoke or flowing water. The waves are soft and fluid, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall tone is calm and artistic.

It seems that pedagogically the improvisation has had almost a pivotal significance. It usually offers a crucial help in finding and bringing out one's musicianship, self esteem belonging to musicianship, and above all the music that is latent inside every one of us.

Laitinen (2003, 266)

One of my long term dreams has been to shout out as loud as I can. To shout out all the blocked emotions. But shouting and making loud voices have been somehow “incorrect, weird, and unacceptable” for me – “not me”. I have been waiting for the right context to make it happen. [...] Well, at the course when we didn’t make sounds consciously, something else came along, something much better. The loud voice didn’t feel like shouting at all. And even if I felt very strong sensations as it happened, [...] it didn’t feel to be “a cry of pain” at all. I felt that there was something in the voice, that was really “me”, something that I am, from which I arise – strength, power, something calm and determined. The experience was really empowering, that kind of an insight, you cannot really tell to another with words. Maybe there was something archetypal in it, because it felt like it was coming from somewhere deep.

Student, Improvisation with Human Voice -workshop (2011)

WHEN MAKING VOICE IMPROVISATIONS...

- Keep your body awareness open.
- Don't exceed your body.
- Let the energy level rise up by itself.
- Step aside from the way of your voice.
- Become aware of the state of your body right now. Accept it as it is.
- Concentrate to your own body. You don't have to listen, react or adapt yourself to what others are doing.
- Awareness, concentration and being in the moment are the keys for the deeper sensations.
- Enjoyment, inspiration and flow – you can learn to activate these states intentionally.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF VOICE IMPROVISATION I: EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNTS

One can feel becoming free from...

the rules of language and music, expectations, outer and inner criticism, fear of doing something wrong, thoughts of the ideal voice

One can find...

his own inner space, “inner power”, forceless and free flowing ways of making sounds, creativity, presence, different states of awareness (e.g. flow, trance), new possibilities of making sounds, a broader spectrum of different sounds, deeper emotional expression, the unity of affects, movements and voice

Shift of awareness...

- from “making sound” > to “being in the sound” (cf. Stubbley 1998)
- from “being in the environment” > to “being one with the environment”
- from “temporal experience” > to “timeless experience”

SOME STARTING POINTS FOR THE STUDY

- Vocal expression of another human being affects my body (Tarvainen 2012).
- Other people's voices have an impact on how I use my own voice.
- Social rules, physical and acoustic spaces as well as sounds of different environments mould my way of being in the world.
- Environment is not only "out there", outside my body. It is also intertwined into my internal world as perceptions, sensations etc.
- We don't only live in different kinds of environments and cultures, but we are also affected by them.

INITIAL GOALS OF THE STUDY

- to bring upon a comprehensive view of human being as bodily, sensible and vocal creature
- to increase the understanding about human being's diverse, sensory and vocal relationship with his environment
- to map out and verbalise the bodily knowledge of vocalising
- to explore experientially
 - (a) the possibilities of human voice
 - (b) the junctions between language and nonsense as well as music and noise
 - (c) the pre-verbal level of being
- to develop emotion-based techniques for teaching singing
- to develop artistic, pedagogical and participatory applications for practicing *experiential vocal ecology*

THEORETICAL BASIS

- Phenomenology of body (e.g. Sheets-Johnstone 1999)
- Somaesthetics (Shusterman 1999, 2008)
- Artistic research (e.g. Leavy 2008)
- Ecomusicology (e.g. Clarke 2005)

- Psychoanalytic research (e.g. Stern 2004, Kristeva 1993)
- Research of music and emotions (e.g. Scherer 1994)

CONCEPTUAL BASIS

- Experiential body – physiological body (Tarvainen 2012)
- Body awareness – ego awareness (Klemola 2005)
- “Listening” or sensing the body, forgetting the body, exceeding the body (Klemola 2005, Tarvainen 2012)
- Emphatic listening (Tarvainen 2012)

- Present moments (Stern 2004)
- Flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1991)
- Vitality affects – categorical affects (Stern 2004)
- Semiotic – symbolic (Kristeva 1993)
- Push and pull -effects (Scherer 1994)

IDEAS FOR REALISATION

- Voice improvisations carried out in different environments and with different line-ups
- Group improvisations together with the beginners as well as with professionals
- Practical somaesthetics (cf. Shusterman)
- Phenomenological observations
- Discussions of the experiences (e.g. writings, conversations, interviews)

THE POSSIBILITIES OF VOICE IMPROVISATION II: METHODOLOGICAL ACCOUNTS ...

A. Voice improvisation can work as...

- a field of acting and sensing where unclear and unfamiliar, even weird things are allowed
- a field where one can open up, confront things, let go and find new perspectives
- a place for the phenomenological releasement and reduction
- an experiential way to deconstruct the dichotomies like:
body/environment, inside/outside, me/others, emotion/technique,
natural/cultural, normal/abnormal

... THE POSSIBILITIES OF VOICE IMPROVISATION II: METHODOLOGICAL ACCOUNTS

B. Voice improvisation can also...

- activate vitality affects
- release the semiotic material to the voice and thus bring it to consciousness
- enhance the body awareness, and silence the ego awareness
- activate the present moments

STARTING POINTS FOR THE DISCUSSION

- If the voice improvisation itself is a part of the research method, what would be the suitable ways of reporting the (bodily) knowledge revealed?
- How to discuss about the bodily experiences with other people (participants, audiences)? What kind of methods to use (interviews etc.)?

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