

Nicolas Collins

The Talking Cure

Duo version, 2004

Recorded live at *Sounds Like Now* festival, LaMama Theatre, October 2004

For years I've used spoken texts in my music. The voice lends its own sonic qualities, and triggers other sounds to generate extensions of the melody and rhythm of natural speech. Narrative content provides form: the hypnotic, often soporific seduction of a good story became central to life and music while I was raising my small children. I scavenged and collaged texts, but the words were always fixed before I went on stage. Since the rest of my performance activities incorporate considerable ad hoc decision-making, I recently decided to develop a strategy for "improvised talking."

In *The Talking Cure* a computer follows the inflection of the voice and generates a piano accompaniment; it also records specific speech sounds, which are played back later to overlay a vaguely instrumental solo line. I prepare nothing: I hold forth and the computer does the rest, making music off my cuff. The title derives from an early euphemism for Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud advised the patient to "utter without obstruction the thoughts and ideas rising to his mind," which is pretty much the advice I follow on stage.

For this performance Jonathan Chen joins me in the triple role of fellow patient, analyst and violinist.