



## Inside the Artistic Blind Date with Jane Franklin

### *A Great (er) Depression (Week 2)*

*A Great (er) Depression* concerns issues surrounding unemployment including the dismissal from the workplace, anger and denial, reactions from friends and the lowering of self-esteem, attempts to re-enter the work force, acceptance that life has changed. Identity is closely tied to occupation and shapes the role of the individual in relationship to others and to self. Above all, money is a measure but also a necessity. Survival is dependent on food, clothing, shelter, medical attention and resourcefulness in providing for one's self and often for others.

**How did your team begin the collaborative process? How did you arrive at this concept?**

We began our process with discussion. Matt had mentioned the Arthur Miller play *Death of a Salesman* and how it remains very current. We determined this topical and relevant theme would have resonance with today's audiences.

**How is this collaborative process different than working exclusively in your usual medium?**

The collaboration has taken place mostly online. Matt posted the script on Google, and then I have added comments about the writing, or described the way the dancers are cued by words. We also set up a blog to collect personal stories from the general population about experiences of being laid-off.

In the studio, I have worked closely with the script but also independently from it. I developed gestural and movement phrases that are tied to the theme and found connections to layer and interact with the text and music.

I've been interested in online dismissal form letters of all types -- from the direct -- "take all your personal possessions and leave the building immediately" -- to the commonplace use of code words such as redundancy or "fast-paced" (which might be a code word for under 30). There is abundant information about "escaping the pitfalls of interviewing," both verbal and non-verbal.

**Describe something you have learned from your collaborators.**

Mostly I have experienced a focus that is keyed to writing, and to using a literary source as inspiration. We have been working independently but communicating on a regular basis; and now we are negotiating coordination of all cast members in order to work together in the studio.

It is difficult to take three different approaches to performance, from artists that are unknown to each other, and merge them in a short period of time. The challenge is to create a balance. The goal is clarity.

**What part of your project are you most eager for the audience to experience?**

I look forward to the performances and I'm curious about response -- where humor lies in a painful situation. Movement, body language is part of identity, and unique to the individual as handwriting. I am curious to see how we can blend movement, that is sometimes more comfortable in the arena of the 'abstract' with the very literal concerns of the text.