

## **Archiving Multiple Perspectives: Student Notes on the Teachings of Florence Fleming Noyes**

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**Abstract:** Between 1911-1928, Florence Fleming Noyes developed Noyes Rhythm, a “Duncan-esque” movement system that explores physiological responses to music, nature, and mythological imagery. In compiling her 1949 publication of the Noyes movement system *Rhythm and the Noyes Technique*, Valeria Ladd drew on multiple students’ notebooks dated to 1913. The Noyes technique has been passed down through several generations of movers, and teachers-in-training consult the Ladd book as the authoritative text for the practice. This paper examines two early student notebooks and begins to historicize Noyes’s teacher and mentor Lucia Gale Barber.

Between 1911-1928, Florence Fleming Noyes developed Noyes Rhythm, a “Duncan-esque” movement system that explores physiological responses to music, nature, and mythological imagery. Influenced by her elocution studies at Emerson College, Delsarte exercises, and her exploration of rhythmic movement with Lucia Gale Barber, Noyes developed her own perspective on dance performance and movement training. In 1923, she published *Rhythm: the Basis of Art and Education*, and argued for rhythmic movement as the foundation of education reform, yet she never published her own technique book or manual of exercises.

Twenty years after her death, in 1949, Noyes’s student Valeria Ladd published *Rhythm and the Noyes Technique*, and in 1982 the Noyes Foundation issued an expanded edition of Ladd’s book titled *Rhythm for Dance and Art: the Exact Notes Taken of the Teaching in Action of Florence Fleming Noyes*. In compiling her publication of the Noyes movement system, Ladd drew on student notebooks dated as early as 1913-1915, including the summer Noyes taught in collaboration with Hazel MacKaye. The Noyes technique has been passed down through several generations of movers, and teachers-in-training consult the Ladd book as the authoritative text for the practice. Until recently, they have not had access to the original student notes that served as the source material for Ladd’s edited manual. In 2016-2017, with support from two university research grants and a National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance grant, the

Noyes School of Rhythm Foundation began processing and cataloguing over one hundred cubic feet of archival materials, including these original student notebooks.

My initial proposal was to examine these notes, alongside Ladd's notes and her published text, seeking to broaden understanding of Noyes's original teachings by including multiple student perspectives. In studying the notebooks, I was struck by how fully formed the system was, just a few years into Noyes's teaching. This led me to investigate the work of Noyes's primary dance teacher and mentor, Lucia Gale Barber.

In 1911, Noyes's teacher Lucia Gale Barber passed away, and at the invitation of Barber's sister Mary Gale Davis, who served as principal of her Washington, DC- based school, Noyes began to teach Barber's system of movement. In 1912, Noyes moved from Washington, DC, to New York City and opened a school in her own name. According to Ladd, "[Noyes] included in her technique, though in a changed form, some of the movements taught by Mrs. Barber: the so-called 'animal' rhythms, the folds, and the rotaries" (Ladd 1982, xii). Little is known about Lucia Gale Barber, but in recent years Noyes Rhythm master teacher Nancy Nichols has become curious about this early period of Noyes's work. (*Nichols has been my primary mentor as a Noyes dancer and teacher, and I am grateful to her for granting me initial access to the school archives when I was a graduate student*). In response to Nichols's questions, I started looking for information about Barber's school and the years Noyes spent training and performing with her, and I am currently in the beginning stages of this investigation.

While there is more comprehensive work to be done to fully report on Barber's work, including her involvement in the American Pageant Association and direction of several well-documented pageants and masques, there are a few insights and discoveries that I want to share here, in advance of examining the student notebooks. First, in her introduction to *Rhythm for*

*Dance and Art*, Ladd credits Barber as the originator of the term “rhythm” as applied to early twentieth-century aesthetic dancing (Ladd 1982, xi). This seems to be a sweeping claim, yet in a 1909 article in the *Nashville Tennessean* titled “Washington Society Takes Up Greek Dances: Follow in the Footsteps of Graceful Isadora Duncan,” Barber is cited as someone who “had introduced and advanced this art [Greek dancing] long before the echoes of Miss Duncan’s triumphs abroad came floating over the water.” The article describes Barber’s extensive training in elocution and physical culture (although it fails to mention specific styles or techniques such as Delsarte), framing the foundation of her system as “a life study made by Mrs. Barber on ‘rhythm in its relation to the principles of nature’” (*Nashville Tennessean* 1909). Barber’s authority extended beyond Washington, DC, for she lectured and taught successfully in New York and Boston before her Washington arrival. Society women, including prominent political wives, seem to have been the major audience for her work.

While Barber’s society students did perform in public lecture demonstrations and recitals, the overarching goal of Barber’s movement practice was developmental and educational. Barber founded and maintained a school in Washington, DC, with a broad-ranging curriculum, including a course in “rhythm.” Oral tradition among Noyes teachers, including master teacher Nancy Nichols, refers to Barber’s system as “animal rhythms.” The *Nashville Tennessean* article is the first source that I have found that directly references animal movements in Barber’s work, reporting, “Mrs. Barber arranged a unique exposition demonstrating her theory that birds and animals represent the various phases of rhythmic expression given by the human body” (*Nashville Tennessean* 1909). The article describes a group of children demonstrating the movements of a seal, a technique that is still practiced by contemporary Noyes movers. Many of the techniques in the Noyes work, including those based on animal movement, follow

developmental movement patterns. According to the *Nashville Tennessean*, Barber's work in Washington, DC garnered the respect of many local educators and was taught in at least one public high school.

Further sources for Barber's ideas include two articles published by Barber during her lifetime: "Physical Training in Character Building," published in *Mind: A Magazine of Liberal and Advanced Thought*, dated 1901, and "The Significance of the Present Dance Movement," published in *The New England Magazine* in 1910. These articles reveal the depth of thought behind Barber's system and demonstrate her perspective on some of the more visible artists of her time. Barber writes, "It is generally conceded that moral and mental conditions produce corresponding effects upon the body: but that bodily states may also affect mind and soul is not so commonly recognized" (Barber 1901, 37). This statement reflects Françoise Delsarte's "Law of Correspondence," and Barber would have been familiar with Delsarte, as Steele MacKaye first lectured on Delsarte in Boston in 1871 and cultivated a large group of followers there. (Ruyter 1999, 20). Barber goes on to write, "When we say that we cannot change our bodies, we fail to realize that we *do* change them with every thought and feeling" (Barber 1901, 38). She argues for relaxation and developing breath control, or "perfect respiration" (Barber 1901, 43), as essential for both spiritual and physical development.

*It is important to note that Barber was working with both the body and the voice. Noyes, in the development of her own practice, departed from both Barber and Charles Wesley Emerson, her primary influences, in privileging the body movement as a means of expression over the voice.*

In her 1901 publication "Physical Training in Character Building," Barber does not directly use the term "rhythm," but she does open with the concept of rhythm in her 1910 article

“The Significance of the Present Dance Movement.” Here she provides an overview of the early modern dance movement, termed by Barber ““the Renaissance of Dancing”” and “classical dancing” (Barber 1910, 273, 278). Barber critiques the performance work of Loie Fuller, Gertrude Hoffman, Maud Allen, and Isadora Duncan. She reads the work of these artists through the lens of rhythm, which she defines as “a psychical, as well as a physical, experience, co-ordinating body and soul. It is thought and emotion expressed in motor terms” (Barber 1910, 275). She goes on to define classical dancing as the “perfect co-ordination of motion with emotion, according to anatomical structure and to psychical content” (Barber 1910, 278). She calls rhythm, “the father of all the arts” and furthers that this includes “the art of living” (Barber 1910, 275). Clearly, Barber’s training is more than an exercise regime and has applications beyond dance performance.

Barber’s movement work requires intense concentration coupled with relaxation. Barber specified that the dance “movement must be made from the smaller muscles outward,” and the *Nashville Tennessean* cites Barber’s description of the relationships between music, feeling, and consciousness, resulting in a “relative communion between physical and mind culture” (*Nashville Tennessean* 1909). This language is similar to language that current Noyes Rhythm practitioners use to describe the experience of movement in response to music and imagery in the Noyes system. In previous writings, I have framed Noyes Rhythm as an early twentieth century somatic movement practice. Recent publications including “The Isadora Effect” and *Thinking with the Dancing Brain: Embodying Neuroscience* by dance educator Rima Faber, who had experience with Noyes Rhythm in Jan Hogue’s Washington, DC classes and in Connecticut at Shepherd’s Nine, also categorize the Noyes technique as a somatic practice, noting its use of specific imagery to elicit dynamic alignment (Faber 2016, 5, 104). These descriptions of

Barber's work suggest that the somatic aspects of Noyes Rhythm can be traced to Barber's teachings.

Noyes is not the only student of Barber's whose work has persisted, in some form. Alys Bentley, one of Margaret H'Doubler's teachers, was also Barber's student. The *Nashville Tennessean* mentions an Olys Bentley as one of the teachers of Barber's techniques at Western High School in Washington, DC. In her short book *Play Songs* published in 1912, Bentley "makes grateful acknowledgement of help and inspiration received from Mrs. Lucia Gale Barber" (Bentley 1912, Introduction). Bentley claims "Mrs. Barber's work in rhythm sounded a new note in physical education" (Bentley 1912, Introduction). She concludes, "Her untimely death...leaves upon those whose fortunate privilege it was to have studied with her, the responsibility for realizing something of her ideals for that work, with which her life was completely identified" (Bentley 1912, Introduction). Bentley emphasizes, "continuity of breath," and she takes from Barber the idea that fully coordinated breathing results in unselfconscious vocal expression (Bentley 1912, Introduction). This emphasis on unselfconscious expression is also characteristic of Noyes's work.

Bentley's focus as an educator was teaching music, but she utilized movement and improvisation as part of her pedagogy. In 2016, Hiie Saumaa published "Alys Bentley's Dance Impulse, Embodied Learning and the Dancing Mind." Saumaa's project is to contextualize Bentley within early twentieth century dance and related practices like Dalcroze Eurhythmics. She recognizes Janice Ross's mention of Bentley in relationship to Margaret H'Doubler, founder of the first degree-granting dance program in the United States, noting, "H'Doubler's dance teaching relied heavily on the input she had received from Bentley" (Saumaa 2016, 250). Bentley's use of the floor gave H'Doubler an important insight into the relationship between

gravity and alignment. Floor work is also a prominent element in Noyes technique, and was likely informed by Barber's original teachings. This connection directly links the beginning of dance in higher education to Barber's teachings. While Saumaa does a thorough job outlining Bentley's career and highlighting her significant students, she does not mention her training or her work with Barber. Interestingly, she does note that Bentley resigned her position in Washington, DC in 1911 and moved to New York. This is the year that Barber died. Noyes also moved to New York and opened her school in 1912, within a year of Barber's passing.

When I proposed comparing the student notebooks to Valeria Ladd's publication, I was originally looking for differences between the student notes and the Ladd text. What strikes me now is that, just a year or two into her independent teaching, Noyes was sharing a system that is very close to the training I have received as a Noyes dancer. My new question is how much of the system that Noyes was teaching in 1913 came from her, and which aspects of it came directly from Barber? There are some slight variations in terminology and language that I want to explore here.

The two student notebooks that I am examining are dated to 1913-1915 and 1926. The 1913-1915 notebook is attributed to Effie Baker and includes notes from three consecutive summer programs, Sharon, MA, 1913; Peterborough, NH, 1914; and Woodstock, CT, 1915. The second notebook was kept by Kathleen M. Young and dates to 1926, when the Noyes School was firmly established with studios in New York City and a summer program in Portland, CT.

Baker's notebook, which is typed with margin notes in pen (Valeria Ladd's markings), includes lecture notes, lists of progressive exercises, and dance descriptions, as well as accompanying music. The first physical exercises described are listed as "Floor exercises" (Baker n.d., 2). They are divided into two categories: "on back" and "on stomach" (Baker n.d.,

2). There is a note to “relax,” and the exercises on the back include straight and diagonal stretches, as well as shaking of the limbs. There is an emphasis on rounding the spine, like an “egg,” in both positions. Several of the animal techniques are also listed including the starfish, the seal, the frog, and the bear. Overall, there is an emphasis on relaxation and melting, on opening the joints, and on sequential movement. “First work with physical until it becomes plastique. Then it will express the thought” (Baker n.d., 4). The idea is to release tension so that the body can expressively and responsively reflect suggested images or music. Noyes theorized this as “a conscious training of the body to be unconscious” (Baker n.d., 9). Noyes’s practice trains a kind of free-flow improvisation that she differentiates from movement composition or invention (Baker n.d., 42).

There are some interesting similarities and differences in language that indicate how Noyes refined her approach to organizing the body. These early notes refer to major joints as “articulations.” The major joints of the limbs are opened through “folds” and the spine is opened through the caterpillar (a rolling down through the spine, leading with the crown of the head) and the serpentine (an opening of the spine initiated at the tailbone). There is also animal imagery in the 1913-1915 notes that is not part of contemporary Noyes technique, specifically the grasshopper and the wasp. The grasshopper seems to correspond to a basic leg fold to the front, a sequential flexion at the hip, knee, ankle that draws the bent leg in towards the chest, and the oppositional unfold that extends the limb. The wasp gives a feeling of roundness and fullness in the trunk of the body, coupled with a vibratory release of tension. This image seems to be an early instruction to access the fullness of breath and mobilize the ribcage and mid-thoracic spine.

These articulations are numbered, with the ankles as one, the knees as two, the thigh sockets as three, sacrum as four, base of sternum as five, and neck as six. These numbers



correspond to numbers used in contemporary Noyes practice, and by 1926, we see that Noyes refers to the “articulations” as spaces, and the segmented body sections as units. By 1926, there is also evidence that Noyes is working with the fifth space as the point of intersection of horizontal and vertical axes and calling it “the spot.” In 1913-1915, this specific terminology is not yet in use, but she is already prioritizing opening of the fourth and fifth articulations, which indicate that the body organization was already established in this early period of her teaching. There is quite a bit of anatomical detail in the student notes at this stage, and we see in the 1926 notebook, that Noyes moves away from anatomical instruction towards using abstract imagery to inspire specific movement responses.

Young’s 1926 notebook opens with two columns comparing Noyes’s teachings with her colleague and collaborator Wolston Crocker Brown. (Noyes co-authored two texts with Brown, and after her death the Noyes Group legally disassociated from him). The categories are “Rhythm” (with a capital R) and “applied rhythm.” The former represents the Noyes method, which uses abstract imagery to inspire expansive movement that, in idealized practice, transcends the physical limits of the human body. Noyes aims to disappear the body, or at least to overcome the physical sensation of the body’s limits. “You can reflect mathematics or apply mathematics—one is impersonal and the other is personal” (Young n.d., 5). Brown’s applied rhythm, in contrast, works with the body, as a body.

Young’s notebook features striking drawings in colored pencil, representing the patterns of movement in Noyes techniques. These drawings are carefully executed and include representations of correct and incorrect movement pathways. Harmony, symmetry, and relative proportion are visual values represented in these drawings, and the drawings are accurate reflections of the techniques as they are currently practiced and taught. One example, illustrated

by Young, is the smite technique. This exercise is executed in a wide stance with the torso folded over the legs and the knees bent. The torso swings, shifting the weight from side to side until moment builds and one leg arcs up and over to land in a deep side lunge, similar to a warrior yoga pose. Young's drawing of this exercise clearly depicts the increasing range of motion that leads to the climax of the movement.

When Noyes began teaching in 1911, she was picking up where her teacher Barber, left off; she was not creating a new movement system in a vacuum. These early student notebooks provide evidence of the system Noyes inherited from Lucia Gale Barber, and may also indicate the kinds of exercises that Alys Bentley was teaching—what Margaret H'Doubler might have experienced when she first found the floor. The shifts in language between the 1913-15 and the 1926 notes indicate that Noyes was evolving and refining her method through her teaching practice, and the abstract character of the 1926 drawings demonstrate her movement away from anatomical instruction in favor of imagery transformative of, rather than delineating, a body.

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Meg Brooker, Assistant Professor, Middle Tennessee State University, researches, and performs early modern dance works, with a specific focus on Isadora Duncan and Florence Fleming Noyes. Meg has presented scholarship for SDHS, CORD, NDEO, and the Isadora Duncan International Symposium, and received a 2016 NEH grant for the Noyes archives.

## **Outstanding Scholarly Research Award 2017:**

### **Honoring the Work of Thomas DeFrantz**

Susan Leigh Foster, Constance Valis Hill (as read by Nadine George Graves), Susan Manning, and Jasmine Johnson

Abstract: This panel celebrates the contributions of Thomas DeFrantz, the 2017 recipient of the CORD Outstanding Scholarly Research Award.

### **Introduction to the Panel--Susan Leigh Foster**

I am excited and delighted to be chairing this session today, honoring the work of one of our most esteemed and influential scholars. Tommy has distinguished himself through a pioneering set of publications that have opened several new dimensions in the study of dance. He has brought considerations of race and racial identity into our assessment of dance's significance and history along with an understanding of how race intersects with gender, sexuality, and elite and popular forms of dance. He has equally delivered highly original and illuminating interpretations of the relationship between dance, culture, and the political. He writes with compelling vividness and precision about a range of artists and dance practices, giving the reader a deep sense of the development of the choreography, the feel of the stage, and the dance's particular engagement with social and aesthetic issues. His writing exemplifies what is, to my mind, one of the strongest abilities to describe physical action and then explain its significance that I have ever read.

Tommy's book *Revelations* pioneered in illuminating the work of Alvin Ailey and in its innovative structure. His several anthologies and many rich essays have given us so many insights into dance's power and potential. I know he also has several projects in the works about which I can hardly wait to read. But let us pause at this moment in his distinguished career to acknowledge what he has accomplished thus far.

On the panel today we have Susan Manning, Jasmine Johnson, and in absentia Constance Vallis Hill, who although unable to attend, has sent along her tribute. It will be delivered by Nadine George-Graves.

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Susan Leigh Foster, choreographer and scholar, is Distinguished Professor in the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance at UCLA. She is currently at work on a book entitled *Valuing Dance: Commodities and Gifts in Motion*. Three of her danced lectures can be found at the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage website <http://danceworkbook.pcah.us/susan-foster/index.html>.

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### **To my Brother Man, Tommy DeFrantz—Constance Valis Hill**

*My dearest Tommy,*

I am sad not to be able to be with you on this momentous and well-deserved tribute by members of the newly joined SDHS and CORD, hoping these words I prepared will be read (with great humor and joy) on your tribute. I am organizing my reflections chronologically and biographically to reflect my experience of you and the revelations I received by standing in your light. Here it goes:

#### *Snapshot #1: Waiting for Tommy*

January 1991. Newly accepted into the Ph.D. program in Performance Studies at New York University. I arrive on time to my first class, Cynthia Novack's Anthropology of Dance. A large roundtable of M.A. and Ph.D. students. All seats taken, but for one— Cynthia handing out her generous multi-page syllabus for the course but hesitates to begin the class, saying—  
“Waiting for Tommy. We must wait for Tommy.” Who is this Tommy, I say to myself that the class cannot begin without him? A few silent minutes pass; suddenly a door opens and in strides

a tall and lanky Tommy DeFranz, with a cute, sly, sweet grin, quickly slipping into his seat.

“Now, we can begin,” says a smiling Cynthia.

*Snapshot #2: Taking on Marcia*

Fall 1991: Performance Studies, NYU, in our first class with our adviser, Marcia Siegel, who has returned from sabbatical. The class is Dance Theory, and Marcia has handed out a list of presentations from which each of us will select a topic for an independent report. I peruse the list cautiously, having been totally intimidated by Marcia’s dominating authority, and choose the easiest topic, totally disregarding Philosophy of Dance, which requires the discerning translations of Hegel, Sparschott, DeLeuze, Van Camp, Suzanne Langer, for surely, a poor report would land you in Marcia’s snare! Every student in the room has the same strategy as mine. Until we get to Tommy: “I’ll take Philosophy of Dance,” says Tommy, smiling broadly at Marcia—and even she, behind a stoic face—seemed slightly pleased and surprised.

*Snapshot #3: Look What I Found in the Ailey Archives*

Fall 1993: I return to the Alvin Ailey school, where I had been on a dance scholarship and jazz instructor, to coordinate their Dance History Program, working under the supervision of Denise Jefferson (who had been my Graham teacher). There, in the corner of a disheveled room is a pile, almost four feet high, of notebooks and scrapbooks. Looking through them, each notebook book was a notation by Ailey of many of his choreographies. I call Tommy: “You gotta come down to the Ailey archive,” I tell him. “There’s a pile of notebooks with Ailey’s scribbled notes.” Tommy arrives shortly to discover a goldmine of materials, which eventually helped to materialize his dissertation (“Revelations: Alvin Ailey’s Embodiment of African American Culture”) and his first Oxford University Press publication, *Dancing Revelations*:

*Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture*, with the notation of over 78 choreographies which had never before been accumulated.

*Snapshot #4: Tommy the Tap Dancer*

1998: Preparing a paper presentation entitled "Iconography of the Soft Shoe" for the SDHS Conference in Eugene, Oregon. I spend three weeks, painstakingly reconstructing the choreography in my attic studio at 222 North Pine Avenue in Albany, NY, the tap choreography of Charles Honi Coles' and Cholly Atkins' "Taking A Chance on Love," renown for being the slowest of all tap soft shoe dances on record. I need a partner, a tall partner, and ask Tommy if he could possibly take the time to learn it, knowing it would take days of labor to master the intricate and slow execution of taps. Tommy arrives; we ascend the two flights of stairs to the attic studio. And he learns the choreography in under one hour! I am flabbergasted! And Tommy is cool. "Any other steps you have in the time we have?" he asks!

*Snapshot #5: Kaiso! From Pamphlet to Book*

Tommy and I are both on the Editorial Board of Dance History Scholars and we are in discussion about potential manuscripts. Tommy points to a document we found in the Ailey archives—a copy of Katherine Dunham's *Kaiso!* printed in plastic spiral "notebook" form. Tommy points out to members of the Board, with commendable cool and reserve, despite indignant fire, how the document was considered to be a "pamphlet" and much in need of being published as an SDHS volume. The Editorial Board is a bit dubious. Tommy, most diplomatically, persists. The result: *Kaiso! Writings by and about Katherine Dunham*, edited by the late VèVè Clark and Sara Johnson, a 700-page volume of collected writings by Ms. Dunham (including an excerpt from her last unpublished work, *Minefields*) with articles by prominent dance and cultural historians (so proud to be included in this book, which I volume edited.)

*Snapshot #6: Tommy the Philanthropist*

Tommy, your edited volume, *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance*, published in 2002, began your support of emerging black performance scholars and melded the writings of such renown scholars as Brenda Dixon Gottschild, Sterling Stuckey, Sally Banes, and John Szwed with a younger generation—Richard Green, Veta Goler, Nadine George, Marya Annette McQuirter—who today are at the apex of their careers. You also included the essay of which I have been the proudest in my career, “Katherine Dunham’s Southland: Protest in the Face of Repression,” immortalizing it unto eternity, and for that I am so profoundly grateful. And then the book earns the Errol Hill Award, the famed Caribbean scholar who happened to be my uncle by marriage!

And, of course, I shall forever be grateful for your reading of my first draft—some three hundred pages—of *Tap Dancing America, a Cultural History*, which you patiently and compassionately read through, encouraging and affirming to me that, indeed, I had in that mess of pages another book!

Your newest co-edited volume with Anita Gonzalez, *Black Performance Theory*, articulates and formalizes a rich interdisciplinary area of study and critical method that theorizes black bodies in motion. The volume heralds fecund and discerning insights from a now-to-be-heard generation of scholars: Melissa Bianco Borelli writing on the tragic mulata; the fab Alvin-Ailey-dancer-turned historian Carl Paris materializing “spirit” in the work of Ronald K. Brown; Koritha Mitchell writing about Black-authored lynching dramas as a resistance to theater history; Tavia Nyong’o’s ecstatic treatise on Little Richard’s “sound”; and Jason King’s explication of spectacularity in Michael Jackson’s “This Is It.”



Tommy, you have deeply influenced all of us, peers and elders all. You are our W.E.B. DuBois of Black theoretical performance (yes, you are the sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, and Pan Africanist) who has contributed to our lexicon such terms as “embodiment” of culture and “slippage” to discern the ever-fluid transportations of Africanist manifestations in performance expressions made visible. In addition, you have been blessed with genes from the anthropologist and folklorist Zora Neal Hurston, mining such contemporary black folklorist materials as hip hop and tap dance in ground-breaking articles such as “Being Savion Glover.” You have led the way to a postmodern renaissance of Black modernism, extinguishing the boundaries of performer and theoretician to engage performing artists to speak authoritatively and engagingly in all areas of dance discourses of dance—and at the same time, engaging in the performative capacities of writing.

I thank you.

We thank you.

And in the words of Duke Ellington, “I love you madly.”

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Constance Valis Hill, Five College Emerita Professor of Dance, has a Ph.D. in Performance Studies from New York University. Her book, *Tap Dancing America, a Cultural History*, was supported by grants from the John D. Rockefeller and John Simon Guggenheim Foundation; she recently has donated the 2500-record Tap Dance in America: A Twentieth-Century Chronology of Tap Performance on Stage, Film, and Media to the Library of Congress.

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### **Honoring Tommy DeFrantz—Susan Manning**

“Thomas DeFrantz”—what an elegant name I thought when first encountering the author’s byline around 1994. In fact, the name conjured up the image of an older man, sophisticated and even somewhat world-weary when I read his review of my first monograph,

*Ecstasy and the Demon*. Within a few years, however, I had met Tommy DeFrantz, not the older man I had envisioned but a younger man—smart, outgoing, not at all world-weary, but determined to make a difference.

In the mid- and late-1990s we served together on the Editorial Board of the Society of Dance History Scholars, alongside Constance Valis Hill, and we bonded during those meetings and after-hours drinks and dinners. (Deathly anxious about driving at that time, I was always thrilled when Tommy rented a car during conferences and invited me along to an out-of-the-way place for dinner.) Tommy's first edited anthology, *Dancing Many Drums: Excavations in African American Dance*, came together during those years, drawing from a CORD Special Topics conference that John Perpener had organized at the University of Illinois in 1996. So too did the expanded and updated version of Katherine Dunham's *KAISO!*, on which Constance labored so assiduously, and Jane Desmond's *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities On & Off the Stage*. Working together on the Editorial Board, Tommy and Constance and I felt like we were making a difference. I'm recalling these years partly out of nostalgia—I miss those times!—and partly as a reminder to you all that volunteer for service within a professional organization can lead to valued collegial and intellectual friendships.

During the years that I served on the SDHS Editorial Board with Tommy and Constance, I was deep into the research for *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion*, attempting to understand how social and artistic conceptions of “whiteness” and “blackness” inflected US modern dance at mid-century. Tommy's research on Alvin Ailey—and the publication of *Dancing Many Drums* in 2002—hugely impacted my ongoing investigation: I might have been the older scholar in terms of academic cohort, but Tommy quickly became my colleague and, in one sense, my ideal reader as I sought to articulate how conceptions of race, gender, and

sexuality shaped the choreography of modern dance from Helen Tamiris to Alvin Ailey. Thus, it seems fitting that *Modern Dance*, *Negro Dance* and *Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture* came out the same year—2004—and were on occasion reviewed together and taught together.

*Dancing Revelations*, which won the de la Torre Bueno Prize for 2004, was a stand-out for several reasons. First, it explored the wide range of Ailey's choreography beyond *Revelations*—the work that had introduced so many of us, myself included, to professional theatre dance. Second, the volume intertwined the story of Ailey as choreographer with the story of Ailey as artistic director and institution builder, not subordinating the myriad tasks of building and running a company to the practice of choreography, as had become common practice in narrating the careers of dance-makers. Third, and most importantly, *Dancing Revelations* introduced a range of perspectives from African American studies as crucial resources for understanding Ailey. The breaks that Tommy sutured into his study—on, among other topics, black modernism, official African American culture, versioning, jazz dance, sex, Black Atlantic dance—constituted a text within a text, a catalogue of topics that anticipated the next decade of black dance studies. That the breaks seem self-evident today only shows the extent to which Tommy's insights have come to define the field.

Since publishing *Dancing Revelations*, Tommy has accomplished so much on so many fronts. First, his many exquisite essays and book chapters, on a range of genres—from black social dance and tap to blacks in ballet and hip hop—and from an array of perspectives. It is rare that one of his essays does not appear on syllabi for my dance studies courses, and from my perspective his essays that foreground gender and sexuality seem especially significant for the field. Time and again I have taken pleasure in teaching his essays—"Simmering Passivity,"

“Black Beat Made Visible,” “Being Savion Glover”—and I look forward to teaching his recently published essay “Black Dance After Race” later this year.

Second, his editorial work: in addition to *Dancing Many Drums*, awarded the Errol Hill Award by ASTR/American Society of Theatre Research for 2002, he recently co-edited with Anita Gonzalez, *Black Performance Theory* (2014), with Tara Willis a special issue of *Black Scholar* titled “Black Moves: New Research in Black Dance Studies” and with Takiyah Nur Amin an issue of *Conversations across the Field of Dance Studies* titled “Talking Black Dance Inside Out/Outside in,” the latter two in 2016. Compare these three recent publications to *Dancing Many Drums* and you’ll see an amazing explosion of new research in just over a decade.

This explosion, I contend, would not have happened had Tommy not organized a mentoring group for younger scholars while still a professor at MIT and had not served as the founding director of the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance in 2012 once he moved to Duke. CADD is the acronym for the Collegium, and its conferences bring together artists, educators, writers, and scholars to exchange ideas and practices through workshops, performances, screenings, panels, and roundtables; its third biannual conference will take place in winter 2018 at Duke. Taking a page from Alvin Ailey, Tommy DeFrantz knows that creating institutions where others can thrive is as, if not more, significant than individually-authored work.

The signature mix of art and scholarship at CADD characterizes Tommy’s career as well. From *Monk’s Mood: A Performance Meditation on the Life and Music of Thelonius Monk*, a solo created in 2002, to *Performing Black*, a duet presented as part of Parallels in Black at Danspace, and *Theory-Ography 4: we queer here*, a group work presented as part of the CORD Special Topics conference “Meanings and Makings of Queer Dance” at the University of Michigan—

both in 2012—to CANE, based on Jean Toomer’s novel, a responsive environment dance work, a 2013 work to be reprised at CADD next winter, Tommy embodies his research.

There’s so much more that Tommy has contributed to the field—his co-convening of the Choreography and Corporeality Working Group for the International Federation of Theatre Research, his teaching at the low-res MFA program for returning professional dancers that Hollins established with ADF, his presidency of SDHS from 2011 to 2014. But my time is running short. Briefly stated, Tommy’s career has been simply dazzling.

I remember calling Tommy to encourage him to accept the nomination to serve as SHDS president, telling him that he no longer was a young revolutionary but now an established mid-career scholar and that taking responsibility for an organization like SDHS made sense at his career stage. (Has he forgiven me for that call?) Now Tommy, I have to tell you that with this CORD Outstanding Scholarly Research Award you have moved past mid-career to “distinguished senior scholar.” That doesn’t mean that you don’t have more work to do—more books and essays to publish, more volumes to edit, more younger scholars to mentor, more dances to make—but it does mean that you can look back and realize that the field of dance studies, even if you never publish another word, is richer because of what you have contributed. Congratulations!

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Susan Manning is an internationally recognized historian of modern dance whose writings have been translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Polish. Currently, she is compiling new and selected essays for publication as *Critical Histories of Modern Dance: a Retrospective* and co-editing *Futures of Dance Studies*, a volume that documents the outstanding research of participants in the Mellon-funded initiative Dance Studies in/and the Humanities. She is a Professor of English, Theatre, and Performance Studies at Northwestern University.

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**For Tommy—Jasmine Johnson**

Good afternoon. It is an honor to be invited to share some remarks on the critical work of Thomas DeFrantz—work to which I am so indebted. What to say about someone who has made your scholarship and career possible? Someone whose language you have had the good fortune of living in; work that has invited you into wider eyes.

During my senior year of my undergraduate program Professor Vèvè Clark handed me two books that would change the direction of my world: Saidiya Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection* (1997) and Thomas DeFrantz's *Dancing Revelations* (2004). With a single yellow post-it atop the 'Wade in the Water' Ailey still that is the book's cover she wrote: "Jasmine. Read these and let's talk." The first part of her clear direction — "read" — was not as straightforward as it seemed, for it felt as though the intellectual house I had previously mounted was falling apart as I engaged these texts.

I used to be an insecure lover of dance, probably because I was often told that dance was in the sub-basement of Black Studies and black people in the sub-basement of Dance. I was told that directing my research toward literature would make me more competitive as a graduate school applicant, one professor warning me nonchalantly, "you just don't want to be *too* focused on dance. Always good to branch out." As I reflected on today's occasion, and what I have inherited from Tommy, it is this: that Black Studies is always already about dance; is a field kited by movement; is, at its foundation, queer.

From Tommy I learned that black movement is black study and Black Studies, an art of talking to your people. There is a refusal in Tommy's work to translate for whiteness. Instead, he steeped in the ways black folks move. Consider the title alone, *Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture*. We could imagine other iterations being 'Alvin Ailey's performance of African American Culture' or 'Alvin Ailey and American Culture.'

Refusing to articulate the contributions of black aesthetics through the rubric of its approximation to European conventions of success, DeFrantz focuses on how Ailey “encoded aspects of African American life and culture in concert dance” instead. Subverting the logic that too often understands the art that people of color make through its resemblance to Eurocentric standards of beauty (and therefore worth), DeFrantz seems to simply and indifferently say “no.” “I do not,” he writes in *Dancing Revelations*, “compare Ailey’s work to that of Martha Graham, George Balanchine, or Merce Cunningham as if Ailey, like them, had been born into an educated, middle-class white milieu. If Ailey made dances that were important to him, we must be willing to look to the particular cultural processes and social realities that inspired him.” What a wonderful refusal that so immediately names itself it seems to just simply be the weather — so much so that we can almost forget the force of its intervention. What a generous turning to blackness to cull its own vocabulary to understand its own grammars. DeFrantz shows us the logics of black life-worlds which in turn produce distinctly black repertoires. In “Blacking Queer Dance” (2002) he writes that “In Africanist performance theory, moving beyond established norms are how we move toward the beautiful, the inevitable, the profound.” Tommy’s scholarship gets us closer toward this marvel.

DeFrantz’s work does not open a single door to say that blackness exists in this room and then leave for another. Instead he sits in that space, feels along its porous walls, and refuses to mistake what others have seen for what there is. He shows us that this room is actually a house, is actually a world, is actually a constellation. It is an altar.

Challenging heterosocial standards in Black Studies, DeFrantz confronts the uninvestigated intersections of Black Studies and Queer Studies. He asks: “What about dance studies and black studies? Why do these areas consistently disconnect? And why is queer dance

too often sidestepping theoretical paradigms established in black studies?” This is work that honors the black diaspora precisely through the articulation of the “power in queer” and the “power in black.” This is scholarship that invites in.

I have been thinking a lot about the texture of Tommy’s writing, which is, for me, distinct. It reads like the summoning of a rhythm just before the break. Swelling in sonic and embodied information, setting a rhythmic pattern. And then, the break comes which is the publication — which of course is not an ending or a final word but an opening for the dancer/reader to come, move with, add to. How generous DeFrantz’s writing is because he does not patronize or underestimate us. He forces us to grow because, it seems, he trusts we will do the work of understanding blackness on its own terms.

Finally, I should say that for you, Tommy, scholarship is being in community. Black Performance Theory, the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance (and so many other gatherings) are also interventions in the field of Dance Studies. They widen the field’s possibilities and create space to imagine black futures while tending to the changing and yet persistent fact of marginalization. These are spaces in which we can come as we are, advance questions within the collective/embodied wisdom of the group, make worlds together and be honest about the ways we might be clipped/claustrophobic/sometimes scared. *Joy is always there.*

I did not know then the beautiful coupling of books Professor Clark delivered: a double dutch game of Black Studies entry. For when I heard Hartman report, in writing about black pain, that “If this pain has been largely unspoken and unrecognized, it is due to the sheer denial of black sentience rather than the inexpressibility of pain,” I saw *Dancing Revelations* and *Dancing Many Drums* as a call to tend to black living, to listen to its own fleshy language for its own animation. DeFrantz has always taken dance seriously without romanticizing its operations.



“There can be a great power in queer dance,” he writes, “drawing from and in relationship to black studies and African American dance histories. But [...] not until we can articulate a liberatory theory of aesthetics; until modern dance histories begin in the crucible of the marketplace and its articulation of the modern enabled by the slave trade; until tap dance is allowed to be conceived as a gay male prerogative and not a hyper masculine alternative to ballet...” Through Tommy (and so many others in this room) I would learn that inside the weather of antiblackness black bodies churn joy and technique through enduring racial and gendered violence.

And so I’ll say that it is through Tommy’s work that I learned the gravity and caliber of Black Studies. Learned that dance was not just present and interesting but consequential. Learned the graceful art of recognizing the overwhelming whiteness of black life and the power of refusing to fix our attentions there. This is a confrontation with white supremacy that taught me a different iteration of rigor, the importance of saving my breath, and the urgency of tending to the work that is most in need of our attentions. Why not spend our energies in the life worlds that black folk, black queer folk, make for themselves? Like Ailey, Tommy speaks *from* an African American ethos, not simply about it.

This is work that invited one black girl, fellow Bay Arean, into the notion that she could not only write about black dance but write as black dance. Be right with black dance. That scholarship is honoring the ancestors, not ignoring their steeping presence. That black dance is not a “subject” but a world, an imperfect gospel, a hush harbor. I know I speak with so many others when I say *Thank you, Tommy*. You are our danced revelation. © 2017, Jasmine Johnson

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**Title**

**The Great Divide: Turn of the Century American Ballet with the Ballet Dancer, the Toe Dancer, and the Ballet Girl**

**Author's Name**

Sarah Williams Gonzales

**Abstract**

Before the arrival of the Ballets Russes, there existed a hierarchical divide between the classes of women who used pointe shoes in their dance in the United States. This study uses New York and Chicago newspaper articles from 1872 to 1913 to examine the evolution of how writers before and after the turn of the century describe Ballet Dancers, Toe Dancers, and Ballet Girls in opera, musical comedy, and vaudevillian settings. Language labels used by writers to identify each class of dancer, prospects for dancer societal advancement, pay rate, and what was transmitted to audiences through movement choices are used as measures to trace distinguishing characteristics between classes. Overall, the study found that around the turn of the twentieth century, American audiences demanded novelty from performers. These findings suggest that the classes of Toe Dancers and Ballet Girl satisfied this audience craving, establishing hierarchies between these categorized artists.

**Paper**

In the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, there was a hierarchical divide among female dancers who used pointe shoes in their work. Trained dancers called, “ballet dancers” or “première danseuses,” starred in opera company performances. There were lesser-trained dancers, “ballet-girls” and “toe dancers,” who performed in physical proximity, quite literally behind, ballet dancers on opera stages or who starred in music hall and vaudevillian settings.

This study draws upon American newspaper and magazine articles from 1872 to 1913 to examine the evolution of the rhetoric applied to ballet dancers versus ballet-girls and toe dancers in America. These primary source articles were all printed without a credited author. It is likely that the authors were men writing about women for primarily male audiences. Societal status, pay rate, ranking within institutions of employment, location of training, language labels, and

movements executed on stage were all indicators of the areas of division between the strata of dancers in America at the turn of the twentieth century.

My research centers upon developing a better understanding of ballet in the United States before the arrival of the Ballets Russes on American soil in 1916, a seminal moment in American ballet and dance evolution. The Ballets Russes were ballet dancers who had formally studied their craft. Lesser-trained American ballet-girls and toe dancers performed with pointe shoes and had received little to no formal training. Through an examination of these divisions of dancers at the turn of the twentieth century, we can better understand the origins of American ballet and the embedded hierarchy within.

Because of their shared nomenclature, there was confusion in the press surrounding the terms “ballet dancer,” “ballet-girl,” and “toe dancer.” There was no standard name for the lesser-trained dancers who claimed an association with ballet at the turn of the century, including those who filled the lowest ranks of opera companies or who were employed by vaudeville houses, music halls, or burlesque theaters. Ballet dancers, ballet-girls, and toe dancers all referred to themselves as toe dancers. Both less and more trained classes of dancers did indeed dance on their toes. According to Barbara Barker in *Ballet or Ballyhoo*, “No matter what their rank, all dancers were referred to in the press as ‘ballet girls’” (1984, 17). Because the press was uninformed about the hierarchical divide among the female dancers, the public also remained ignorant of the difference.

The hierarchy of dancers in an American opera company, as printed in the *Chicago Tribune* in 1872, included a company divided into *premières*, *coryphées*, *figurantes*, and *corps de ballet* (Chicago Daily Tribune 1872). The *premières* were ballet dancers who had been trained in European schools. The members of the *corps de ballet*, *coryphées*, and *figurantes* were primarily

American dancers who had little or no formal dance training. In part, this was the case because there were very few reputable dance schools in the United States prior to the turn of the twentieth century. The Metropolitan Opera's ballet school, for example, did not open until 1909, even though the company was founded in 1883 (Moore 1976, 144).

Dancers with qualified training were a foreign import for American opera companies at the turn of the century, resulting in a divide in experience and capabilities among members of the same troupe. "A Day with a Ballet Girl," published in the *New York Sun* in 1886, followed Maria Sims, a *corps* dancer from New York's Metropolitan Opera. At the time Sims was with the company, the *premières* of the Metropolitan were comprised of twelve English ballerinas, four Italians, and several French, Russian, German, and Swedish dancers. The article makes a great distinction between the dancers performing on the same stage. At the turn of the twentieth century, foreign ballet dancers were featured downstage in American opera productions, while American ballet-girls filled the background upstage.

But what was a ballet-girl? In 1884, Minnesota's *Sunday Globe* published the "Fairies of the Stage," an article that defined the characteristics of a ballet-girl. In this article, a reporter shared an interview with an unnamed gentleman "well versed in the business of the ballet," who stated that ballet-girls were female dancers from the working class, who were sometimes old enough to be grandmothers. Ballet-girls were women known for their appealing beauty and bodily form. When responding to the question that ballet-girls were frequently subjected to insult because of their vocation, the author defended the ballet-girl, replying, "They may be insulted and so may any lady that walks along on your streets, but ballet girls are as respectable as any other class of women... People generally have a poor opinion of ballet girls, but it is because they don't know any more of them than what they see on stage" (The St. Paul Sunday Globe

1884). In this time period, a societal bias existed against any woman who worked outside of the home. This included the ballet-girl who was required by her employers to wear a minimal amount of clothing in her trade.

The “Fairies of the Stage” article stated that for ballet-girls, “Their sole purpose is to please the eye by glittering costumes and curiously arranged marches and poses, exemplifying the adage that women should be seen, not heard. Ballet girls are never heard, only seen” (The St. Paul Sunday Globe 1884). Minimal skill or training was required for a ballet-girl to sit, walk, or march around an opera stage. In *Dancing Class: Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Divides in American Dance*, Linda Tomko describes requirements of ballet-girls: “A buxom figure and willingness to wear very scanty garb were requirements that this cadre of working women shared with female burlesque performers” (1999, 66). Therefore, a ballet-girl’s job was to charm the audience while wearing minimal amounts of clothing, showing off her figure.

However, according to the 1884 “Fairies” article, most ballet-girls were not content to conform to poor societal biases. The author recounted instances of male audience members flirting with ballet-girls after performances. He commented that more often than not, ballet-girls did not return the affections of their male admirers. The gentleman recounted one instance of a male audience member following an attractive ballet-girl back to her boarding house after a performance. The audience member made advances to the ballet-girl and was refused. The incident escalated, and the ballet-girl “pulled out a little 22-caliber revolver and shot him in the arm” (The St. Paul Sunday Globe 1884). Working in the ballet-girl trade, it is clear that women had to be prepared to defend themselves.

In 1894, American ballet-girls and ballet dancers banded together to defend themselves and to secure their labor rights. “Ballet Girls Cannot Agree” is an article published in *The*

*Evening World* newspaper on August 8, 1894. This article outlines a meeting of about 150 female dancers of all nationalities in New York who worked together to organize the Coryphées' Protective Association, which came to be known as the Coryphée Union. The purpose of the union was to increase pay rates for ballet-girls and to promote the prompt payment of dancers' salaries. The Eldorado management company had withheld pay from a group of ballet-girls, alleging that the ballet-girls had stolen their costumes. One of the leaders of the union movement rebutted the charge to *The Evening World*, "I wish you could have seen the costumes. The only thing that actually covered us enough to keep us out of jail were the tights and slippers, which the girls furnished themselves. All that the manager gave us was a piece of chiffon, which we wound around us like a kind of cloud" (The Evening World 1894). Not only were ballet-girls expected to supply their own tights and ballet shoes, encouraging employers to pay wages on a regular basis was a frequent part of their reality.

Where ballet-girls were placed on stage determined their weekly wage. An anonymous leader of the Coryphées Union explained the placement of ballet-girls on stage in 1894, "Girls are classed and paid by the week as follows: First line, \$22; second line, \$20; third line, \$18; fourth line, \$16; fifth line, \$12; sixth line, \$10. The scale of wages given has been the standard for years, but recently the hard times have reduced it somewhat, particularly among those already poorest paid" (The Evening World 1894). While it is unclear exactly what companies or establishments used this ranking system, it is clear that the more beautiful, talented, and trained dancers were paid more and were placed closest to the audience members. Women in the third and fourth lines had great experience and had garnered as much training as possible. The women in the fifth and sixth rows had little experience. The leaders who formed the Coryphée Union, who were themselves part of the first through fourth lines, refused to allow dancers from the fifth

and sixth rows to join the union. The organizers of the Coryphée Union did allow foreign ballet dancers to join their ranks, but did not want to be associated with fifth and sixth row dancers. The Coryphée Union is an example of American ballet-girls establishing their own legitimacy by bolstering the division between skilled and unskilled dancers.

The women of the Coryphée Union distrusted the press, stating to the *New-York Tribune* in 1894 that newspapers had misrepresented them (New York Tribune 1894). Derogatory language labels had long since been used in the press to describe the American ballet-girl and her trade. “The Dancing Beauty” from San Francisco’s *Morning Call* was published in 1890. In this article, the author referred to ballet-girls as “mules.” In fact, the *Morning Call* author went so far as to state that, “It is true there is no parallel between a ballet-dancer and a mule beyond the fact that both are well known as eccentric kickers” (Morning Call 1890).

Genuine ballet dancers at the turn of the century were most certainly not “eccentric kickers,” as stated in the *Morning Call* article. Even Willa Cather, better known for her novels about the American frontier, felt compelled to comment on the lack of kicking in 1913 ballet, very clearly stating that kicks were infrequent occurrences in classic dance. For ballet dancers, it was not appropriate to lift the foot above the hip. Cather wrote, “The high-kicking which has disgraced our stage for so long has nothing to do with the ballet. It came from the cabarets of Paris, from the *can-can*. But there it is not ballet dancing; it is called kicking” (Cather 1913, 93). With the unchanging nature of the classical dance form, the kicking action was not an appropriate movement for ballet in 1913, let alone appropriate prior to that time.

The legitimate ballet community was hesitant to add movements from outside the ballet vocabulary, particularly flashier steps, like kicks, in order to startle and excite audiences. Toe dancers in music halls and vaudeville turned to a variety of tricks, novelty steps, creating their



own movement vocabulary. In 1897, an unnamed author of the Sacramento *Record-Union* “Music and Drama” column declared disgust with toe dancers and the contemporary trends of mixing acrobatics with serious stage dancing. The addition of ostentatious steps was labeled as mere fads with which the public would eventually grow bored, including kicking a tambourine above one’s head and performing “that outrage on art and nature,” the splits (The Record-Union 1897). Hoping that the new trend would cease, the author inserted expectations that graceful ballet dancing would eventually return to its proper and respectful place, unburdened by distasteful additions.

However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, American audiences who patronized vaudevillian and music hall establishments demanded novelty from their performers, expecting ballet-girls and toe dancers to satisfy this craving. Dancing in establishments like vaudeville, literally translated as the “voice of the city,” the American audience did not necessarily understand the reasoning or the purpose of the divide between dancers who used pointe shoes. Ballet dancers had training and truly knew how to dance on the tips of their toes and could perform steps safely on pointe, thanks to years of training their bodies. In contrast, ballet-girls and toe dancers were not trained, nor did they perform highly technical movements on pointe. Outside of the opera, American ballet-girls balanced on their toes, not always gracefully, and performed their kicks neither burdened by the shadow of the ballet dancer nor the requirements of proper ballet technique. However, it was these unpretentious and spontaneous qualities that added novelty to the performances of the lesser-trained dancers, creating demand for this type of pointework from a variety of audiences.

Although divided at the turn of the twentieth century, ballet dancers, ballet-girls, and toe dancers all made their living in America, laboring in work rooted in ballet. From 1872 to 1913,

the press wrote a great deal about ballet dancers, ballet-girls, and toe dancers, sharing insights into opera company hierarchies and rankings, societal biases, and scandals involving dancers. These female laborers demonstrated driving protofeminist impulses while fighting for their reputations, their wages, and the evolution of the classic form. Notably though divided, these classes of dancers did work together. This fascinating period in ballet history is rich in detail and holds a great number of tangential topics for future exploration. Further and expanded investigation of the American ballet-girl, the impact of the Coryphée Union, and the vaudevillian novelty toe dancer are fertile areas of research for the field of Dance Studies.

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## ***HORSE[M]EN: Contemporary Queering of Traditional Traces in Mexico***

Ruth Hellier-Tinoco

**Abstract:** Award-winning choreographer Jaciel Neri creates provocative works, investigating traces of the folkloric through extreme contemporary practices. Neri grew up dancing traditional genres, often masked, in the context of socio-religious Roman Catholic fiestas, describing how, as a youth, he felt alienated when dancing these forms. Analyzing his latest full-length work, *HORSE[M]EN*, created through the Centre for Production of Contemporary Dance (CEPRODAC), I engage notions of Taylor's embodied repertoire to discuss the tension created by re-imagining recognizable traces of the revered collection of traditional and folkloric dance, and generating profoundly sensualized, explosive, and resistant choreographies.

As humans we are deeply aware of our bodies as containers and transmitters of memories, histories and temporalities. Through bodies we become conscious of alterations and transformations over time; of discontinuities and juxtapositions; of accumulated layers, sediments and iterations; of multi-temporal connections; of remains and traces. We sense embodied relationships with our predecessors, our pasts, our own prior and other selves, and our personal and collective memories. We use objects, photographs, movements, architectures, phrases, texts, spaces, smells, tastes, images, and ephemera to connect with bodies of history and memory. We play with tangled temporalities. As artists, creators, performers, actors, audiences, and receivers we are also deeply aware of bodies as containers and transmitters of memories, histories and temporalities. We play with time, memories and histories through our bodies, returning time and time again to body-based explorations of complex pasts within complicated presents.

I want to focus on Diana Taylor's idea of embodied repertoire that she discusses in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. In particular I'm interested in the embodied repertoire of Mexican folklórico, and ways in which traces are subverted and queered. Taylor stated:

The repertoire ...enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing...

The repertoire requires presence – people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there,’ being part of the transmission...

Performances also replicate themselves through their own structures and codes. That means that the repertoire, like the archive, is mediated. The process of selection, memorization or internalization, and transmission takes place within (and in turn helps constitute) specific systems of re-presentation. Multiple forms of embodied acts are always present, though in a constant state of againness. They reconstitute themselves, transmitting communal memories, histories, and values from one group/generation to the next. Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge”

(2003, 20–21)

Taylor also describes how “Many contemporary performances carry on these representational traditions as they continue to form a living chain of memory and contestation” (2003, 50). So this is the trace and the contestation.

For this discussion I’m also interested in ideas of queering and I’m using this concept to signal the unfixing and destabilizing of identity categories. This encompasses notions of ambiguity, cross, inter-, multiple and unstable positions. It also places questions into historical contexts. So, if identities are not fixed, they cannot be categorized and labeled, because identities consist of many varied components, so categorization by one characteristic is incomplete, and there is an interval between what a subject “does” (role-taking) and what a subject “is” (the self). This opposition destabilizes identity categories.

By considering notions of embodied repertoire as a trace, and contestation through queering, representational traditions continue to form part of a living chain of memory, but, through creative and imaginative choreographic and devising practices, are used to destabilize stereotypes and generate potential alternatives. My two examples today are of two contemporary scenic arts works in Mexico City: 1. *HORSE[M]EN* by award-winning contemporary choreographer Jaciel Neri; 2. *Zapata, Muerte Sin Fin* (*Zapata, Death Without End*) a five

company project facilitated by La Máquina de Teatro. For these two examples I focus on playing with traces of horse bodies as ways of radicalizing traditional traces of folklórico. In Mexico, there are various overt connections between dances/performance and horses, particularly dances with horses: firstly, in the ritual dance of *moros y cristianos* (Moors and Christians) dancers often ride horses within the processional choreographies; secondly, in celebrations of *jaripeos* and *ferias*, horses perform with dance sections; and thirdly, the practice of *charrería* (a competitive event with horses) includes dancing horses. For my examples, what is crucial is the understanding the horses have a deep and conflicting presence in Mexican history, with the horse-body representing a fundamentally complex and contradictory body, containing traces of the Spanish invasion and domination of 1521, and the Revolutionary wars for land and liberty of 1910-17.

### *HORSE[M]EN*

Turning to Jaciel Neri and his work *HORSE[M]EN*: this is a radical choreographic exploration and a deeply political investigation, encompassing a relationship of postmemory with both the Spanish invasion and domination and with the Revolutionary wars. Through his choreography, Neri aims to investigate scenarios of stereotypes, the idea of liberty, and domestication and domination. He engages aesthetics that are fundamentally dance-driven, with a multidisciplinary openness – including speaking and interaction with audiences. He develops appropriation aesthetics to explore questions. Here is a brief introduction to Neri: he is an award-winning contemporary choreographer, and founder of *Moving Borders, arte escénico sin fronteras*. After undertaking dance studies at the Folkwang Hochschule in Germany and at the Centre for Choreographic Research (CICo) in Mexico City, he has gone on to create provocative

works, investigating traces of the folkloric through extreme contemporary practice. His recent work *HORSE[M]EN* was a coproduction of the Centre for Production of Contemporary Dance (Centro de Producción de Danza Contemporánea CEPRODAC) and Moving Borders ([www.moving-borders.mx](http://www.moving-borders.mx)).

Neri grew up dancing traditional or folkloric dance, in the context of socio-religious Roman Catholic fiestas in his home town in Mexico. He was frequently involved in dancing masked dances. These dances or dance-dramas have long trajectories, transmitted through multiple generations and bodies. In some dances, scenarios of conquest and battle are re-enacted, taught in the sixteenth-century by Spanish conquerors as forms of embodied inculcation. In the 1920s, some were theatricalized for constructing the national unified “body” of Mexicanness (I discuss this and trace one dance, *la Danza de los Viejitos*, in my long-term research, Hellier-Tinoco, 2009, 2011, 2015, forthcoming. See also García Mendoza 2013, 2016). In the twenty-first century these syncretic and embedded forms are danced as offerings and promises. Many of these dances are masked – and Neri has described how, as a youth, he felt alienated when dancing these forms, not knowing with whom he was dancing. One particular figure is the maringui – a Mary figure – often clothed in highly sequined and rich fabrics, who performs exquisitely refined steps. So, when Neri choreographs he specifically draws from his own embodied knowledge and rememory, creating from corporeal traces of his years of dancing. Neri plays with these movements, overtly queering and transforming them, generating profoundly sensualized, explosive, and resistant choreographic revisions. As he explains, he draws on his life experiences, from a traditional dancer to a contemporary dancer and he conceived *HORSE[M]EN* as a homage. He also explains that *HORSE[M]EN* “is a reflection of stereotypes related to leadership, through the language of dance. The work analyzes the image of

the horse as a double symbol: on one side the idea of liberty, and on the other, domestication and domination.”

There are recognizable traces of traditional-folkloric dance – but contested through his choreographies. Through this dance piece, horse-bodies and horse-movements are translated, re-formed, and performed as human bodies, intermingling the two forms. In the first part the dancers appear disguised as a mountable horse in a festive atmosphere and with “música de banda” – a live band, as if it were a festivity in some village. Through the course of the scene the dancers perform movements that simulate horse movements and through which they mark their territory and demonstrate their power. In this way contemporary dance is combined with zapateado – a form of footwork common in traditional dance —and the shift of folkloric dance, therefore performing an obvious form of experimentation. With a great deal of color, and in a kitsch atmosphere, various scenes are performed in which the figure of a leader is represented – including military, political, popular and religious. Throughout this choreographic and scenic exploration, humor and sarcasm are very much in evidence. With recognizable traces of the revered collection of traditional and folkloric dance, Neri plays with these movements, overtly queering and transforming them, generating profoundly sensualized, explosive, and resistant choreographic revisions. He choreographs radical dissolution of binaries (gender and species), working through trans-temporal movements and costumes to generate a hybrid horse-human. Horse-bodies and horse-movements are translated, re-formed, and performed as human bodies, intermingling the two forms. The dancers transform gestures and poses, and subvert relationships of rememory. Given that the audiences for contemporary dance in Mexico City and in other cities are demographically broad, Neri’s re-rendering of well-known choreographies is bold and challenging.



*Zapata, Muerte Sin Fin*

My second example involves the performance *Zapata, Muerte Sin Fin* (*Zapata, Death Without End*) a five company project facilitated by La Máquina de Teatro. This was a multi-ensemble project, encompassing live workshops and a final performance on stage in Mexico City, with audience and public co-participating on stage. Five disparate ensembles from diverse states in Mexico participated: Mexico City; Tampico, Tamaulipas; Mérida, Yucatan; Guadalajara, Jalisco; and Oaxaca, Oaxaca. The project lasted for one year, with collaborative engagement through intensive workshop sessions, sharing at-distance through virtual technologies, and live performance. The postmemory body of revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata, one of Mexico's most iconic figures, was the core provocation. The project used an open- and multi-layered structure of playfulness and community, and incorporated deliberate interweaving of aesthetic and experiential corporeal differences, by performing overt juxtapositions. The project culminated in four public performances, involving performers and public co-mingling and co-participating on a theater stage in Mexico City. It comprised fully-rehearsed scenes, improvisational scenes and deliberately inclusive scenes with the public. Here I focus on discuss two of these scenes – by Mexico City and Mérida. It is important to note that when the public entered the studio theater, walking through auditorium to sit in the seats, performers approach them, inviting and encouraging them to walk up the five steps and onto the stage. For the three hours everybody is on stage together, moving around and being moved around. The stage is empty, except of the bodies of the performer and audience, so there is a tangible sense of bodies being re-placed, re-formed, and transformed, even as ephemeral traces remain of each scene. There are no clear demarcations and delineations of space indicating which bodies should go

where. With multiple crossings and layerings, the stage is a container of diversity, with no objective of generating unity or sameness. The space is constantly constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed, creating palimpsests of making and unmaking.

*Mexico city:* Five performers begin to transform the space, walking in, out, and around the space, placing square, cardboard egg-box trays on the floor, in structures, and in towers. Stage lights with trailing cables are placed strategically on the ground and tiny self-contained lights are placed atop the towers. This cityscape is being constructed from everyday objects, as these now-empty containers which usually hold items of great fragility are transformed into spaces for living. Two performers wear large cardboard horse heads over their heads as they perform zapateado. In this experimental framework working through the postmemory of Zapata, the sound and movement of zapateado reforms traces of the postrevolutionary years: of shaping of shared national identity, of traditional embodied dance forms. But the traces are being danced in a newly constructed –scape –an urbanscapes of egg-boxes and lights, contemporary and fragile. One performer, Juliana, wearing an awkwardly-fitting charro suit and holding a large hat, begins to speak: “When I was six years old, in 1971, I was a representative of my primary school for the Independence celebration, dressed in a charro outfit.” She puts the hat on her head: “I remember standing in a line at the National Palace. I was very nervous, waiting for President Luis Echeverría Álvarez. As he walked past the line, he picked me out and took me with him.” Isaac picks up Juliana, lifting her awkwardly off the ground, one arm under her legs, one under her back, taking the full weight of her body, as if carrying a child. “This was 10<sup>th</sup> September 1971, just three months after the Halconazo. I was in the arms of an assassin.”

As Juliana’s feet dangle, and as her heavy and uncomfortable fifty-year old body is held up inelegantly, she is re-visioning and re-mempering her six-year old child-self. Her palimpsest

body of childhood is interwoven, layered, and sedimented in her adult body. One live body holds and transmits archived-repertorial traces of the dead and broken bodies of 1968 and 1971. Her charro suit connects her to national identity, to *charrería* (horsemanship), to zapateado and the folklórico repertoire. As Isaac lowers Juliaan to the ground, he elegantly and gently performs zapateado, seemingly contesting the embodied knowledge and repertoire.

*Mérida* (la Rendija): Katenka, Rafael and Alejo haul three sacks to the front of stage, and stand side by side in a line, with their backs to auditorium, as the crowd gathers to look towards them. Each one is in a pool of light, as they tip their sack upside down, out of which falls fresh earth, generating three small mounds. Particles rise into the light beams. The fresh dirt has a pungent smell that pervades the air. Throughout the scene, each performer remains in their own piece of earth, moving within it as and gradually transforming it. Katenka, with a seemingly-pregnant belly, wears a delicately-embroidered traditional white blouse. She kneels in the earth and raises the front of her blouse to reveal a finely woven shawl (*rebozo*) around her belly. The shawl is the quintessential icon of femininity, “woman,” motherliness, and maternity, and frequently used to carry babies and fresh produce. Katenka carefully removes her shawl from her belly, plays with it, and then opens it, to reveal that it is full of earth, which she empties into her mound, generating an accumulation of earth. With fluid movements, she sits in the earth, creating patterns with her bare feet, twisting, standing, and revolving her shawl around her. The whiteness of her blouse is gradually transformed by the earth. She lays the shawl in the earth, fills it again, then with her bare hands, drags earth over it, again and again, until it is eventually completely obscured. Her twisting flowing body offers traces of traditional Yucatan feminine dance forms.

Rafael shifts his body to form a horse-like pose – arms forward, torso bent, head high and shaking. He begins a steady galloping movement, with bare feet pounding in the earth, repeating this rhythmic action over and over. His feet are returning to the same place again, and again, and again, undertaking a journey to nowhere. His face stares forward in gritty persistence. Through his galloping movements his body seems human-animal, and in a perpetual liminal state. He is pushing his body to the extreme, with sweat mingling and with the rising dirt particles, he becomes more and more exhausted. In the hushed space, the sound of his heaving breathing is very present as he seems to struggle for air. His pounding movements are felt by everybody as embodied vibrations through the floor of the stage. His individual body connects viscerally to the collective body. He performs traces of Zapata as struggling and persistent revolutionary bodies, through his horse-human movements connecting destruction of Indigenous bodies in the sixteenth century with fighting revolutionaries in 1910s. Alejo stands in his earth-pile holding a jaw-bone of a horse. This object is the literal remains of a body and ephemera of “death.” He twists and turns, manipulating the body-remains and generating a beating sound. He kneels and places his own head where the head of the horse had been, generating a visual palimpsest of coexisting life/death, horse/human, freedom/slavery. This simultaneous scene performs a queering of traditional embodied repertoires through traces of folklórico as three bodies move in their mounds of earth.

## Summary

In *HORSE[M]EN* by Jaciel Neri and *Zapata, Muerte Sin Fin*, facilitated by La Máquina de Teatro, obvious traces of embodied repertoire of folkloric are evident. Yet, both are examples of

deep re-visions of traditional traces. The alteration forms challenges to stereotypes. Neri's choreography generates deeply sexualized and sensorial transformations, combined with political and religious inquiries. The choreographies of La Máquina de Teatro and La Rendija in the transdisciplinary *Zapata* project perform a challenge stereotypes. In the scene by La Máquina, the traces of zapateado (through a hybrid/palimpsest horse-human) challenge institutional amnesia and form part of an embodied memory of massacres carried out under the governmental order of Luis Echeverría. In the scene by La Rendija, the hybrid horse-human bodies form traces of reproduction, struggle, and liminality, as an exhausted body pounds the earth, going nowhere. Repeating Taylor again, "Many contemporary performances carry on these representational traditions as they continue to form a living chain of memory and contestation" (Taylor 2003, 50). In these radical and provocative performances in Mexico City, contestation involves re-embodiment and remembering traces of folklórico, zapateado and horses, and playing with and transforming these movements to offer ambiguous, unstable and multiple re-formations.

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## **If the Shoe Fits: The Pointe Shoe as a Tool for Knowledge Acquisition**

Sebastian Ignacio Oreamuno

### **Abstract**

The pointe shoe has transformed “from being a means to an end to becoming an end in itself” (Fisher-Stitt). However, by shifting perceptions of the pointe shoe from a feminine object back to a piece of technology, and by utilizing Ingold’s discussion on how the ground shapes our understanding of the world through our feet, and Clark and Chalmers’s concept of the extended mind, I suggest that this technological tool is a site for knowledge acquisition and transmission. Pointe shoes lead to the embodiment of knowledge, shaping the dancer’s body, balance, self-awareness, and cognition from the ground up.

It might be obvious to note that the pointe shoe has become associated with female bodies and with femininity.<sup>1</sup> Yet, this has happened over time through the continuous iteration of women engaging with pointe. While ballerinas were the initial creators of the pointe shoe,<sup>2</sup> choreographers have also played a part in propagating this coupling. But the pointe shoe has the potential to be used for other purposes, and some of those reasons highlight that pointe work should not be restricted to gender norms. My presentation, which is the conclusion of my Master’s research on men and pointe, aligns itself with Jennifer Fisher’s sentiment that “[b]allet has to have a future as well as a glorious past, and its propensity to become immured in tradition ... causes it to move too slowly away from gendered protocols” (2014, 60). My attempt, in this paper, is to enable a backward-looking re-envisioning of the identity of the pointe shoe to mobilize it away from “gendered protocols” and towards a tie with knowledge acquisition.

What is missing or unacknowledged in the various accounts of ballerinas on pointe and their contribution to pointe dancing is the training they have undergone (Fisher 2014). Ballerinas, whom the public sees on stage effortlessly performing on pointe, have trained in pointe work which is in itself a transformative process. It is not that the female body is any more conducive to

being on pointe, it is just better accepted since this coupling's continuous reiteration has made it the norm over time.

As such, the pointe shoe can be considered first and foremost a training device used to expand a dancer's traditional vocabulary while simultaneously broadening their bodily knowledge. That men have been excluded from this type of training opportunity is what should be questioned. The pointe shoe as a feminine artefact not only prevents men from donning it, this gendered signification confines the identification of the pointe shoe itself. Perceiving this artefact as a tool might permit a greater range for its utility, and more importantly, open up a space for transformative interaction. If the point shoe is considered as a tool, these restrictions that men face, and the tension this coupling creates, might dissipate. This perspective would allow the pointe shoe to reside in various spaces, to attach to and detach from different bodies, and to fluidly cross borders and engage in complex relationships. There is a lot of knowledge that can be gained by putting on pointe shoes, and this information, which is acquired through the feet, will affect the body and spread into other aspects of dance training. Learning about balance in one context can transfer to other situations.

It can be reasoned then that the pointe shoe is ultimately an artefact of knowledge production, and that attempts to elevate the body and leave the ground have transformed our body as well as our cognition. In engaging with pointe work, I came to realize that information was being created by and passed on through my feet. While this knowledge from the feet was not an explicit topic in the oral history interviews I conducted, it was certainly alluded to: being fitted correctly, learning how to articulate through the foot, pushing through the phalanges, concentrating on my ankles going outward rather than focusing on the toes, feeling the sensation of being in fifth and first, and so on.



Tim Ingold points out that there is a certain perception arising from evolutionary theorists that place the feet and hands as polar opposites: the feet are seen as “stepping-machines,” while the hands are considered agents that can transform the environment, and through which knowledge is acquired (2004, 317). Feet become the mechanisms that “propel the body *within* the natural world”; whereas the hands are the agents that “deliver the intelligent designs ... of the mind *upon* it” (Ingold 2004, 318; emphasis in original). These two appendages are placed in a hierarchical dichotomy: the status of the hands and fingers is elevated due to their perceived contribution to people’s “intellectual superiority” through “grasping and manipulation,” whereas the feet and toes are reduced to the roles of “support and locomotion” (Ingold 2004, 317).

Ingold reveals how hands have come to be made superior to feet because of their potential to transform, and therefore control the environment (2004). The hands, as well as the brain, are given an active role, while the feet are passively engaged since they are subjected to pursuing the needs and wants of the brain through the hands. According to the theorists that Ingold speaks of, it was the hands, not the feet, that allowed early humans to embark “upon the road of civilization” (2004, 317). Ingold’s critique, and his discussion of the influence of boots, shoes, and fabricated ground, such as sidewalks and studio floors, on notions of the body, is enlightening and applicable here.

In ballet, which this paper focuses on, feet are mainly used to travel around the stage, to elevate the body (through rises onto demi-pointe and pointe), and to propel the body into the air. Pointing the feet is the foremost foot articulation that is seen and expected. Conversely, the hands are given more movement through the *port de bras*, and at times the freedom to articulate specific gestures through mime. In a sense, while the feet are made to support the feel of a character, the hands are given the possibility to feel the environment through touch, and portray

feelings through gestures. Feet are taken for granted as expressive appendages, and producers of knowledge.

Thinking about feet and ground, Ingold argues for “a more literally *grounded* approach to perception .... For it is surely through our feet in contact with the ground (albeit mediated with footwear), that we are most fundamentally and continually ‘in touch’ with our surroundings” (2004, 330; emphasis in original). Although Ingold is talking generally about walking, one can extend this view to how traditional ballet technique affects those individuals who engage with it, both with regards to their movement across the surfaces of studios and stages, and with respect to the footwear that is a mandatory aspect of this dance form. How the individual dancer interacts with the various “grounds” through different footwear shapes their body, and their cognition.

While Ingold overtly claims how constrictive footwear has reduced the feet to the carriers of the more adept hands, and disconnected knowledge production from the ground up, I wish to explore how this is not necessarily the case for pointe work. The pointe shoe as a piece of technology actually involves receiving knowledge from the foot. That is, the foot’s haptic involvement in the process of pointe work reverberates up through the body aligning and shaping it, and by creating sensation that is transformed into knowledge. While boots and shoes might diminish, as Ingold suggests, “the activity of walking to the activity of a stepping-machine, [depriving] wearers of the possibility of thinking with their feet” (2004, 323); the pointe shoe, which necessitates awareness, implicitly requires and provides this.

Ingold also illuminates how “the boot has blocked the development of the prehensile functions of the foot” which can only be re-gained “with much practice and training” (2004, 324). Conversely, pointe work unexpectedly and essentially requires pre-pointe exercises in order to provide the feet with this “prehensile function.” As most of you may know, the purpose

of these exercises is to permit the foot to become as flexible and dexterous as possible, that way, when it is constricted within the encasing of the pointe shoe there is already a sense of what the foot must do to rise onto the tips of the toes. While some feet have become “naturally” flexible and strong through their development, and might be able to rise onto pointe more easily, others require training and understanding before commencing pointe work. Therefore, the pointe shoe is an intriguing device because even though it binds the feet in a tight encasing the feet are still meant to be dexterous, enabling the toes to act as unit through their separate strength.

Ingold’s article brings forth an important idea: knowledge can arise from the ground up, through the feet, and through the objects that we use to cover (and Ingold would add constrict) them. Even though pointe work might be considered unnatural, or at the very least an exaggeration of the elevated body, it is a body technique that “falls within the range of possibility and comes as second nature to its practitioners” (Ingold 2004, 335). Pointe work can provide a form of embodied knowledge that might not necessarily be present in other forms of dance precisely because of how extreme it is, and due to the footwear that is used.

Andy Clark and David Chalmers also maintain that the body can be a producer of knowledge (2016). The authors remark, “The brain (or brain and body) comprises a package of basic, portable, cognitive resources ... [which] may incorporate bodily actions into cognitive processes” (10). Their argument does not end there however. The authors explain that the machinery that constitutes an individual mind can be distributed across the brain, body, and world. This proposal is part of a cognitive science perspective that extends cognition beyond the boundary of skin and skull and out into the world with which the individual interacts. In this view, “the human organism [can be] linked with an external entity in a two-way interaction,

creating a *coupled system* that can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right” (Clark and Chalmers 2016, 8; emphasis in original).

The extended mind invokes “the active role of the environment in driving cognitive processes” (Clark and Chalmers 2016, 7). While the pointe shoe has come to be perceived through performance as an extension of the feminine, it can also be viewed as an extension of body-mind because of the cognitive implications as both tool and prosthesis. It might seem like a stretch to propose that this pairing between dancer and pointe shoe is an example of the extended mind. Still, as Sandra Noll Hammond demonstrates in “Searching for the Sylph: Documentation of Early Developments in Pointe Technique,” training in pointe work and performing on pointe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was originally done by both men *and* women, and without pointe shoes, which would have undoubtedly involved body-mind knowledge acquisition (1988). The pointe shoe, which is an extension of the foot and is utilized for training and performance purposes, can also be deemed an example of the extended mind. As mentioned previously, a dancer’s interaction with the pointe shoe creates a particular awareness, or knowledge, that becomes embodied, and can be tapped into and applied to other aspects of dance. The pointe shoe then, through its use, becomes a producer of and repository for knowledge.

The pointe shoe as a technical aid has recently been revamped by Lesia Trubat. Katherine Brooks recounts that Trubat has created a technology—“E-Traces”—that captures “the fleeting image of a physical dancer into a whole new visual language” (2014). This technological enhancement is sewn onto the pointe shoes allowing the device to record the movement which is then transported “to a custom mobile app program” that records the mapped choreography (Brooks 2014). As the author recounts, the purpose of this technological tool is to provide the

dancer with the opportunity to “view the movement they’ve made in video format,” to “extract skills and analyze them,” and to be able “to correct choreography and document it in new ways” (Brooks 2014).

In this instance, the pointe shoe is clearly a technological device meant to transform the perceptually ephemeral into a record with some permanence. The patterns that the dancer creates with the pointe shoe are meant to be externally recorded, thus enabling the dancer to make room to embody other information. As Clark and Chalmers note, “It certainly seems that evolution has favored onboard capacities which are especially geared to parasitizing the local environment so as to reduce memory load, and even to transform the nature of the computational problems themselves” (2016, 11). The use of external and environmental supports is meant to aid our cognition and maintain it in a two-way interaction (Clark and Chalmers 2016, 8); whether outsourcing knowledge into the environment (Clark n.d.) means recording information through a computational system that archives data or breaking in and wearing out pointe shoes, both can be analyzed for future reference, especially with E-Traces. Further, the record that was created through the body can be said to be stored within it and outside of it.

Clark and Chalmers contend that this link between biological organism and external resources, this extended system, is an extended self (2016, 18). Thus, dancers with their pointe shoes can be perceived as an extended system in which the dancers’ shoes become a part of their self through the transformative process of their inter-engagement. Clark asserts that an extended person is built from “both biological and non-biological parts, some of the latter not even being attached to his [or her] biological body,” and suggests that destroying this person’s non-biological parts could be construed as “a crime against the person, not merely a crime against [her or] his cyber-property” (n.d.). From this perspective it could also be proposed that socially

restricting men from using pointe shoes, technological devices utilized for knowledge acquisition, can be seen as an obstruction to male dancers' bodily and intellectual development.

The pointe shoe as a tool cannot and should not be perceived as a gendered accoutrement; nor, it could be argued, was it ever meant to be restricted to such a realm. This is only an illusory representation that has surfaced. Yet the shift from tool to prosthesis (Fisher-Stitt 2011, 24) created a new scenario within which the pointe shoe appears to have become gendered as feminine due to its continual utilization by female bodies. Conversely and importantly it is unknown whether men completely abandoned pointe work with the advent of the pointe shoe; a topic that requires further exploration into archives and oral histories.

In the end, whether knowledge is from the ground up or through an extended mind, or both, it should not be bound by gender norms. Shifting the perception of the pointe shoe from a feminine object towards a tool will help to advance this device as a resource for knowledge that should be accessible to *any* body (with the correct supervision of course). As a dance form that arose out of Western ideals, and which reflects its values and customs (Kealiinohomoku 2001, 33, 40), ballet should at least attempt to reflect the current ideologies of the culture within which it is embedded and develop or change with this culture. Pointe work within traditional ballet is often used in a way that references ideas that are quickly becoming outdated, and not to mention prejudiced and sexist. By bounding (dance) knowledge to particular genders and biological sexes, traditional ballet refuses, as Fisher states, "the tips of the toes to be considered as just another plane on which to perform" (2014, 73). If women are allowed and encouraged to enter into fields that were once deemed inappropriate, then why is there still a bias with respect to men going on pointe? And what does it mean that they are "allowed" to do so through subversive art?

Dance practice, ultimately, is a transformative process that shifts perceptions and extends cognition. So, let's not limit ourselves, or others.

## Notes

1 In the presentation I began with a quote from a dancer from Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo whom I had interviewed for my Master's research. Although I had anonymized his statement in the presentation I am not adding it to this version of the paper since I am bound by the ethics of my university. In short, the Trock dancer was providing insight into other ways that the pointe shoe could allow for character development, and he was also questioning their strong association with femininity.

2 I would like to thank Jennifer Fisher, the panel's moderator, for noting that in not acknowledging the ballerina's integral contribution to pointe history I was taking away their voice and agency. I have adjusted the sentence in order to reflect this insight.



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**Title**

Butoh as an Approach to Performance in South Africa

**Author's Name**

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**Abstract**

This paper problematizes the manner in which the application of butoh principles in performance processes can contribute to discourses of identity and cultural transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. What does it mean to be dancing darkness in South Africa/n? The politics of ugliness (Pop and Widrich, 2014), 'strangeness' (Sara Ahmed, 2000), as well as adopting notions of difference as a marker of post-colonial agency (Gilbert and Tompkins) are interrogated. It focuses on multiple descriptions of individuals, as opposed to singular descriptions of race and communities. I argue for a more liminal notion of identity that is situated in between certitudes and homogenous racial descriptions, thereby opening up several potentials of how the body and persons can be perceived. I re-investigate my own butoh practices as a black, female South African in Japan, Germany and South Africa since 2000s and challenge the broad philosophy of *uBhuntu* (*I am who I am because of all of you/communitas*). My paper suggests the application of butoh techniques can elucidate different individual narratives, and potentially provide some theoretical answers to complex questions around identity and personhood. Finally, I theorise some of the philosophies that underpin my research and teaching, in order to problematize notions of the Body and Performance in contemporary South African theatre practice.

**Paper****Butoh as an Approach to Performance in South Africa**

The trajectory of this theme begins with contextualizing my connection to butoh as a solo dancer. It then expands to a brief description of my Masters research in 2013 where I offered a series of workshops to professional ballet dancers associated with Cape Town City Ballet company in South Africa. It also references my role as director and choreographer of a Cape Town Opera production, *African Angels*, as well as a series of seminars and practice sessions with third-year drama students at the University of Cape Town. Primarily, the title infers the philosophy underpinning my scholarship and how, in theoretical and practical terms, that is applied to a range of performers seeking creative ways of engaging with multiple issues concerning identity and socio-political transformation in South Africa.

When I worked with Ohno Yoshito in Japan, he often asked a question which I understood on quite a personal level, “What is your butoh?” (Ohno, Interviews, 2004-2011). My initial connection to butoh resulted from its insistence on developing a language that responds to questions of identity and life cycles with imagination. However, right at the beginning of my solo performance career in the early 1990s, this connection was not as explicit. When I took my first journey out of South Africa in 1994, I travelled to London and created a work with the intention of responding to reductive, binary stereotypes that put South African people in White or Black race boxes. Singular stylistic expectations of dancers are usually based on these racial descriptions. I wanted to introduce myself in dance, but not as a Black body that does traditional African dance and moves to the beat of a drum with foot stamps, syncopated rhythms and a fluid, undulating torso. I wanted to deliver a more nuanced description of my identity, stemming from my upbringing in apartheid South Africa and an involuntary absorption of the meticulous attention paid to dividing people into four racial categories. White (defined as of European descent) was placed at the top end of the economic spectrum. Much further down the scale of socio-political advantage were those classified Indian (of Indian descent). They were followed closely by the Coloured<sup>1</sup> category (described as neither White nor Black) and at the bottom of the scale, positioned with the most disadvantages in terms of education, economics, job opportunities and living opportunities, were those classified as Black (of African descent). For me, growing up as Coloured in a community of people who largely believed themselves to be neither White or Black, but someplace in between, became a lens for me to create a solo work. In 1994, a character, called *Daai za Lady*, colloquial in English for ‘That’s a Lady’, emerged. The main intention was to create a dance language that like my identity, could not be described in unitary terms. *Daai za Lady* is

a self-constructed, imaginary hybrid figure, that explores the physical, psychological and emotional aspects of a woman imbued with the spirit of a horse. From 1994 to 2004, several installations of *Daai za Lady* were made and her hybrid parts, including male, female, horse and flower parts, explored. Thus, on my arrival in Japan in 2003, a body of work that focused on expressing a dance identity that provokes a more nuanced and complex perception of identity, was already established through the leitmotif of *Daai za Lady*. This repertoire aims to find a holistic way of being that is not contained within the structures of race and gender, as well as its associated stereotypes. It is a liminal state that subverts structure, roles and relationships encumbered by categorizations of self (Turner, 2017). Through *Daai za Lady* I use the idiosyncrasies of my body, upbringing and everyday experiences to find meaning in who I am, on my own terms and not subsumed by Western aesthetics of performance. These intentions connect with the founders of Butoh, Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo, and their desire to find a unique body language. Whilst living in Tokyo from 2003 to 2011, butoh became a viable tool for deepening my solo performance and visceral conviction that we are not just our bodies but entail bodies of wisdom from multiple sources within and around us. This sensation and conviction has intensified in South Africa, a country still fraught with racial conflict and economic disparities.

### Re-Imagining South African

Making sense of the complexities of identity in South Africa requires imagination, or as South African sociologist, Zimitri Erasmus says, “a re-imagination of our identities” (Erasmus, 2001, 21). In addition, I believe a willingness to engage with the unfamiliar is of fundamental importance. In terms of dance in South Africa, ballet, contemporary and African dance are entangled in processes, methodologies and

performance aesthetics that are best described by South African theatre-maker, Jay Pather, as “shaped by a colonial hangover that we have not shaken off” (Pather, 2007, 11). Pather claims that we need to develop a set of aesthetics that are informed by a life lived within and of our communities in this time and in this place. Personally, butoh has provided me with the tools to ameliorate self-styled aesthetics, and from both theoretical and practical positions, I have been able to interrogate ways of applying it to performance processes in South Africa.

Theoretically, I use indigenous theories in combination with philosophies in phenomenology as a means to make sense of butoh in a South African context. Indigenous theories, as expounded by Linda Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), suggest the centering of our own concerns and experiences as a way to understand theories and research from our own perspective. Examining these experiences with a phenomenological methodology, suggest an analysis of imagination and the perception of the world beyond simple descriptions of what they are. Drawing from Gallagher and Zahavi (2008), phenomenology reflects on how things appear and expands an understanding of how that description correlates to and informs our experience. Therefore, it helps us pay attention to the way in which we experience reality and as a consequence, how combinations of different actions affect the world in which we live. These notions of indigenous theories and phenomenology connect to butoh, especially when we consider how the insertion of personalised characters give performances of butoh various manifestations of form and content. Butoh artists are described as understated and nude, antiheroic, wild, spiritual, mystical, existentially dark and void, uplifting, or sometimes a single artist can portray all of this. Fundamentally, I believe performances framed within phenomenology’s introspection and butoh philosophy

have the possibility to move one beyond the “categorical formations [that] we inherit” (Sokolowski, 2000, 167).

In practical terms, I apply butoh philosophies in my teaching and performance making by focusing on a few of its inherent principles (Job, 2014). There is the principle of restraint, which I interpret as a restraint from oneself, achieved by repressing the urge to respond to stimuli in ways that one usually would. Another is a conscious physical and psychological focus on oppositional forces, such as the idea of the beauty in the monster, or the continuum of life in death in life. The principle of perception, physically experienced by imagining eyes under the feet, on the back, hands, as well as the surrounding environment, is useful in developing multiple perspectives in creating processes. The inversion of body weight and body parts also serves to re-imagine the body and psychically will a different expression, presence and understanding of narratives. The idea of learning from both animate and inanimate elements, such as embodying the density of stones, or delicateness of a tissue, shift the quality and dynamics of movement in the body. Combinations of butoh principles enable a specific body language and conscious choice in how movements, narratives and characters are articulated. This process is extremely physical and requires a particular understanding and awareness of the body. To this end, I have developed a style of movement, called *Movement Dynamics*<sup>TM</sup>, often taught in the warm-up phase of my teaching sessions. It comprises a series of physical, cardio-vascular and muscle toning exercises and movements, to bring awareness, release and a different perception to what may be considered as smaller or even hidden parts of the body. For example, realizing the middle fingers as alternative spines, releasing the neck by tapping the bone behind the ear, utilizing the armpit and shoulder to initiate arm movements, finding

balance by focusing on the heart, or consciously inhaling to elevate and expand the body, or exhaling to deflate and release certitudes and perceived limitations of the body.

Movement Dynamics also brings a consciousness to the surrounding environment and prepares the body to find meta-physical meaning in the exploration of various butoh principles. Metaphors inform many of the butoh exercises following the warm-up and are helpful in challenging stereotypes. For example, psycho-physically imagining and embodying the vastness of the sky, or slow-moving heat of the summer sun can problematize the stereotypical representation of Black people as energetic, colorful or loud. In addition, imagining eyes under the feet and on the fingertips enables a sensitive movement quality and forces a close up look at where, what, why and how we touch and tread as go through our daily lives. The class ends with the concept of sharing a cup of tea; a moment of consolidation and coherence, whereby the performers can decompress and assimilate the work into their practice by sharing their experiences.

### Butoh Approaches to Ballet, Opera and Theatre-Making

I have drawn several comments from the final cup-of-tea phase of the class, which reaffirm my conviction that butoh has relevance and is a viable tool in approaching performance making practices in South Africa. The fact that we are all encased in bodies that signify meaning, extends my work beyond dancers who generally use their limbs in a conscious way to deliver meaning. It includes actors and opera singers, who may be less aware of the potential of their bodies and how it could add meaning to their performance. My aim is not to get them to move in a butoh-esque fashion. However, in all instances, I find that butoh puts the body in research and interrogates its potential and significance in performance. Therefore, the performer's skill is intensified as they

become capable of demonstrating different depths and nuances to their narratives and more adept at creating a sense of magic that all performers yearn for.

According to Cape Town City Ballet dancers, butoh heightened their imagination and embodiment of characters. One dancer mentioned that following her butoh experience, when next playing a character in a classical ballet, such as *Giselle*, she would first look with the eyes on her back before moving. For her, realizing this sensation and awareness of the body makes a huge difference to the more conventional, controlled rendering of the back in classical ballet. This active and different engagement of the body changes the interpretation of the music and provokes a different emotion within the dancer. If done consistently, this can infuse classical ballet with new meaning and alternative ways of expressing aesthetics. This ideology fits into Spivak's notion of aesthetic education and how it requires going beyond agendas set by established centers of learning. It creates the sense of shifting the sacred from its pedestal by proposing alternative ways of performance. For me, butoh has become a provocative tool in nurturing "an epistemological performance through a rearrangement of desires" (Spivak, 2012, 125) and shifts the conventionally undisputed authority of what we hold as ideal. I apply butoh in an aesthetic training that engages the imagination to not only see what is there, but also what is not, by rendering the invisible, visible, and in the process, destabilize power structures.

Shifting notions of what is held as sacred and thus formulaic in theatre-making processes into a more indigenous and contested place, is demonstrated in the production *African Angels*, performed by Cape Town Opera. This opera concert is performed by eighteen singers and moves through classical repertoire, gospel,



traditional African tunes, as well as jazz. During the time of my association, from 2013 to 2017, it was performed in the biggest opera houses and concert halls in Germany and Holland. The prestige of venues associated with what is perceived as sacred in the way classical opera repertoires are delivered, increased the performers' anxiety and sense of responsibility to live up to the ideal. My directing processes, however, lean toward the notions of Antoine Vitez who claims that performance work has to be "both the preserver of ancient forms of expression and the adversary of traditions" (Vitez in Pavis, 1996, 127). In the rehearsal processes with African Angels, I considered how to ignite what has been submerged and internalized, in order for the performers as well as the audiences to listen, recognize the familiar in the unfamiliar, and at subliminal and visceral levels, establish a different connection to their traditions and their skill. Would it be possible for their bodies to sing and thereby, provoke audiences to listen differently? I found a way to experiment with this idea in the transition between a medley of songs from the musical *Showboat* (Showboat, 1936), and the rendering of a Nina Simone tune, *Strange Fruit* (Simone, 1965)<sup>2</sup>.

In this scene, we firstly considered the unspoken racial prejudice and stereotypes in the narrative of *Showboat*, as well as Nina Simone's graphically explicit outcry against racism with the metaphor of strange fruit portraying Black bodies hanging from trees, and connected that to Black lives in South Africa. The invisible was made visible by reflecting on how human injustices associated with perceptions of race are still experienced in South Africa but remain silenced. Instead, positive images and romantic notions of transformation and multiculturalism are perpetuated in South African productions on international stages. Around the time of rehearsing African Angels in 2016, an incident occurred in South Africa where 2 White men, Willem Oosthuizen and

Theo Martins Jackson, threatened to kill a Black man, Victor Mlotshwa, for trespassing on their farm. They put him in a coffin, threatened to douse him with petrol and bury him, all the while filming their sport. Fortunately, they did not follow through on their threats, but seemingly unaware of the gravity of their crime, posted this sickening incident on social media 3 months later. This video (AllAfrica Newsdesk, 2016) went viral and led to their arrest. In the wake of this, the cast of *African Angels* felt obliged to say something about the ongoing racial disparities and hatred that continue to govern our actions in the country. It was important to generate a response within their performance of *African Angels* and *Strange Fruit*, became the perfect conduit for their emotions.

In staging the scene, I employed a butoh-esque aesthetic that might be considered disturbing in conventional opera. Instead of employing the center, the lead singer was placed far back on the left-side of the stage, and the rest of the cast positioned across the lip of the stage, where they silently stood, covering either their eyes, mouths or ears. This staging forced the audience to employ their imagination in interpreting the scene. Firstly, they were compelled to negotiate meaning between themselves and the silent, up close bodies, and then connect that to what they heard from a distance. I believe that just as the cast were required to sing differently and use their bodies, the scene provoked the audience to listen differently, and become conscious of bodies – both theirs and the performers. I like to think of this scene in Spivakian terms and describe it as “affirmative sabotage”<sup>3</sup> (Spivak, 2012). The inclusion of indigeneity, something derived and produced naturally, or born from the region, enabled them to shift what was held as sacred with imagination. In addition, the singers’ embodiment of butoh principles transmitted a performative energy from their silent bodies. In shaping the

scene, they imagined eyes under their feet, back and hands, and accessed an endarkened aesthetic that was not determined by Western rationale, but informed by inhabiting a metaphysical, phenomenological sense of themselves and their environment. When referring to this process one singer claimed that the experience of placing eyes on her feet made her feel more careful as she moved through the space. This sensitivity forced a different connection to the body and the space. She poetically claims, “to wear the song [...in order to] truth-sing and deliver the message of what is hidden within her body” (Pam<sup>4</sup>, 2017). In *African Angels*, butoh was a legitimate tool for placing the singers’ bodies in research and specific exercises triggered their desire to look in to darkness. This scene provoked audiences to notice details by listening and looking differently, and I believe it demonstrates one way for performers and the audience, to re-establish visceral connections with traditions, as well as re-imagine their assumptions of knowledge. According to Molefi Kete Asante if language possesses an instrumentality, it provides a way for persons to understand and transform their reality. In other words, “It must be able *to do something* toward transforming particular ways of knowing and producing knowledge” (Asante in Denzin, 2008, 279). Whether this knowledge is demonstrated in the mode of dancing, singing, or acting, I believe the process of creation should “shift the boundaries of the familiar, of what we assume that we know” (Ahmed, 2000, 7) and broaden the thinking around transforming bodies in South Africa from the perspectives of both participants and the observers.

At the University of Cape Town, the third-year drama students created practical work that required a phenomenological engagement with their performance space. Here, the notion of possessing multiple eyes extends to the space and its way of looking, thus creating a partnership and dialogue with the environment, including the

walls, floors, trees and sand. The process of artistically examining what might otherwise be taken for granted or represented mimetically, enables the actors to find lateral ways of engaging with site specific work and link it to their personal narratives. The actors historical research of various sites on campus identified one toilet building to be a place where slaves were killed. An actor whose work focused on the shame experienced with an abnormal menstrual cycle, chose to use the toilets and draw from its abhorrent history as a place of bloodshed, as her performance site. Approaching the work with butoh principles enables an embodiment of the phenomenological narrative of the site together with the crafting of a particular movement language, texture and dynamic of the body.

Several actors relate how the physical processes specific to my engagement with butoh builds strength and a sense of having multiple foundations in the body. This is especially heightened with one student, an amputee, who claims the combination of movement dynamics and butoh principles facilitated an exploration of different ways to balance and stand. The actors also speak about how the processes in butoh relating to ways of seeing can be applied to how they view their scripts. For example, they relate it to looking at the material peripherally and finding meaning hidden in and in between the lines. They find the introspection of butoh to enable a stripping of their bodies as well as the text, allowing them to portray their vulnerabilities from a truly corporeal perspective. One Coloured actor claims to have found ways to validate her story, including her fears and ambiguous support experienced in the politics of everyday social life, even if they do not easily fit into the popular narrative of a non-racialised South Africa. Another actor mentions how inhabiting a different perception of the body, discovered when for example, initiating movement with the wings on the back,

seemed to trigger memories of an other being, perhaps an animal being, rendering the self unfamiliar and curious.

Of all the comments, ideas of transformation and love are common to the performers with whom I work. After engaging with butoh principles in their performance-making processes, they do not claim to be butoh artists. They are aware, however, of how this Japanese mode has been made specific to a South African context and in the process, precipitated a transformation of themselves and the space, in turn creating a third or in-between space. Rustom Bharucha states this in-between space is “found when we open ourselves up to other spheres and find overlapping in blurred spaces that bring us together” (Bharucha, 2000). For me, it is also found in the interrogation of love, which similar to bell hooks (2000), I understand to be an action rather than a feeling. As an action, we can interrogate the complexities and ambiguities of love, as well as be accountable and responsible for what we do. Ohno Yoshito claims that love is the primary intention behind all of his father’s work (Ohno, 2004). This is echoed by the actors, dancers and opera singers who engaged with butoh processes in their performance making. After trying to express love with a sense of a disabled body, an actor claims “to find beauty and love within his ugliness” (Charles, 2017). One ballet dancer, initially embarrassed to do an exercise that forced broken and incomplete lines, claims to feel “so in love” (Cindy, 2013) at the end of the session. Finally, at the risk of being esoteric, one opera singer mentions how “it is our job to change the energy in the room and realize that we are all brothers and sisters. Respect me, and I will respect you” (Pam, 2017).

## *Daai za Lady*

As an epilogue, I revert to *Daai za Lady*, a leitmotif that remains a palimpsest in my journey with butoh and ultimately, a tool in my exploration of love (job, 2012, 2017).

To find the feeling of being born again,  
and have a sense of not knowing as we go through this world.  
To know that when I fall,  
I will find invisible strands of support  
on which to hang,  
and move through.  
And always curious to find  
what it means to be a person  
through what may be deemed as different,  
difficult and strange  
in performance making processes.

## **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup>The South African spelling of the term is used deliberately to highlight the specific context of the term. Racial classifications in South Africa remain official terms. For more information, see Zimitri Erasmus's *Race Otherwise* (2017).

<sup>2</sup>The song is based on a poem written by written by Abel Meeropol in 1937, and later set to music by Meeropol. The song was first recorded by Billie Holiday in 1939.

<sup>3</sup>Unfortunately, due to the provocative nature of the scene, it was censored by the company's management and 2 days before the opening performance, removed from the December 2017 rendition of *African Angels*. The paper reflects what I imagine could have happened if the work was not censored.

<sup>4</sup>Note, pseudonyms have been used to provide anonymity for all persons interviewed and whose comments are reflected in this paper. First names are specifically used as opposed to the convention of surnames, in order to signal the value of personhood and individuality.

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## **When Did Fokine first see Duncan dancing? : Reexamining a historical problematic** Mariko KITAHARA

**Abstract:** In 1904, Michel Fokine attended Isadora Duncan's Russian debut, and his reform of the art of ballet, which occurred a year later, was realized under the influence of her art. This narration received very wide currency during the choreographer's triumphal European tours with Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in the 1910s, after which Fokine was forced to struggle to detach his reform from Duncan's art and to dispel his disgrace as her "follower" or "imitator." To defend this discourse, published texts on the choreographer have principally depended on the following two references written in the 1920s: Duncan's posthumous autobiography, *My Life*, in which she reminisces about a dinner with Diaghilev's circle after her first appearance in St. Petersburg, and a letter written by Diaghilev in which he recalls attending Duncan's Russian debut with Fokine. However, these two sources are dubious with regard to their dates if we weigh them against some contemporary accounts, Fokine's recollection, or the date of Léon Bakst's portrait of Duncan. Indeed, according to Vladimir Teliakovsky's diaries, it was during her Russian sojourn from the end of 1907 to the spring of 1908 that Duncan was closely associated with the Imperial Theater and its ballet company as she visited the Imperial School and gave a demonstration with her German school students.

This reexamination of historical sources concerning Duncan's influence on Fokine is not merely anecdotal. It reveals more general problems with the generative process of historiographic discourse on dance.

"Fokine had seen Duncan's dance on her first Russian tour, and this pushed him to his ballet reform." This discourse was disseminated internationally beginning in the 1910s, in particular by the Russian ballet critic Valerian Svetlov, and it seems to be firmly established today. He considered Fokine as the first to adopt Duncan's principles to big stages (Svetlov 1912, 16–17).

Duncan came to Russia for the two first recitals in St. Petersburg in December 1904.<sup>1</sup> In January of the following year she returned to Russia with her new lover, Gordon Craig, to give a single recital in the capital and four recitals in Moscow.<sup>2</sup> From December 1907 to February of the following year Duncan stayed in Russia, giving thirteen recitals in both cities, including on stages

such as the Moscow Art Theater of Konstantin Stanislavsky and the Mariinsky Theater, one of the Imperial Theaters directed by Vladimir Teliakovsky.<sup>3</sup>

It is absolutely evident that Fokine saw Duncan onstage during her visit between late 1907 and early 1908, because during that time she succeeded in establishing a close relationship with St. Petersburg's Imperial Theaters: she visited Teliakovsky's office and the Imperial Ballet School, and with her students from her Berlin school she gave a charity appearance at the Mariinsky Theater and a dance demonstration at the Imperial Ballet School, where Fokine had been a dancer and a teacher for several years. During Duncan's 1908 stay in Russia, Fokine even created a solo dance entitled the "Duncan genre dance" for an all-night ball event at the Mariinsky Theater (Souritz 1999, 109) and published his opinion on the barefoot dancer in the form of an interview (Fokine 1962, 335–336).

However, concerning Duncan's first visits at the end of 1904 and the beginning of 1905, there is neither historical documentation nor information from their own memoirs that could testify to their first encounter. Rather, there is a kind of "silence" from both sides. Elizabeth Souritz writes that Duncan "is curiously silent" in her posthumous autobiography, quoting an episode about a dinner at Anna Pavlova's home after her first recital. She points out the strangeness in Duncan not mentioning Fokine as being there: "He was in all likelihood present there. With Pavlova, a frequent partner, he had crowded into the Hall of Nobles the night Duncan made her debut" (Souritz 1999, 97). Remarks from Sergei Laletin's recent publication on Fokine's life have a similar tone: "At the end of 1904, Isadora Duncan made her first trip to Russia. Though Fokine's memoirs don't mention him attending the 'barefoot American's' appearances, there can be no doubt that he saw her perform" (Laletin 2011,

40). Vera Krasovskaya<sup>4</sup> and Galina Dobrovolskaya<sup>5</sup> affirm in a more definite manner, but they do not indicate any specific reference.

However, the kinship between Fokine and Duncan is often explicated by their aesthetic resemblance: their common use of Frédéric Chopin's music and ancient Greek costumes, and their naturalness of body movement and expression, in contrast to the conventional representations of classical ballet. When Fokine created a ballet based on an ancient Roman subject in February 1907, a press announcement contained the following statement: "All of the dancers will appear not in the usual ballet costumes but in Duncan-style costumes" (*Обозрение меампов*, January 10, 1907) During Duncan's 1907–1908 Russian tours, Fokine was already considered an "admirer and follower of Duncanism" (*Новое Время*, December 11, 1907).

Apparently, Diaghilev adhered to and drew on Svetlov's view for his company's publicity. In 1912, to promote his new choreographer, Vaslav Nijinsky, who was to replace the older Fokine, he contrasted the latter, inspired by Duncan, with the former, inspired by Jacques-Emile Dalcroze and modernist paintings (*Comoedia*, April 18, 1912). In 1926, Diaghilev also wrote in a letter, "I knew Isadora well at St. Petersburg and was present with Fokine at her first débuts. Fokine was mad about the dancing and the influence of Duncan on him lay at the base of all his creative work" (Martin, 1931). This letter, cited in the recipient's book (Propert 1931, 88) and later quoted in many texts (Haskell 1935, 167), became famous as evidence of Fokine and Duncan's earliest connection.

As for Fokine, he was aware of such a view from the very beginning. Beginning in 1908, he insistently stressed the difference between his ballet reform and Duncan's dance principles. In his

famous five principles, published in a British newspaper in 1914, he emphasized that his new ballet “cannot [...] be regarded as a follower of Miss Duncan” (*Times*, July 6, 1914). In 1931, he answered John Martin’s question about the credibility of Diaghilev’s assertion regarding his attendance at Duncan’s first Russian tour with Fokine: “I very well remember how I attended with Diaghileff the performance of Duncan. [...] This happened several years after I started my revolutionary activities in the ballet. At that time I was already engaged by Diaghileff as a ballet master as a result of the reforms in the ballet which I had carried out” (Martin, 1931). However, in 1935 he began to protest in précising the date of the beginning of his reform prior to Duncan’s debut in Russia. Cyril Beaumont, who had made Fokine’s acquaintance in 1923 and corresponded with him about his ballet art, emphasized the following in his 1935 biography of Fokine<sup>6</sup>:

It has been stated that Fokine’s reforms were inspired by Isadora Duncan. But this dancer did not visit St. Petersburg until 1907, and Fokine’s plan for ballet reform had already been submitted to the directorate of the Imperial Theatres in 1904. (Beaumont 1935, 29)

The two dates in Beaumont’s statement are interesting. At first, Beaumont made a mistake about the year of Duncan’s first recital in Russia. However, this was not so strange at that time, because Svetlov had already made the same error in his famous and authoritative book *Le Ballet contemporain* (Svetlov 1912, 61). Surely Beaumont followed what Svetlov had already written. Victor Dandré, in his biography of Pavlova, equally followed Svetlov’s incorrect dating (Dandré

1932, 261). In Duncan's posthumously published autobiography (1927), she made an error concerning the date of her first arrival in Russia, stating it was January 1905. In any case, it seems somewhat strange that Beaumont and Dandré, two of the major balletomanes of the time, did not take her description into consideration for their books written in the 1930s.

The other date, "1904," as the date when Fokine submitted his reform plan to the director of the Imperial Theaters, is also interesting. Today, we know well that Fokine claimed this date in order to defend his independence from Duncan's influence. However, before Beaumont's biography was published, the date claimed by the choreographer had instead been "1905,"<sup>7</sup> and he mentioned sometimes that it had taken place "long before Duncan's début in Russia" (Fokine 1962, 513; *Archives internationales de la danse*, January 15, 1934). Fokine's dating concerning his earlier career is not always exact. For instance, we know he assigned the date of the premiere of *The Dying Swan* as 1905 (Fokine 1925, 4), but that it was indeed in December 1907. However, it is still puzzling why the date of his first reform plan was changed suddenly from 1905 to 1904 in Beaumont's biography. The reason may be because, on reading Duncan's autobiography, Fokine recognized that his previous date—1905—was not early enough for him to defend his independence from Duncan's influence and that he asked the author to bring forward the date. But if until that moment he had been thinking by mistake, like many other authors, that her first appearance in Russia was in 1907, it seems reasonable that he had "thought" that he saw her dance for the first time in 1907 and that his conception of ballet reform took place "long before her début in Russia," in other words, possibly before 1907: so, 1904, 1905, or even 1906.<sup>8</sup> I cannot develop further my argument concerning the

dates in Beaumont's statement, but it is important to point out that the dates concerning these earlier visits of Duncan in the 1900s have been very confused until recently in dance historiography.

Duncan and other barefoot dancers were already known through various reports and pictures that appeared in Russian newspapers and periodicals before her arrival in the country. The choreographic influence of a dancer is not limited to physical contact. Yet when there still exists no evidence of Fokine's attendance at a performance during her first Russian tour, and when the choreographer himself indirectly protested against this discourse that he had seen her at that time, one should be careful in defining the historical facts.<sup>9</sup>

First, I point out the differences between Duncan's 1904–1905 tours and 1907–1908 tours.

During her first visits of 1904 and 1905, Duncan was honorably invited by the Russians, but she was not very motivated to socialize with them because she had just met her new lover, an English theater director named Edward Gordon Craig in Berlin, only a few days before her departure for St. Petersburg. During her sojourn of less than a week in the Russian capital in 1904, she wrote letters and telegrams every day to Craig, in which it is easy to perceive her impatience "for her Russian stay to be over" (Steegmüller 1974, 51). She rejected a proposal to add a third performance and tried to get a train so that she could leave in the evening following the second performance, but in the end she could only get the train that was departing the following morning. Her words suggest that until December 27 she was filled with sadness; however, on the 28th she enjoyed the city. Probably following the second recital on the 29th, she was invited by her admirers to the restaurant

Cubat, where she drank a lot and improvised a bacchanal dance around tables that had been moved aside (Kasatkina 1992, 59–73, 377–378). In January 1905, she came back to Russia with Craig. The evening following their arrival, she gave a single performance at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire (January 21), but her Beethoven program was rather criticized. Then, the couple “went on immediately to Moscow” (Steegmuller 1974, 64–65). This time, she gave recitals four times in Moscow. I would like to mention a minor but interesting fact: Vladimir Fokine, the choreographer’s comedian brother, imitated Duncan on a Moscow stage just a few days after her last performance.<sup>10</sup>

What happened between 1905 and 1907? Craig and Duncan’s illegitimate daughter was born. According to Emi Yagishita, this event resulted a financial crisis at her school in Berlin: funding was reduced, and Duncan could not dance for several months (Yagishita 2011). Her Berlin school was to be closed in 1908. To save her school, she was very active in setting up contacts with representatives of the Russian theatrical world, especially Stanislavsky and Teliakovsky, during her 1907–1908 tours in Russia. In his diary, Teliakovsky wrote that Stanislavsky asked him to invite her School to Russia and to support it (Teliakovsky 2011, 350). The director of the Imperial Theaters permitted her to visit the Imperial Ballet School and to give a demonstration there.<sup>11</sup> She also gave a recital with her pupils at the Mariinsky Theater for a charity event. However, the director did not accept her additional request to use the Mikhailovsky Theater that same week (Teliakovsky 2011, 388). In January and February, Duncan danced mainly at the private Maly Theater in St. Petersburg.

As we have seen, the two periods of time—1904–1905 and 1907–1908—are quite different in terms of quality and quantity. In Duncan’s memoirs,<sup>12</sup> she recalls many events that happened

during her first tour: having made the acquaintance of Mathilde Kshessinskaya and Anna Pavlova, she was invited by each of them to dine at their homes and to attend their performances at the Mariinsky Theater. However, during her 1904–1905 sojourns there was no performance by Pavlova nor a gala by Kshessinskaya.<sup>1 3</sup> The latter's "Palace," where Duncan remembers being invited, was not yet built at that time (*Teamp u uckyccmbo*, July 16, 1906). The famous Duncan portrait by Bakst that she remembers him making at the Pavlova's dinner was dated "1908" by the painter's hand.<sup>1 4</sup>

As for Fokine, the year 1905 has some importance: his name began to appear frequently in Teliakovsky's diary because he became more and more active in protest movements within the Imperial Ballet Company and even led dancers' strike in a performance in the fall (Karsavina 1931, 179–187). In his private life, he got married to Vera Petrovna, and in the same year their first and only child was born. In his memoirs, Fokine wrote that his new life encouraged his engagement as choreographer outside the Imperial Theaters (Fokine 1961, 86).

In 1909, Duncan assisted at the first performances of Diaghilev's company in Paris (*Gil Blas*, May 20, 1909). According to Fokine, she offered flowers to Nijinsky, and her secretary visited Fokine to ask him to teach at her school (Fokine 1962, 523; Martin 1931). In fact, during the same spring season she also gave performances in Paris with her pupils. When Diaghilev arrived in Venice from Paris for summer vacation after the Ballets Russes' first season ended, he was with Nijinsky, the Fokine family, and Duncan with her pupils (Bakst 2012, 156–157). Often ignoring the fact that Duncan was also seeing Fokine's stages, we may consider the possibility of Fokine's influence on Duncan. As Irma Duncan affirms, it could be that "The art of Isadora Duncan has never been either



beautified or revitalized by the ballet,” but we can entertain every possibility in dance history.

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<sup>1</sup> During her first stay in Russia, she danced two times: December 13 and 16, at the Hall of the Nobles (Steegmuller 1974, 38). In this essay, the dates before 1917 are all in Old Style.

<sup>2</sup> At the St. Petersburg Conservatoire (January 21), at the Moscow Conservatoire (January 24 and 27), and at the Solodovnikov Theater (January 31 and February 3).

<sup>3</sup> According to press advertising for her recitals, after four recitals at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire (December 5, 10, 12, and 27), she left for Moscow to give two matinee performances at the Moscow Art Theater (December 29 and 31). During “a week free on account of Holidays” between the third and fourth Saint Petersburg recitals, she met “a big manager” (Steegmuller 1974, 285).

Simultaneously, she expressed her dissatisfaction with the Conservatoire’s stage in an interview (*Обозрение театров*, December 19, 1907) and the following day a change in location of her Moscow recitals from the Hall of the Noble Assembly (Зал Благородного Собрани́я) to the Moscow Art Theater was announced (*Обозрение театров*, December 20, 1907). Probably, she made Stanislavsky’s acquaintance during this period. Except for a single appearance at the Mariinsky Theater with her pupils from the Berlin Grunewald school for a charity event (February 9), she gave five solo recitals at the St. Petersburg Maly Theater (January 7, 15, 21, 26, and February 4), and her pupils appeared with her for her last recital at the same theater (February 11). Meanwhile, she also toured in Helsinki (January 28, 29, 31, and February 1), probably brought her pupils on her way back to Russia (Schneider 1981, 34–35).

<sup>4</sup> Krasovskaya describes in her little book on Anna Pavlova an episode in which the future ballerina, accompanied by Svetlov, met Fokine and Karsavina at the Hall of Nobles (Зал Дворянского Собрани́я) and that after Duncan’s first recital ended, the three dancers walked down the Italian Street discussing her dance (Krasovskaya 1964, 146–154). This book for the general reader does not make any precise reference about the fact, and the historian wrote on the subject in her later publication in a less definite manner: “The young dancer [Fokine], a fledgling classic ballet teacher, should have certainly attended Isadora Duncan’s concert” (Krasovskaya 1971, 164).

<sup>5</sup> In her book on Fokine, Dobrovolskaya wrote, “In 1904 Fokine saw Duncan’s dances” without reference (Dobrovolskaya 2004, 43).

<sup>6</sup> In his 1935 letter to a former colleague at the Mariinsky Theater, Fokine appreciated the Beaumont biography as “well-founded” (Fokine 1962, 526).

<sup>7</sup> For example: “In 1905, despite the fact that I had no expectation of every being a maitre de ballet, I composed my first scenario. It was ‘Daphnis and Chloe’” (*Musical America*, April 29, 1922); “In 1905, Michel Fokine made his historic report to the Board of Directors of the Imperial Theatre ...” (Michel Fokine Dance Studios’ pamphlet, c. 1923; Fokine 1925, n.p.; a recital program *Roerich Society Presents ...*, January 6, 1932).

<sup>8</sup> “1906” is also very probable, because, commenting on the “abolition of *bis* in ballet” in September 1909, Fokine said that he had already asked the director of the Imperial Theaters “three years ago,” but that in response they had prohibited *bis* only in opera (*Петербургская Газета*,

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September 13, 1909). In his autobiography, a similar episode is described together with his submission of the libretto of *Daphnis and Chloe*, accompanied by his ballet reform introduction, including the prohibition of public applause and dancers' greetings that interrupt ballet action (Fokine 1962, 566).

<sup>9</sup> For example, a leading ballerina, Olga Preobrajenskaya said at the beginning of January 1908 that she had never seen Duncan dance yet (Kasatkina 1992, 92–93).

<sup>10</sup> Vladimir Fokine danced a number entitled “Imitation of the famous dancer Isadora Duncan” between two comedies for a benefit event at the “Ermitage” Theater in Moscow (*Московские ведомости*, February 6 and 7, 1905).

<sup>11</sup> The day following Teliakovky's arrival in Moscow (January 6), Stanslavsky visited his office and requested his support for Duncan's school to transfer to Petersburg (Teliakovsky 2011, 350–352). Three days later, on Stanislavsky's introduction, Duncan visited Teliakovsky's St. Petersburg office and asked his permission to see the Imperial Ballet School. She proposed to organize a demonstration of “her system” there (*Ibid.*, 355). The 18th February, Duncan school gave their dance demonstration at the Imperial Ballet School (*Ibid.*, 387–388).

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Loving doubted the authenticity of her autobiography (Loving 1931).

<sup>13</sup> According to records of *The Yearbook of the Imperial Theaters*, during this period, Kshessinskaya appeared four times (December 12, 1904; January 23 and 26 and possibly 30, 1905). <sup>14</sup> Duncan stated in her autobiography as follows: “That evening, at supper, the painter Bakst made a little sketch of me which now appears in his book, showing my most serious countenance, with curls sentimentally hanging down on one side” (Duncan 1927, 164–165). Among Bakst's books published before Duncan's death (1927), there is not one that contains Duncan's portrait. It is perhaps Svetlov's *Le Ballet contemporain* in collaboration with the painter. Arnold Haskell captioned the portrait by mistake in his book as “Isadora Duncan by Bakst, 1905” (Haskell 1935, n.p.). A very similar Bakst caricature drawing of Duncan had been published in a newspaper on the day of her third recital at the Saint Petersburg Conservatoire (Pruzhan 1975, 215).

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**Title of paper: Amandla! Agency and Dance-Activism in South Africa**

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**Abstract:** Since the 2010s, some contemporary dance in South Africa has shifted notions of marginality rendering (in)stability, power, and agency as figures on a continuum. My position as an Othered dancing body offers a contextual and methodological frame from which to illuminate a notion of alterity. I trace the “Dehumanizing signs [that] remind these Othered bodies of the territory that is marked out for their community because of the defined socio-cultural difference” (Samuel, GM. 2016: 82). Mamela Nyamza’s *De-Apart Hate* (2017), and Jacki Jobs’ *Of Dreams and Dragons* (2017) offer a partial window into black and female voices in Cape Town.

### **A call to action**

*Amandla!* This call for freedom in isiZulu stirs so many memories for someone like me who has lived on both sides of apartheid, pre- and post-. As a brown dancing body, I have been celebrated for my exotic roots in India and clever ascendance to classical ballet (I carry the burden of being arguably the first professional ballet dancer to emerge from an Indian community in the messy four hundred-year-old colonial history of racial division and oppression in South Africa). I am ambivalent about my claim to oppression as I was part of an all-White Performing Arts Council of the time, with its fully funded ballet companies (Friedman, Mapping an historical context for theatre dance in South Africa 2012) but it is also here that the birthplace of my own choreo-activism against such oppression can be traced. My entry into a ballet company happened at the height of the scourge that was apartheid in the 1980s with its State of Emergency, separate school systems, neighborhoods and other draconian laws all firmly in place. In summary, my dance heritage is complicated. But, what does this complexity have to do with the subject of my paper, agency and Dance-activism and specifically, choreo-activism, a term which I will attempt to briefly define and contextualize given my location in Cape Town, South Africa; gender; category of age and sexual orientation, amongst many other social constructs.

This paper asks: How do societal mores such as national protest and unrest resurface in dance performances? Is artistic mediation an affective and/or transformative tool for dancers, choreographers, and audiences? What aesthetic traces are subsumed in gendered performances particularly by black South Africans? By whom and for whom, are rallying calls for social justice heard and announced when multiple audiences ingest dance through vacillating positions: touristic and activist gazes?

I have chosen a phenomenologic reading (Fraleigh 1987; Kozel 2007) of the works of Mamela Nyamza and Jacki Job for the ways in which these two sculptors of African dance offer a rendering of contemporary dance in South Africa albeit from differing frames - one choreographic and the other pedagogic and artistic. I begin by problematizing some of the aesthetic and socio-historic traces that have been hybridized by black South Africans choreographers, acknowledging my etic perspective from these strong female voices (Samuel 2016). South African choreographer and academic, Lliane Loots (Loots, *Memories Against Forgetting* 2017) had cautioned,

In the lure of developmental and the commodification and corporatization of ourselves, our learning spaces and art spaces, we no longer encounter the layering of history and memory, of acknowledging artists and activists who have built the bridges we stand on. (Loots, 2017)

I hope to highlight the layering of memories and forgetting that continue to haunt the body and its performance and acknowledge the agency and attempts at erasure by some dance activists in South Africa.

### **Aesthetic and Historical Traces**

Earlier this year, one of my students attempted to argue how works of the iconic German choreographer, Pina Bausch were a feminist response to the aesthetic traces of ballet which include an effortlessness and quiet composure. For Anriette (not her real name), Bauschian works with their profoundly troubling questioning of the human condition were the ultimate expression of anguished dancers who are female. Other students in that same class argued that Bausch's works were not Modern dances but deeply balletic, as for the most part they presented White dancing bodies. Furthermore, Bausch's earlier roots in the Metropolitan Ballet must mean that her ballet could not be erased. These claims intrigued me and opened many vexing questions around an inescapability from certain notions of dancing bodies and the problematics associated with patterns of behavior that become ingrained under the disguise of Dance pedagogic praxis.

It is in this context, that I begin to examine the ontologies of Nyamza and Job who in this paper I suggest are choreo-activists responding to each of their socio-historic and aesthetic pathways in dance. Both these artists were born in Cape Town, both have lived half apartheid lives as I have noted above. So, the questions that surface for me include: to what extent is a geopolitical location responsible for shifting the ways in which we can offer a transmission of our worlds, told in dance? Job had resided for almost a decade in Japan retuning to South Africa in 2010, and Nyamza has been based largely in Cape Town in her lifetime. Both have performed from Dakar to New York, Paris to Johannesburg... the list goes on. Having studied classical ballet with Arlene Westergard in Gugulethu's<sup>i</sup> Moravian Church in the Cape, Nyamza bears the onerous title of South Africa's first black ballerina. It is apparent to me that ballet and its associated trappings continue to haunt her. Many of Nyamza's works such as *The Meal* (2012) reference the tutu, albeit in an exaggerated form.

In comparison Job's formative years were spent in the oldest multi-racial dance company in South Africa, Jazzart<sup>ii</sup> Dance Theatre Company whose rejection of all things ballet was legendary. More firmly established by the late 1980s, Jazzart under the leadership of Alfred Hinkel, positioned Afro-fusion, and works with politically charged narratives as a brand for this company. Job's departure and subsequent journey with butoh as her artistic and pedagogic paradigm is noteworthy in a context of South Africa's eleven official languages, multiple religions and ethnicities. Why chose butoh as her preferred tool to address such cultural diversity?

The *nature vs nurture* debate of what shapes a cultural identity has raged in psychological journals since 1960s (Ridley 2003). In both Job and Nyamza's cases various searing if not traumatic events have shaped their world view: from a catastrophic tsunami, to the tragic murder and rape of Nyamza's mother in 2009. If, we recognize that such scarification becomes visible in choreographic subject matter, as a kind of "thinking in movement" (Sheets-Johnstone 1981, 400) and in our approaches to Dance teaching, then the space of Dance needs to pay close attention to various attempts to sift through the residue of such an embodied furnace. What is the Dance praxis that will arise or becomes visible? My colleagues in South Africa, Friedman and Triegaardt (2000) had critiqued post-apartheid Dance and concluded that artists were dancing *on* the ashes of apartheid. I extend their metaphor here to suggest that in 2017, many South African choreographers and dance teachers are desirous of a more fluid and unstable platform, one that acknowledges the complexity and incompleteness of attempts to frame complex issues such as multiple cultural diversity, migration and diaspora, and body itself. I would argue that a kind of thirst for contemporary dance works has arisen because of, and continues despite, the past. The new South African contemporary dances move as it were, *through* these ashes which I suggest could be more easily read through what I am beginning to describe as a 'body-space' reading. My

Dance phenomenologic thesis invites an application of the dual tools of ‘the politics of body’ and ‘politics of space’ for such nuanced readings of contemporary dance.

Such analysis has revealed in works by Nyamza, Job, Dada Masilo, Desire Davids and others a lynch play epistemology that is being retold through dance. It is noteworthy that they are offered in potent performance sites such as Main Station rooftops, and in front of colonial remnants of a Slave Lodge loudly articulating absent and marginal bodies. These pioneer choreo-activists simultaneously champion their right to make work as ‘art for art’s sake’ and, confront political catastrophes such as the hideousness of racial re-classification. Davids’ *The ColouRED Chameleon* (2014) is a prime example of the latter. For these artists, the task of continually seeking any funding for their work is mired by an environment where international agencies and festival organizers need to attract paying audiences. In many cases, it is the re-presentation of a ravaged Africa (the continent and not country) that is attractive to such touristic audiences (and arguably festival producers). Such performances frequently are presented outside of the socio-cultural genesis and have the potential to dilute contemporary African dance works.

### **Just who becomes transformed through the arts: dancers or audiences?**

The answer for me is both but, exactly how does such change matter? For whom? As dance scholars we have recognized that Dance holds a power to effect social change but with power comes greater responsibility. What happens when you disturb deeply held religious values and trample holy cows? What is the line drawn in the proverbial sand or the call to action for artists when young males in the Cape die each year as they undertake a journey to manhood that is part of a Xhosa cultural practice? Should such sacred practices be made visible by choreographers on stage and to whom? How do we begin to engage dance students on these cultural sensitive issues? Why is an image of a bible that is fixed in Nyamza’s crotch as she licks her fingers careful turning



each page important for various audiences to unpack? Nyamza's powerful and disturbing work – a critic of homosexuality and the Church begged further reading. What, if anything, does such shocking performances achieve? For whom?

At my second viewing of *De-apart-hate*, at the 19<sup>th</sup> JOMBA Dance Experience, a major annual contemporary dance festival, held in Durban in August 2017, as we entered the performance space we were handed a pamphlet with what seemed like a hymn sheet. The doors to the auditorium on either side displayed printed sheets announcing a series of bible texts. These verses were instantly recognizable to me, given my Catholic upbringing and subsequent fight for Gay rights and anti-homophobia issues. My mind raced at the similarity of the performance space of the theatre and a church. I began to wonder to what extent I will be preached to. Are the values of the church with its rigid rows, wooden pews, stirring sermons and impermeable laws being unintentionally re-enforced as normative by Nyamza? Is a hyper-sexualized, black, openly lesbian choreographer not once again being framed as an exotic other? Just who is licking their lips?

As a former altar boy, the church as a space of performance with its high ritualized behavior and practices has suggested high drama, but what intrigued me was the way in which an African evangelical Church was easily rendered. In my first encounter with this work, which was during Cape Town's Live Arts festival in 2016, Nyamza was already in the space, chanting audibly whilst she slowly shuffled towards the stage. Her hip movements now veered into a kind of overtly sexual gyration/twerking returning to a more sedate procession while her form fitting tight, black dress held her thighs and legs firmly together. This made the revelation of the Holy Book from a cavity disturbing for many as I also heard gasps amidst the performers in between Nyamza's praises to Jehovah. We also heard loud Hallelujahs and replies of Amen! in what I recognized as *isiXhosa*.

This conjuring act transported most in her audience to familiar daily scenes on trains, under trees and at roadside intersections of traditional Christian based African religious practices.

As a body of work, *De-apart-hate* has emerged amidst multiple calls for de-colonization and what some have anxiously predicted as a dramatic rejection of all things Western in university curricula including in Dance curricula. At the University of Cape Town where I teach, I have interpreted such calls, as urgent appeals to re-engage with the colonial past. At UCT's *Confluences 9 - Deciphering Decolonization in Dance Pedagogy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* delegates sought and argued for new and appropriate ways in which to respond to diverse and often contradictory twenty-first century needs and concerns of Dance. Nyamza's evocation of the painful memory of a 'Whites only' bench is even more poignant as a teetering see-saw that is now painted in the rainbow colors of the Gay flag. Not only are we confronted with the imbalance of power and gendered dynamics which the bench suggests but its death as the bench becomes coffin over her male performer, Mhlali Gwatyu. For me, many subtleties such as her wide white pleated collar and soft pointed cap seem to be lost on the mostly black, young South African audience. Her nod to *commedia del arte* and *Pierrot* in my view, felt unnoticed.

### **Lest we forget.**

We dare not overlook or forget. We dare not look away from the exotic and marginalized, and the icons such as Josephine Baker with her dazzling string of pearls. As we re-look and research dance works such as *De-apart-hate* we can become seduced by the strong rejection of discrimination. But, we need to guard against a re-exoticization of black women as sexual object.

Perhaps Job<sup>iii</sup> by gulping down the grotesque associated with Butoh offers an alternative rendering of the black voice where the excruciating stillness associated with of butoh compels us to stare

into the blank spaces created by her preferred choreographic tool. Job's newest incarnation as lecturer at the University of Cape Town and now a PhD candidate has spawned, *Of dreams and Dragons* (2017). Job and Kudo Taketeru<sup>iv</sup> took over the performance space of the Arena theatre in Cape Town to process their imaginations. There are a few hard, black painted long blocks in the space, and a single rope hanging from the ceiling downstage left. A shaft of mustard light emerges from the very rear of the performance space through a heavy door where Job dressed in a gauze like black jacket with wide sleeves, and make up that is pale grey with pronounced eyes hesitatingly seeks out the corridor of light. The packed audience marvels at her angular body, fingers that have become lizard pads and slender limbs and feet that slither, creep and unexpectedly pounce. Kudo, in a fantastically wrapped kimono comprising shredded rags hovers behind us. He is also painted, marked as either gods or dragons, and occasionally we see glimpses of his finely tuned musculature. The interaction between the performers is electric. Will they devour one another? What, if any, is their sexual tension? Who is the monster? Just as he bares himself she disappears, now he re-appears. More conjuring. These highly skilled artists with increasing agility and speed suddenly disappear and muffled grunts rise from underneath our seats. They are in the heavily darkened audience space. So, when is a performance happening or not happening? Now re-appearing these half-human creatures manifest and resist definition. Can butoh in this South African context be read as its own form of Dance-activism, one that responds not only to dominant classical ballet, but to traditional African dances and other concert theatre formats? As a last stand against the onslaught of the over split *jeté*, the acrobatic twirl and mostly for female dancing bodies that have been conditioned to gyrate or twerk, I suggest that Job offers a counterargument and defiant response to the above phenomena.

Nyamza, Job and others articulate that which we may have heard before, but their message and its newness may be less important than the vital need for a repeated emphasis of marginal voices: including black and female. Just as we learn about new walls that are being planned to be built in America, we must not forget that some in South Africa have taken over forty-seven years to tear down. What can be learnt from such frontiers of resistance? Maybe the time has come for artists and dance pedagogues to once again heed the clarion for freedom from discrimination and cry out 'Amandla!'.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Gugulethu is a township in Cape Town that is almost exclusively populated by black, poor and working class, people. It emerges because of the infamous Group Areas Act (1950), which divided where South Africans could live and work based on their predetermined race.

<sup>ii</sup> Jazzart was formed in a Long Street studio, in Cape Town in 1974. It began as a dance studio led by South African born, Sonje Mayo (who had previously trained in the US) and later Sue Parker. Most of the original group of dancers were White women dancing with Coloured men which at the time was technically illegal. Ignorance of the law or a disregard for the power of dance may have resulted in their work slipping under the radar of the authorities.

<sup>iii</sup> Job has evolved from pioneer dancer with the acclaimed Jazzart dance company, based in Cape Town since 1974 to her own brand of Butoh- choreographer. She was integral to the development of Jazzart - the first multiracial, professional contemporary dance company in South Africa. Job later co-founded the independent Jagged Dance Company.

<sup>iv</sup> I maintain the Japanese custom of Surname / Family name first before the individual's name.

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## *Traces of Audio-Visual Movements – Tracing Choreomusical Creativity*

Stephanie Schroedter

### Abstract:

The significance of music in Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker's choreographic work is common knowledge. Less well-known though is the question of which different facets of choreomusical creativity open up against this backdrop. To put it differently: which models of transmitting music into dance can be determined?

In one of her first pieces, *Fase, Four Movement to the Music of Steve Reich* (1982) it is noticeable that Keersmaecker understands music not only as an art based on time but also as spatial art, a kind of audible choreography. Based on this premise, she creates interferences between music and dance, which result in permanent "différences" (Derrida). In other pieces based on Reich's compositions (*Drumming*, 1998, *Rain*, 2001), she extends this approach even further, in the process of which the spatial-architectural conception of her choreographies increasingly push themselves to the fore. Thus it is not surprising that Keersmaecker found her way to Gérard Grisey's sound-spatial spectral music (*Vortex Temporum*, 2013) and transferred her respective choreography later on in the space of a museum (*Work/Travail/Arbeid*, 2015). In this context dance is not meant to visualize or to illustrate the music, but instead to build up interdependences with it, something which gives the visual kinetics an audible depth (in the sense of musical spatiality).

To conceptualize these interdependences of audible and visible movements that seem to disappear without traces in space and time, a theory of a performative trace reading will be presented, based on techniques of tracing that stem from cultural and media studies.

*Danses Tracées* calls Laurence Louppe (2005) sketched dances and thus dance traces, that is dance notations which are not exclusively meant for documentation but also have an artistic value of their own. Thus, they oscillate between dance and the fine arts, opening spaces of imagination for the reader, which exceed the directly visible. However, even if the main motivation behind those graphics is that of documentation, they are dance traces which can only give contours of those choreographies or rather choreo-graphics to which they refer. This is also the case in the *Scores* or *Carnets* edited by Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Bojana Cvejić (2012, 2013 and 2014), which are based on educational and didactic intentions after all. They are no more (and no less) than outlines of quickly evaporating movement traces, which again are inscribed with sound traces – an aspect often not taken into account in dance notations, which makes them seem even more fragmentary.

These complex audio-visual phenomena, which seem to resist notation, will be discussed in the following. In this context, De Keersmaecker's artistic work stands out, since in her choreographies she translates compositional processes of the music into (corporeal) movement traces as a kind of choreographic tracking. However, her choreographies are not meant to visualize or even illustrate music, but rather aim at loading the music's sound architecture energetically by means of bodily movements – and vice versa: bodily movements become even more energetic by means of sound dynamics. Due to the resulting continuous shifts between audible and visible movements<sup>1</sup> as audio-visual interferences, differences can be caused in the audience's perception. They can be linked to Derrida's concept of *différance* in levering out the traditional functional logic of signs with its distinction between signified and signifier or meaning and expression. If one transfers this concept to interrelations between music and dance, music might be perceived as not necessarily delivering the impulses for dance movements – or the other way around. Rather a continuous interplay between music- and dance movements evolves in the perception of the spectators, in which cause and effect can no longer be distinguished. Instead of a bipolar way of thinking between music and dance this phenomenon leads to a tight network of (bodily) movement- and sound traces with constant shifts and frictions between the audible and visible, in order to refer as figurations of a permanent delay to something stretching beyond the audible and visible. This is where a deconstruction according to Derrida can start, which of course does not intend to destroy structures (*destruere*), but rather aims at revealing a construction (*de-construere*), in order to point out what is inherent even though not immediately recognizable (absent) as a productive gap. It is even more important to acknowledge the latter, since this is the foundation of the directly apparent (though not inevitably the cause of it) and, accordingly, is therefore indispensable for an approximation of its never completely comprehensible nature, for an understanding of its never-ending ambiguity.

Such theoretical considerations can be clearly demonstrated early on in De Keersmaecker's first choreographies: In her solo *Violin Phase* (1981), based on the composition of the same title by Steve Reich (1967), she draws with her steps, turns, jumps and swinging legs a big circle into sandy soil. This *archi-trace* (almost) without beginning or rather origin nor end consists of detailed, thoroughly structured, virtually ornamental patterns, which leave their footprints. In the development of her movement motives, i.e. the building up of her body's rotations with accentuating arm swings, which correspond with the step *material*, at times contrapuntally, she orientated herself towards compositional principles of Reich's music: First and foremost the *repetition* of small motives with gradual minimal changes or rather variations that lead to new motives. Furthermore, the *accumulation* achieved by a series of several motives resulting in complex structures as well as the *substitution* of motivic material and its *acceleration*. De Keersmaecker also takes up movement impulses from the music – “a very physical charge, carrying a kind of emotion” (De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012, 13) –, which she translates into her dance (despite or particularly because of her apparently prevailing orientation towards clear structures). However, Reich's music and De Keersmaecker's choreography or rather her respective phase-building do not coincide, just like the four violins in Reich's composition subtly oscillate among each other between playing in unison and *phaseshifting*. De Keersmaecker applies this compository principle of phaseshifting to her choreography by moving the arm and leg movements against each other in subtle changing nuances. As a result, music and dance compete with each other in constant shifts between synchronisation and de-synchronisation. This artistic decision is the more consequent, since the audible and visible movements can never be in accordance with each other due to their respective *materiality* and *mediality*. The impression of a coincidence between music and dance is mainly the result of our brain's capacity for quick syntheses of divergent impressions and thus due to neuronal processes.



The play with interferences and *entrainment*, that is the refined oscillation between synchronizations and de-synchronizations of movements, which cause irritations of perception, are essential for *minimal music*, which developed during the late 1950s. De Keersmaecker meticulously translates these musical achievements into her dance aesthetics – in spite of her affinity for U.S. postmodern dance and its latent refusal to work with music at that time.

The principle of phaseshifting in dance, which De Keersmaecker developed in *Violin Phase*, was expanded shortly afterwards in her *Piano Phase* (1982), a choreography structured as duo this time – again based on a composition of the same title by Steve Reich (1967), but now with two pianos. In this piece the interferences do not only occur between the phases but also between different qualities of movement. Three choreographic phases are based on different arrangements of three movement motives, each of them danced in one line that is shifted forwards twice, to the front of the stage. Thus, it is performed on three different levels in space – comparable with the effect of zooming in. At the same time, the quality of the movements with which the motives are performed is shifting within each level – from “fluent” (as basic quality) to “suspended” (with reduced speed) and “attacked” (fast and coming to an abrupt halt, comparable with the musical staccato). There is only one brief moment when the movements drift apart due to a female dancer increasing her speed, which again is duplicated by special lighting or rather by the shadows cast onto the stage’s background (see the photo by Herman Sorgeloos in De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2012, 52). Otherwise, the two female dancers stay in unison, whereas the choreography as a whole stays comparatively independent to the music, or strictly speaking interdependent, since the compositional and choreographic processes match each other on an aesthetic meta-level. Against this backdrop the *materiality* and *mediality* of the (bodily) movement and sound traces

are not intended to supposedly achieve a congruence of audible and visible movements, instead they emphasize their own *materiality* and *mediality* – despite their inner ties as (audible and/or visible) movements in space and time. And whereas in *Violin Phase* the bird's-eye view is crucial for comprehending the movement traces, it is the frontal view in *Piano Phase* that is decisive for recognizing the phaseshifting resulting from the movement traces (including their reflection in the shadows).

In *Drumming* (1998) and *Rain* (2001), the next two choreographies by Anna Teresa De Keersmaeker based on compositions by Steve Reich (the first on a composition of the same title from 1971, the latter on his *Music for 18 Musicians* from 1976), the spatial dimensions turn out even more complex, since the floor paths as well as the vertical evolving movement motives are based on spiral movements as elementary path forms (*archi-trace*). Furthermore, the comparably simple conception of the movement motives encourages an even more complex processing through canonical, contrapuntal or declining composition techniques (the last one is comparable with the crab movement in musical counterpoint).

In *Drumming* these spiral movements are executed within a square or rather a structure consisting of several squares, the proportions of which are based on the Fibonacci sequence. At the same time, they are mirror-symmetrically shifted into each other with a slight rotation (thus spiral-shaped on the horizontal level). In *Rain*, these spiral movements are performed within a big circle, which again is subdivided into the very square structures that De Keersmaeker had developed for *Drumming* (cf. De Keersmaeker and Cvejić 2014, 20–26 and 113). However, *Drumming* is based on just one unisex *phase*, whereas in *Rain* there are two gender-specific *phases*, one for the female and the male dancers respectively. Finally, *Drumming* is asymmetric in its macrostructure with two unequal parts that are based on the Golden Section, whereas *Rain* is designed symmetrically and can be traced back to an

extended ternary form (ABA). Nonetheless, in principal the choreographic proceedings in *Drumming* and *Rain* are comparable, which are based on general characteristics of De Keersmaecker's work: *phaseshifting*, *mirroring* (with *videoscratching* as special form that shortens it abruptly), *accumulation*, which is a condensation of movement motives, increasing or rather decreasing speed (*kinoking*), a gradual construction of phases (*stacking*), partner work in the style of contact improvisations (*manipulations*) and fabric-like, almost woven arrangements of dancers with continuous changes of place (*tresses*) (De Keersmaecker and Cvejić 2014, 118-122).

Against this backdrop, not only the rhythmic dimensions of music but also those of the architecture of music gain choreographic importance – at least such an effect emerges in the perception: The musical sound traces inscribe themselves into space by the movement traces of the dancers. Thus, the dance traces point far beyond the visible events and open up a listening space, which invites to experiences of *interference* or rather of *différences* as defined by Derrida.

The procedures of leaving choreomusical tracks as outlined above, which are constituted due to the reciprocal action and interplay of (bodily) movements and sounds that De Keersmaecker developed in her early works and has continually differentiated from thereon, are of a growing and baffling complexity in her later and latest choreographies. This is particularly true for her choreography *Vortex temporum*, based on the composition of the same title by Gérard Grisey (1995). It was originally created for the stage (2013), before De Keersmaecker re-arranged it shortly afterwards under the title *Work/Travail/Arbeid* for the performances in the exhibition hall of the Contemporary Art Center Wiels in Brussels (2015).

It is hardly a coincidence that De Keersmaecker's intensive examination of U.S. American *minimal music* is followed by her turning to a *liminal music*, i.e. music balancing at

the threshold of human perception, the origins of which go back to the (apparently) free-floating time- and sound concepts of the French impressionists. As one of the founding fathers of the so-called “musique spectrale” (spectral music), which focused on the development of composition techniques that depicted liminal perception phenomena, Grisey worked on a musical creation of time that was to exceed human imagination as a “vertigo of pure duration” (Haselböck 2009, 163). It directly corresponded with “sound figures” and harmonic spectres as sound-spatial “archetypes” (*Archétypes*), which intended to exceed the limitations of Western classical music concepts and the corresponding habits of perception, as Grisey himself explained.<sup>2</sup> Rhythmic and sound-spatial parameters are interwoven so tightly that traditional differentiations of musical time and musical space are successively undermined.

Thus the music in De Keersmaecker’s interpretation of Grisey’s composition advances to a highly and through-choreographed soundscape due to a danced vertigo of time (*Vortex temporum*). To achieve this, it was important that the dancers of her ensemble intensively examined the structural conception of Grisey’s score. Furthermore, it was necessary that they collaborated in the choreographic process with the musicians and directly interacted with the instrumentalists during the performance – but without purposefully creating relations based on cause and effect (Filipovic 2015, 17-23). Instead, there is a permanent exchange between audible and visible movement impulses, which are absolutely aware of their own respective *materiality* and *mediality* and ultimately of the impossibility of achieving (an apparently) harmonic congruence – just as Jean-Luc Plouvier, the pianist of *Ictus*, described by convincing metaphors. Thus, he shall have the last word with his description of this phenomenon regarding an aesthetic of perception:

There you have it. We [the musicians] did not become dancers and they [the dancers] did not become musicians and the ambiguous word *gesture* continued to dangle between us

like a fertile enigma. As for whether dance and music actually interact, this would be as boring as hell. Let us say that they seek each other out, converge, want from each other, ask for things from each other. As in love, misunderstanding is the norm, nothing happens as planned, and each gives what they do not have. (Plouvier 2015, 46)

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> To conceptualize music, sound and noise immediately as movement is not self-evident. Undeniable is alone, that music moves us, physically and therefor visible, or emotionally or in our imagination, which is not necessarily visible. Nonetheless neuroscience and cognition research prove us, that we can conceptualize (but do not have to conceptualize) music as movement, although it might be, that this is only a metaphor, which refers to our experience of music (but not the music itself). Cf. for this topic among others Cox 2016.
- <sup>2</sup> The corresponding explanatory text from *Vortex temporum* is printed in the booklet of the composition's recording by the *Ensemble Recherche* (Musidisc France and WDR 1997/2001).

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## **Biography**

Stephanie Schroedter works at the intersection of dance studies and musicology. After her second monograph *Paris qui danse. Bewegungs- und Klangräume einer Großstadt der Moderne* (finished in 2015, forthcoming) she is leading a new research project on interrelations between music/sound and dance/movement in contemporary dance, supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

## **“What dances shall we have?”: Assembling the Evidence of Non-Courtly Dancing in Shakespearean England**

Emily Winerock

### Abstract

Shakespeare's plays feature numerous references to, and stagings of, rustic dancing, from fairies' rounds in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to a morris in *Two Noble Kinsmen*. However, while surviving instructional manuals feature courtly choreographies, they rarely detail commoners' dances. Yet, despite these problems of transmission, ample, if scattered, evidence survives in English archival records about the dancing habits of villagers and townsfolk. These records offer welcome details about non-courtly dances and also provide a corrective to anachronistic performance traditions, such as maypole ribbon dances, that have sprung up in the absence of accessible, clearly delineated historical choreographies.

A handful of instructional dance manuals survive from late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. These manuals contain detailed step descriptions and choreographies for specific dances, as well as accompanying music. Some also contain notes on ballroom etiquette, illustrations, and defenses of dancing crammed with classical references. These manuals were part of the deluge of “how to” guides published in Renaissance Europe made possible by the printing press. Like fencing, hunting, and embroidery guides, dancing manuals were pitched to the nobility and gentility (what today we would call the upper and middle classes). They featured courtly dances such as the galliard, pavane, and coranto, and their instructions stressed the importance of self-control, elegance, and grace. As a general rule, these manuals do not contain instructions for the dances of commoners—the shepherds and shoemakers and servant girls—nor do they describe the style of common dancing, except as a counter-example. The main exception to the exclusive focus on court dance is Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchésographie* (1589), which includes a number of branles.

Branles were simple, rustic dances, usually performed in a circle or round. Some of the branle choreographies Arbeau provides are painfully simple—for example, the double branle is a

double step sideways to the left and then the same to the right, repeated *ad nauseum* or until the music ends. Others, like the pantomime branles, where you pretend to be a horse or a washerwoman or a Scotsman, are not particularly challenging but are playful and more fun to dance (in my highly subjective opinion). None of these dances requires special training or much practice to perform effectively, unlike the courtly dance choreographies in the manuals of Cesare Negri and Fabritio Caroso. Arbeau also notates two martial dances, the buffens sword dance and a lively *moresque* that might have been danced by non-elites. (Although the similar-sounding name makes it tempting to draw connections, Thoinot Arbeau's *moresca* in *Orchésographie* likely had little in common with the English morris dance.) These dances would have required practice to ensure that the dancers hit each other's swords and not each other, but the steps that comprise them are simple.

This is important to consider when asking which dances might have been danced by commoners. We know that courtiers took dancing lessons from a young age, but most commoners learned to dance informally from their elders and peers. Therefore, although the survival of dancing manuals enables the transmission of courtly dances, at least in some form, to us today, and Arbeau's manual preserves a handful of branles, for most non-courtly dances, we must find alternative sources: an alternative archive.

In order to establish this alternative archive, we need to know where to look as well as what to look for. For Shakespearean England, that is England in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth centuries, we find numerous references to non-courtly dancing in literary works and archival records. These often brief or passing references provide evidence of both named dances such as the hornpipe, jig, and morris dance, as well as unnamed dances performed at seasonal festivals, life-cycle celebrations, and private gatherings. In the remainder of this paper, I will



examine several dance scenes and textual references from English Renaissance plays, considering what they can and cannot transmit, and will argue that, despite their problems as historical and choreographic sources, plays nonetheless merit inclusion in the alternative archive for non-courtly dance.

In seeking a play that would shed light on dancing outside the court, I first turned to William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The play is littered with references to non-courtly dances. In the second act, Titania describes dancing "ringlets to the whistling winds" (2.1.84), and wishes Oberon would again "dance in our round" (2.1.144). Rounds, roundelays, rings, and ringlets were all terms used to describe group circle dances, which tended to be rustic rather than courtly by the end of the sixteenth century. These dances likely developed from the medieval carole, which was also generally performed as a circle dance. In the same scene, Titania also mentions the only circle dance type for which contemporary choreographic instructions survive, the aforementioned branle. Titania complains to Oberon that "with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport" (2.1.84). Since "brawl" can refer to either a fight or a dance, the pun would have invoked mental images of dancing at the same time that the text said that dancing has been halted or interrupted.

Titania makes two further allusions to rustic dancing when she details the negative consequences that have resulted from her feud with Oberon: "The nine-men's-morris is filled up with mud," she chides, and "the winds, piping to us in vain" have sought revenge for being ignored, blowing thick fog in from the sea (2.1.84). Piping—which could refer to either a bagpipe or a pipe and tabor—was the main musical accompaniment for rustic dancing, especially in northern England. "Nine-men's-morris" was a popular board game, but "morris" could also refer to English morris dancing, which was a common entertainment at village festivals.

The picture that emerges from these dance references in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is that not only do fairies like to dance a lot, but that their dancing is distinctly and emphatically non-courtly. While the stage directions only indicate that a dance should occur —“Titania and Oberon dance” in Act IV (SD 4.1.90.1) and “Oberon leads the Fairies in song and dance” in Act V (SD 5.1.417.1)—the play’s textual dance references also mention figures, like rings and rounds, and dance types, like branles and morris dancing, that were also associated with rustic, common, country dancing. That piping is named as the usual musical accompaniment for fairy dancing, rather than the lutes and viols of courtly consorts, further emphasizes its rusticity. It would not be a wild speculation, then, to assume that the two aforementioned staged dances of fairies might have been more rustic than courtly in content and style.

Dancing is one of the primary pastimes of Titania, Oberon, and the other fairies, and with the exception of the Bergomask danced by the tradesmen or “rude mechanicals” towards the end of the play, all of the staged dances in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are performed by fairies. Wonder and magic permeate the play, and dance is critical to how the play conveys this otherworldliness. Yet Shakespeare’s fairy world does not exist unto itself, but serves as a counterpoint to the courtly world of Theseus, Hippolyta, and the Athenian court. As in many of Shakespeare’s plays, wronged or wrongheaded courtiers must leave the court with its corruption and intrigues and get lost in the forest to find love, forgiveness, and redemption. In *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale*, shepherds and shepherdesses represent the court alternative. In *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, this role is primarily filled by spirits and fairies. In other words, rustic dancing can be used to critique court life, not just serve as a foil to courtly dancing, and fairies can be its conveyers (or transmitters, if you will).

But what are they conveying? There are, of course, no video recordings of the original productions of these plays in Shakespeare's own time, nor are there instructions in any of the dancing manuals for "how to dance like a fairy." Moreover, Shakespeare is marvelously unhelpful in his stage directions for dancing, only indicating that there should be a dance, but rarely specifying which dance should be performed or providing movement instructions. How, then, can we answer Theseus's question in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "What dances shall we have?"

While we are unlikely to encounter sources outside of dancing manuals that are in any way "choreographically definitive," it turns out that many of the references to dancing in English Renaissance plays include passages that are "choreographically suggestive." The first production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is usually dated around 1595. In the same decade, at least two other plays were published that also contain scenes with dancing fairies.

Robert Greene's play, *The Scottish History of James the Fourth*, was written around 1590 and published in London in 1598. Its central topic is the life and death of the late medieval monarch, James IV, the last king in all of Britain to be killed in battle. Curiously, this "tragicall" history is "entermixed" with a light-hearted comedy featuring Oberon, king of the fairies, and Bohan, a Scottish misanthrope. Most of the framing scenes that begin and end the five acts of the play feature dancing by Oberon and his fairies or by the two sons of the misanthrope, Slipper and Nano.

The play opens with a dance. As music plays from within (offstage, presumably), and Oberon and a group of fairies, referred to as "*an Antique*," dance around a tomb (sig. A3). In the 1590s, the antimasque was still a twinkle in Ben Jonson's eye, but antic dancing was already a well-established performance style. To be called "antic," dancing needed to be "strange and

fantasticall,” “grotesque,” and possibly accompanied by dissonant music (*OED*). More speculatively, antic dancing might include notably athletic jumps and turns, exaggerated knee bends and lunges that took the dancer closer to the floor than usual, an inclined torso, and raised arm movements and gestures, which were not usually present in courtly dance choreographies.

Back at the tomb, the antic fairy dance gets interrupted when Bohan suddenly emerges, and all but Oberon flee the stage. Oberon and the misanthrope then converse, revealing Bohan’s disillusionment with the world, which is so great that he has removed himself from humanity and is now living in a tomb, readying himself for death.

However, his disillusionment does not extend to dancing, which seems to be one of the few activities in which he still delights. Bohan says he finds the antic dance of the fairies enjoyable but boasts to Oberon that his sons can dance even better than they: “whay I haue two sonnes, that with one scottish gigge shall breake the necke of thy Antiques” (sig. A4). Oberon expresses his desire to see this jig, and the two young men enter and perform it.

The stage directions include a small but significant detail: “The two dance a gig deuised for the nonst” (sig. A4v). One of the questions asked by dance historians who work on theatrical staging is, “were the dances choreographed specifically for particular plays or were already known dances inserted or adapted?” Since “for the nonst” means “for the occasion,” this stage direction provides clear evidence that, at least sometimes, dances were “devised” or choreographed for a particular production (*OED*). At the same time, that a stage direction would specify this suggests that it was unusual, that it was literally “note worthy.” In other words, it now seems most probable that, ordinarily, known dances were adapted for the stage, but that, on occasion, new dances were created, or commissioned, for a production.

Although there are no detailed choreographic descriptions of the dancing in *The Scottish History of James the Fourth*, we can make some surmises based on dance's function within the play. The dances heighten and embody the contrast between the innocence and delight of the rustic fairy world and the evil machinations and folly of the court and city shown in the main narrative. Thus, the dancing of the fairies should be rustic rather than courtly and sufficiently energetic to qualify as antic, yet it must also convey that their celebrations are innocent and sincere, not just pleasant and playful. Likewise, the jigs must show the genuine skillfulness of the dancers, with rapid spins and turns, but unlike most early stage jigs, Nano and Slipper's dance should not be bawdy.

Degeneracy and scurrilous language might not be present in Greene's play, but they are certainly present in *The Maid's Metamorphosis*. The dancing fairies in this drama are playful, but they are also petty, violent, and, at least in the eyes of modern interlocutors, quite bawdy.

This anonymous play is dated 1600. Written in rhymed couplets, it was originally acted by the Children of Paul's, an all-boys acting company that began as a boys' choir. The plot borrows from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*.

Whereas in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Scottish History of James the Fourth*, the play essentially stops for the dance numbers, in *The Maid's Metamorphosis* the dancing is integrated into the surrounding dialogue. Three fairies approach three mortal men and ask them to dance and sing with them, offering positive encouragement and then threats of bodily harm to overcome the men's reluctance.

*1 Fay.* Wilt please you daunce sir?  
*Io.* Indeed sir, I cannot handle my legges.  
*2 Fay.* O you must needs daunce and sing:  
Which if you refuse to doo,  
We will pinch you blacke and blew. (sig. D1)

The threats are successful, and the stage directions that follow state, “*They all daunce in a Ring, and sing.*”

In addition to the delightfully clear instruction that the fairies should dance in a ring, the anonymous author of this play includes the lyrics of the songs that the fairies sing when they dance, some of which contain choreographic hints, such as: “Two by two, and three by three:/ And about go we, and about go wee” (sig. C4). These phrases could refer to steps grouped together, but they most likely refer to small groups of dancers moving together in couples or trios within a larger choreography. Style-wise, the fairies claim they dance “Lightly as the little Bee” and say that they’ll have “fine musicke” from “daintie Instruments” (sigs. C4, C4v). However, the banter between the men and the fairies is decidedly bawdy. The third fairy’s name is “little, little *Pricke*,” and he explains that whereas the other two fairies leap among the flowers and skip among the dew drops, he prefers other activities:

When I feele a gyrle a sleepe,  
Vnderneath her frock I peepe,  
There to sport, and there I play,  
Then I byte her like a flea:  
And about I skip. (sig. C4v)

In the song that accompanies the ring dance, other choreographic clues include the refrain: “Round about, round about, in a fine Ring a:/ Thus we daunce” and such phrases as “All about, in and out, ouer this Greene a:/ Too and fro, trip and go” (sig. D1). As one might expect for fairies, they are dancing outside, on a green. The fairies also say that they have “daunc’t lustily,” which means in a vigorous and athletic manner, not in a wanton or overtly sexual style, but again, given the implications of the surrounding dialogue, it would be hard to rule out the possibility of the latter. Interestingly, the dancing of the mortals in this play is also antic and rustic, but less bawdy.

Then, at the end of the play, there is a sort of dance reprise, but now it is graceful muses who dance with the mortals, not philandering fairies. The lovers get reunited, and Phoebus Apollo provides music on his harp for their wedding festivities. Here, too, there are choreographic suggestions in the song that accompanies the dance, including indications that it is a round dance: “Then trippe we all this Roundelay” (sig. G4v). The line that time “hath coupled friend with friend” might mean that within the dance circle, men and women alternate, partnered up -- perhaps the three muses pairing up with the disappointed shepherds (sig. G4v).

So now, in light of all these choreographic suggestions, we once again might ask, “What dances shall we have?” When it comes to staging dances for fairies, whether in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* or elsewhere, rounds and rings—that is, circle dances—are a safe bet. Not only were they clearly one of the dances that would have come to mind if you asked Shakespearean audiences what fairies danced, but you can make circle dances work in a variety of productions, from those that try to recreate the playing conditions of Shakespeare’s own time as accurately as possible, to ultra-modern, *avant-garde* productions that nonetheless want to foster moments of connection and resonance with the play’s performative past. For example, one could insert a faithfully reconstructed branle from Arbeau’s *Orchesography*; or create a circular dance in the style of a branle using branle steps; or employ the general idea of a circle of dancers moving together but using folk or modern steps and music; or devise a totally new and contemporary choreography that quotes or incorporates the most iconic components of the historical dance.

But there are certainly other dances we could have—jigs, morris dances, hornpipes—as well as improvised dances that try to capture the angular, grotesque, slightly off-putting antic style that we keep encountering. In the Shakespearean period, people did not think of fairies as beautiful, feminine, delicate creatures that flitted from flower to flower. Those are Victorian

fairies. Shakespeare's fairies were more mischievous and more playful, and we should at least consider trying to capture their antic spirit when staging their dances.

Furthermore, these suggestions and caveats apply to many other non-courtly dances. Part of making our archive is deciding what does *not* belong in it, the anachronisms, the false transmissions. The maypole dancing that you imagine when I say "maypole dancing" is Victorian. Shakespeare's peers put up maypoles, but they did not do an interweaving dance around them while holding ribbons. There were no ribbons, just flower garlands, and people dancing "about" the maypole, which only sometimes meant holding hands in a circle around the maypole itself. At other times, it just meant dancing in the general vicinity of the maypole—or a tall tree. Likewise, the hornpipe you see in your head when I say "hornpipe," that virtuosic solo dance for a sailor? That's from the mid-eighteenth century. In Shakespeare's time, the hornpipe was associated with northern England, especially Lancashire, and could be performed as a group round dance, a couple dance, or a solo dance. It was most closely associated with shepherds and shepherdesses, but there are also references in literary sources to the hornpipe being danced by satyrs and soldiers, fools, philanderers, and even fairies.

Because Renaissance dancing manuals are such rich and, thanks to Julia Sutton, accessible sources, scholars have tended to focus on them. However, the majority of Europe's populations were commoners, and they danced dances that are not recorded in these manuals. This paper argues that we need to think more about these other dance types and offers English Renaissance plays as a valuable source base for creating an alternative archive for non-courtly dance.

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## **Michio Ito: A Bridge Between East and West**

Emi Yagishita

**Abstract:** “As an artist, my hope was to build a bridge between Japan and America,” wrote dancer-choreographer Michio Ito. This study focuses on Michio Ito’s artistic projects in Japan, because they are not as well known as the American chapter of his story. I will explore Ito’s 1931 tour of Japan with his American dance students and its Japanese reception, as well as the Japanese press coverage of Ito’s performances in the U.S. In addition, Ito’s activities following his repatriation to Japan (his dance school, the Ernie Pyle Theatre, and his global vision for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics) will be examined.

### **Introduction**

In this paper, I will discuss Michio Ito’s career with a focus on his artistic efforts linking Japanese and American cultures. I will explore the Japanese audience's reception of Ito's 1931 tour of Japan with his American dance students. In addition, I will examine Ito's activities after he returned permanently to Japan in 1943, especially his work as a dance director of the Ernie Pyle Theater (a theater for American soldiers in Tokyo) and his unrealized global vision as an artistic director for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. This analysis of Michio Ito's dance goals and their impact is based on archival sources and material in the possession of Ito's descendants.

### **Michio’s early career in Europe and the United States**

When he was a child, Michio studied *nihon buyo* (traditional Japanese dance). His family was interested in artistic ideas from the West as well. Ito's father, Tamekichi, an architect, was influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright. Michio Ito developed a desire to be an

opera singer, which eventually led him to study abroad in Germany. However, he abandoned his dream of becoming an opera singer, because he perceived his vocal ability to be totally different from that of Western people. He was inspired to dance by watching the expressive performances of Isadora Duncan and Vaslav Nijinsky.

Composer Kosaku Yamada, one of his friends, encouraged Ito to become a dancer.

While in Germany, Ito trained in eurhythmics, manifesting musical rhythms through movement, at the Dalcroze Institute. After his training in Germany, Michio moved to London, then to New York, and, eventually, to Los Angeles.

In London, New York, and Los Angeles, he frequently performed Japanese-style dances, which were well-received due to Western audiences' fascination with the Orient. Ito received much acclaim for creating the role of the Hawk, inspired by Japanese Noh drama, in William Butler Yeats' play, *At the Hawk's Well*.

In 1919, Michio opened his own dance school in New York City. In a brochure for the school, Ito explained that his dance was a unique expression of his feelings, instead of formal Japanese dance; yet he fused Japanese and Western dance elements. Ito said, "In my dancing, it is my desire to bring together the East and the West" (Cowell 2015). Professor Mary-Jean Cowell suggested that Ito's goal was to "locate himself and his work in a supranational artists' realm, where he was neither Japanese nor American" (Preston 2016, 128).

In 1929, Michio went to Los Angeles, where he taught in his own dance studio in

Hollywood, as well as performed dances and choreographed. Ito choreographed large-scale, symphonic dance performances at the Hollywood Bowl in 1930 and 1937. Almost 20,000 people could attend a performance at the Bowl. Both his Western- and Japanese-influenced ensemble productions were very popular.

### **Michio's 1931 tour of Japan**

In 1931, he decided to tour Japan with his American dance students. According to Ito's brother, the Asahi Newspaper Company had invited Michio to visit Japan (Ito 1931). While in Honolulu, en route to Japan, Michio revealed: "I have not visited Japan for twenty years, it is like meeting an old girlfriend. I have both happy and anxious feelings" (*Asahi Shimbun*, April 1, 1931).

Ito returned to Japan with his American students; his American wife, dancer Hazel Wright, and their two children; the conductor Frank Haring; and other staff. They arrived in Yokohama harbor on April 10, 1931.

Aware that Michio Ito had achieved international recognition, many Japanese journalists publicized Michio's return in the newspapers. An article in the *Tokyo Nichi Nichi* newspaper stated that Ito's primary purpose for returning to Japan was to study Japanese classics (*Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, April 11, 1931).

Ito discussed the beauty of dance as soon as he arrived in Japan. In an interview, he explained why he had decided to become a dancer. He had sought an art that could be

understood internationally because he had realized that he would not be able to communicate verbally in countries such as China, India, and Egypt (*Jiji Shimpō*, April 11, 1931; “Exquisiteness of Japanese Dance” n.d.).

He characterized the arts in two ways: a material and objective expression, such as architecture, or a subjective expression composed of human feelings, such as dance. Ito diplomatically stated that he had lived twenty years in the West and had realized that Japan was a very good place.

Michio said that the purpose of his visit to Japan was not to display his dance, but “to study the unique aspects of Japan and its arts that the rest of the world respects.” Ito explained: “For example, Eugene O’Neill is writing a play that uses masks like in a Noh play” (*Jiji Shimpō*, April 11, 1931).

A painter, Riichiro Kawashima; a modern dancer, Baku Ishii; a comedian, Roppa Furukawa; actresses from the Kamata area; and some other friends welcomed Michio and his troupe when they first arrived in Japan. On the deck of the ship in Yokohama harbor, Michio reunited with his mother after twenty years of separation. Michio and his troupe then traveled to Tokyo and stayed at the Imperial Hotel, which had been designed by Michio’s father’s friend, Frank Lloyd Wright.

The following day, on April 11, a presentation on Michio Ito was given at the Tokyo Asahi Shinbun newspaper company. Japanese scholar Zenmaro Doki delivered the opening

remarks; playwright Syoyo Matsui discussed Michio's early career; Isamu Noguchi's father, the poet Yone Noguchi, talked about Michio's dance style; and Michio spoke about the dance world in Europe and America (*Asahi Shimbun* n.d. 1931).

Michio Ito needed to be introduced to Japanese audiences since he had developed his career in the West. Michio's brother wrote about the dancer's return to Japan and urged in a letter, "please buy tickets for Michio's performance" (Ito 1931).

Michio Ito was concerned about whether his performances would be well-received in Japan. He decided to do a dress rehearsal in order to generate critics' reviews before performing for the general public.

On April 13, Michio and his dance group held a dress rehearsal at the Imperial Hotel and invited 100 people from the dance and music world. The program relied heavily on music by European composers, with one piece by Ito's Japanese friend, Kosaku Yamada. They performed the dances, "Ecclesiastique" (Tchaikovsky), "Oto no Nagare" (Yamada), "Sonata No. 30, Opus 109" (Beethoven), "The Little Shepherdess" (Debussy), "Primitive Rhythm" (Unknown), "Empire Waltz" (Glazunov), and "Tango" (Albeniz) (Momoi 1931).

Sessue Hayakawa, the first Japanese actor to become a silent movie star in the West, admirably shook hands with Ito after this show (*Jiji Shimpō*, April 14, 1931). In a review of the dress rehearsal, critic Kyoji Momoi noted that "Primitive Rhythm" would be praised in the United States, but dancers in Japan (such as Kabuki actors) would have provided greater

realism. Momoi commended the piece, "Tango," writing that Ito would gain respect from his home country even if he showed only this dance. This dance proved to Momoi that Ito was a great artistic director who could direct hundreds of dancers in a large-scale performance (Momoi 1931).

A few days later, Michio exhibited his interest in the Japanese classical arts by visiting the Kabuki Theater with his wife, and meeting a famous Kabuki actor, Sadanji Ichikawa (*Asahi Shimbun*, April 15, 1931). On April 18, Michio's supporters held a welcome party for him. The invitation card listed the names of many famous Japanese people, including the Kabuki actors Ennosuke Ichikawa and Sadanji Ichikawa; the painters Ikuma Arishima, Riichiro Kawashima, and Saburosuke Okada; producers Tsuruo Asari and Shiro Kido; a writer Aoi Ikuta; businessmen Takejiro Otani and Toyo Kikuchi; actors Soujin Kamiyama and Sessue Hayakawa; a critic Mitsuru Ushiyama; a conductor Hidemaro Konoe; a journalist Kiyoshi Kiyosawa, etc. (Invitation Card 1931).

According to newspaper reports, Michio's performance tickets then nearly sold out ("Michio Ito Dance Performance" n.d.). I believe that the promotional activities undertaken by notable supporters of Michio's art helped to create large audiences for his performances in Japan.

On April 21 and 22, Michio and his dance group performed at the Tokyo Asahi Auditorium. The publicity material for these performances asserted that Michio was one of

the top five dancers in the world, along with Isadora Duncan, Michel Fokine, Argentina, and Ruth St. Denis. It is true that Michio Ito was a pioneer of modern dance in the United States. Michio and his troupe performed the dances: "Ecclesiastique" (Tschaikovsky), "Prelude, Opus No.2" (Scriabin), "Theodora" (Friml), "Sonata No. 30, Opus 109" (Beethoven), "Oto no Nagare" (Yamada), "Maruts" (MacDowell), "Etude No. 2" (Schumann), "Waltz" (Chopin), "Oriental" (Ippolitov-Ivanov), "Pantomime" (Penau), "Empire Waltz" (Glazunov), "Prelude in B-flat" (Chopin), "Impressions of a Chinese Actor" (Ravel), "En Bateau" (Debussy), "Flamenco" (Unknown), "Habanera" (Sarasate), "Tango" (Albeniz), "Javanese" (Kelly), "Impressions of Olga Schlavotska" (Fibich), "The Little Shepherdess" (Debussy), "Arabesque No.2" (Debussy), as well as "Primitive Rhythm" (Unknown), "Down South" (Middleton), and "Pizzicatti" (Delibes) (Poster and Brochure 1931).

The critic Mitsuru Ushiyama praised Michio's first performance on April 21 as brilliant, even better than a gala performance. According to Ushiyama, the production featured dances influenced by China, Java, Russia, and other European countries. He especially praised Michio's solo dances, "Tango" and "Pizzicatti." The critic suggested that the dance to Yamada's "Oto no Nagare" had the atmosphere of a Noh play (Ushiyama 1931).

The second day of the production, many Japanese dancers, critics, and other prominent figures attended Ito's performance, including an ambassador of the Soviet Union, Oleg Troyanovsky. Troyanovsky and his wife visited Michio's dressing room to congratulate



him after the show (“Shaking Hands with An Ambassador of the Soviet Union” n.d.). One newspaper article complimented Ito's spectacular presentation for being truly international ( *Asahi Shimbun*, April 22, 1931).

Michio Ito and his dance troupe performed in several other places in Japan. On April 28, they danced in Nagoya, sponsored by the Nagoya newspaper company. The next two days, on April 29 and 30, Michio and his dancers performed at Asahi Kaikan. Then, on May 1, they danced at the auditorium in Kyoto (Brochures 1931).

Ito's troupe performed on May 2 at the Yokohama Port Opening Memorial Hall. In Yokohama, Michio and his dancers performed the same pieces they had introduced in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Kyoto. The theater program advertised Michio’s brilliant career. According to this publication, Ito had left Japan when he was nineteen; over the years, his patrons had included Queen Alexandra, Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats, and Edmund Dulac. The list of Michio's supporters in America included former presidents Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, and Calvin Coolidge, as well as businessmen such as John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Frank A. Vanderlip. This validation of Ito as a success in the West impressed Japanese audiences at the time (Brochures 1931).

On May 3, Michio and his dancers returned to Tokyo and performed at the Imperial Theater. On May 14, they performed at Hibiya Public Hall. The program for this performance depicted Ito as a modern artist in Western costume.

Michio Ito spent about six weeks in Japan. Ito needed to return to the United States because of a commitment to teach dance during the University of Southern California's summer session. He had been invited to be a visiting professor at the university in order to teach his own dance forms to 1,200 dance teachers from different parts of America (*Cyugai-Syogyo Shimpō*, March 24, 1931; *Jiji Shimpō*, April 11, 1931).

A number of Japanese newspapers published articles about Michio Ito's planned return to the United States. Ito and the famous actor Sessue Hayakawa sailed on the same ship to Los Angeles; Hayakawa voyaged to America in order to act in the film, *Daughter of the Dragon* ("Sessue and Michio are Going to Go to the United States" 1931).

Michio's tour of Japan had been an excellent opportunity to introduce his choreography, with its blend of elements from different cultures, and his American dancers to Japanese audiences. For his American students, visiting Japan was also an instructive, new experience. They could observe the skillful performance of traditional Japanese arts and meet notable Japanese figures. Although Michio had not visited Japan for twenty years, the Japanese warmly welcomed their fellow countryman and were fascinated by his beautiful dance works.

Michio's international vision was the creation of a cultural bridge between Japan and the United States. Although Japan and America are far apart geographically, Michio realized that the arts were not limited to one continent--because they are borderless. Ito wrote, "As an

artist, my hope was to build a bridge between Japan and America . . . so that a new and higher civilization could be developed" (Michio Ito Foundation 2014).

Unfortunately, Ito's idealistic goals were overshadowed by the political ramifications of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in September 1931 and the growing friction between the U.S. and Japan.

Ito's connections to Japan made him the target of suspicion by the FBI when the relationship between Japan and the U.S. further deteriorated. The day after Pearl Harbor was bombed, Ito was arrested and detained in a camp for two years. As part of a prisoner exchange, he returned to Japan in 1943.

### **Michio's post-war activities in Japan**

Shortly after World War II ended, Michio was hired as the dance director for the Ernie Pyle Theater in Tokyo. The Takarazuka Theater was temporarily renamed the Ernie Pyle Theater during the American Occupation, 1945-1952, and used as a movie and stage theater for American soldiers. Michio served as a liaison between the U.S. government and the Japanese cultural community, hiring all of the Japanese dancers and actresses for the productions. Ito's services were in demand not only because of his talent as a choreographer-director but also for his knowledge of Western culture.

Michio established the Ito Institute for Artistic Dance in the Meguro district of Tokyo. In addition to teaching dance in Japan, Michio started the first training program for fashion

models in the country.

In the late 1950s, Michio received an offer to be an artistic director for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. He wanted to create an extraordinary experience and he attended the 1960 Olympics in Rome as part of his preparation for the Tokyo event.

On the eve of the opening ceremony for the Rome Olympics, he saw a performance of *Aida* staged outdoors at the ancient Baths of Caracalla. After the dazzling performance, he expected that the ceremony would also be splendid. However, he was disappointed by the tedious, loosely organized event. What Ito had hoped to see was a striking spectacle of 6,000 doves flying and all the church bells in Rome ringing at the same time as the Olympic flame was lit.

There is a famous proverb: “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” Michio wanted to produce the Tokyo Olympics according to the idea: “When in Tokyo, do as the Japanese do” (*Asahi Shimbun*, Aug. 27, 1960). The 1964 Olympics were the first Olympics to be held in Asia. Michio wanted to utilize the beauty of traditional Japan to express a vision of world peace.

However, Michio Ito died in 1961, three years before the Tokyo Olympics, so his idealistic vision for the Olympics never materialized.

## **Conclusion**

In his own life and dance, Michio Ito fused Eastern and Western influences. He

studied Japanese traditional dance as a youth but pursued his innovative career in Europe and the United States. Moreover, he tried to forge a cultural bridge between Japan and the U.S. with his tour of his native land in 1931. He introduced his international dances and his American students to Japanese audiences. Although Ito had been somewhat nervous about how the Japanese would receive his art, he found many supporters and was acclaimed for his performances.

Following this tour, Ito tried to send his American students to Japan every year. However, because of the deterioration of relations between the Japanese and U.S. governments, culminating in World War II, Ito's ideas were not fully realized. He planned to show his massive and magnificent concept of an “East meets West” culture at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. But because of his death in 1961, this dream was also not fulfilled.

Michio had noted that the Japanese philosopher Tenshin Okakura once wrote: “Asia is one.” Michio's response was to assert: “The world is one.” I think that Ito's broad ideas about a bridge between East and West are even more essential for us in this globalized era.

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**Biography**

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## ***Cūkas Driķos: The Story of One Latvian Folk Dance***

Julie Brodie, Diāna Gavare, Hannah Russ, and Valda Vidzemniece

### **Abstract**

This lecture-demonstration traces the story of one traditional Latvian folk dance, *Cūkas Driķos* (*Pigs in a Buckwheat Field*), including: who dances it, where and when it is performed, how the dance varies regionally, and what changes in presentational rather than celebratory settings. Video footage and demonstrations of different versions were shared, and the notation system utilized for teaching and recording folk dance in Latvia was introduced and compared to the Labanotation system. The session culminated with participants learning a traditional version of *Cūkas Driķos* to provide kinesthetic understanding of social, cultural, and artistic elements inherent within this one dance.

### **Introduction**

The lecture-demonstration began with an explanation of how the project started and what brought the presenters together. Professor Brodie was a Fulbright scholar in Riga, Latvia in the spring of 2016, teaching contemporary dance and Laban theory at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music. Many of her students were professional folk dancers, and folk dance instruction was part of the curriculum at the Academy of Music. As such, she was able to observe folk dance classes and exams, rehearsals, and performances of folk dances at various venues.

While folk dance in Latvia is popular and has been extensively researched and recorded, the participatory versions of common dances have not previously been documented in Labanotation. The simpler, social versions of Latvian folk dances are the core elements of the more ornate and complex staged dances, but discerning the authentic, base dances is complicated. Therefore, understanding the relationship between participatory and presentational Latvian folk dances became central to this investigation and to understanding the



role that folk dance plays in Latvian culture. Accessing primary sources to reveal the evolution of folk dances through time and place was equally important to this project and to establishing the “authentic” versions of dances. Labanotation became an unexpected tool in this process, going beyond its usefulness as a universally accessible system for preserving and disseminating the dances of Latvia.

Through her students, Brodie had access to the work of the Pērle folk dance company, in particular. She decided to use Pērle’s performance of the presentational dance called *Nerejati Ciema Suņi*, choreographed by Jānis Purviņš, as a starting point. One dancer explained that some of the source material for the dance was derived from the basic step patterns of a social dance, *Cūkas Driķos* (*Pigs in a Buckwheat Field*). Upon request, the dancers of the Pērle Dance Company performed a (semi) participatory version of *Cūkas Driķos* in one of their rehearsals. While the dancers explained that this version “can be seen in bars,” it is still clearly the arrangement of professional dancers.

This is the version that Brodie began notating, assisted by Hannah Russ, her Kenyon College summer scholar. As Brodie and Russ researched other participatory versions of *Cūkas Driķos*, they noticed some standard variations in the movement. To provide a more complete picture of this dance (and Latvian folk dance in general), Valda Vidzemniece and Diāna Gavare joined the project, contributing their expertise as a Latvian dance historian and researcher and as a Latvian professional folk dance artist, respectively. From these differing perspectives, the story of *Cūkas Driķos* has been traced through time and place, viewed in three primary contexts:

1. Celebrations (Participatory Dance)
2. Proscenium stagings (Presentational Dance)

### 3. Festival stagings (Presentational Dance)

Participatory and presentational dances can be defined from either a prescriptive or a descriptive point of view. For the purposes of this project, the prescriptive point of view was utilized in notating both participatory and presentational versions of dances. Viewing and describing participatory dances from a prescriptive perspective reveals clear and simple steps and patterns. In contrast, a descriptive analysis would need to account for every performative discrepancy and idiosyncrasy, making participatory dances much more complex to notate than their presentational counterparts. According to Nahachewsky's model, in presentational dance "the standardization of movement on microscopic level is designed to highlight and reinforce macroscopic elements" (1995, 6). Presentational choreographies draw from and stylize the participatory folk dance steps, and little improvisation is included; it is only seen in character portrayal or theatrical moments. The fact that most Latvian folk dances are couple dances, performed within a larger group, may also contribute to the standardization of the steps. From the prescriptive perspective however, the presentational dances of Latvia are more complex and ornate in terms of step patterns, floor plans and virtuosity than their participatory counterparts.

When danced in participatory settings, there are individual variations in the performance of the basic steps, consistent with dancers having freedom to improvise and be expressive. However, the steps and arrangements remain more or less consistent for the whole group. Significant and common differences in the steps themselves were also discerned through this project and were notated and included in the glossary as part of this project. These contemporary, social variations are congruent with versions of the dance that were traced back to different regions of Latvia and beyond—to Estonia and Sweden in the

case of *Cūkas Driķos*. All notations, including the variations, can still be considered prescriptive, as they are intended to capture the major regional distinctions and not individual stylistic and performative aspects. Similarities and distinctions in patterns and steps are readily visible when viewing the score, even without training in Labanotation. Thus, notation became a tool for seeing and documenting significant ethnochoreological variations in this one folk dance.

### **Following traces of *Cūkas Driķos***

Knowledge of the basic history and geography of Latvia is important to understanding the standard variations seen and notated in the social renditions. Traces of other cultures are evident in Latvian cultural artifacts, including traditional Latvian dances, songs, and music. When Latvian folk dance scholars analyze traditional and modern manifestations of Latvian dances, they often mention dances that are borrowed from other nations. The question arises: is it always possible to identify what is truly Latvian and what is borrowed? Is it possible to trace the development of one particular dance: its steps, patterns, figures, and melodies; when it originated, and how it developed; how it adapted to, and assimilated into Latvian choreographic folklore? In many cases, scholars interject their subjective opinions. Researching the story of *Cūkas* revealed many of these issues.

Folk art is a process that is alive, as it is changing continuously. In this twenty-first century, new examples of national choreographic folklore are still being created. *Cūkas Driķos* (*Pigs in a Buckwheat Field*) is one example of this phenomenon. The dance became popular within the last few decades. It manifests itself as a social dance, yet it still inspires choreographers to create new presentational versions of it. Historic information about *Cūkas*

*Driķos* is documented in the research of Sniedze Grīnberga, a choreography student at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, when she was exploring and compiling social choreography of the Maliena municipality (1992). Maliena is the most remote municipality of North Vidzeme (Vidzeme is the north-central part of Latvia), close to the borders with Russia and Estonia. Several variations of the dance *Cūkas Driķos* are recorded:

The first variation. Dance in groups of four. Dancers form a square facing center, hands on waist. Two slow jumps, then four fast jumps, all changing feet. Repeat, but on the last jump put both feet together. Chorus – clap own hands, then join right hands in the center, forming a star. Skip or run clockwise. When verse repeats, turn and clap, repeating skips or runs in the opposite direction (Grīnberga 1992, 75). Singing while dancing:

*Pigs in buckwheat, pigs in buckwheat*

*With all piglets*

*Go children and chase them away*

*Not to spoil the grain!*

The second variation. Dance in groups of four or in pairs. If dancing in pairs: partners join hands facing each other. If in groups of four, then all four join hands facing center. Two slow jumps, then four fast jumps, all changing feet. Repeat all actions one more time (same as variation 1). In the second part: dance in couples (round polka) or clap and polka in circle with hands joined in star formation, then turn and repeat the other direction. Slow jumps changing feet may also be performed with bounces in between changes (Grīnberga 1992, 76). Singing while dancing:

*Everybody says, everybody says,*

*My wife is a little lazy*

*Let she be lazy as long as she is beautiful and a good dancer.*

The third version. Couples in waltz position perform eight gallops in one direction, then change clasp and repeat eight gallops in the opposite direction. Chorus – round polka (Grīnberga 1992, 76).

In the first part of versions one and two, the basic step pattern of the dance can be distinguished, which is *jumps changing feet*. However, in the second part of versions one and two, the movement patterns differ – skips (the first version) and polka (the second version). Execution of polka steps suggests that the second version is the newer one, because polka, as well as gallop and waltz steps in Latvian folk dance, were not introduced and adapted until the nineteenth century. The step pattern of the third version – gallop and polka – as well as the use of the waltz position, implies that this choreographic pattern appeared even later. All versions of the dance have a binary form.

The lyrics accompanying *Cūkas Driķos* may also help trace the history of the dance. The same dance was originally accompanied by different song verses. Now these verses are combined, although the texts are incoherent: one verse is about pigs in a buckwheat field, the other is about a wife who is good dancer. Both verses originate from the northern part of Vidzeme, further suggesting that the dance also originates from the Vidzeme region (Grīnberga 1992, 74). In terms of musical accompaniment, the melody consists of two parts and has 2/4 timing, defining the two-part structure of the dance.

The first version of the dance appears to be older, not only because of the step pattern, but also because of the dance pattern in general. In this version there is no mandatory couple dancing. Dancers take positions standing in a group of four, not obeying the order of couple dancing. The dance has figures of a square and a star; dance in place and dance in motion. According to the Latvian folk dance scholar Harijs Sūna, dance patterns that do not incorporate couple dancing

belong to the oldest layer of choreographic folklore (A). He classifies dances in which participants are dancing in groups of four into a specific type of choreography (A IV, i.e. layer A, type IV) (Sūna 1991, 220). Sūna labels quartet dances where the groups are freely located and equally moving around the room as the first subtype (A IV 1) (1991, 220-23). He further divides the first subtype, recognizing dances that are based on jumps changing feet as a distinct variation (1991, 222). It can be concluded that the dance *Cūkas Driķos* corresponds to one of the oldest of Latvian choreographic types.

Harijs Sūna also mentions similarities between the *Cūkas Driķos* dance pattern and the Estonian dance *Kaera Jaan* (1991, 222). Maliena municipalities' close geographic location to Estonia supports the possibility of cultural bonds, as well as influences and interactions between the two regions. A description of the Estonian folk dance *Kaera Jaan* can be found in the notebook *Citu Tautu Nacionālās Dejas (Folk Dances of Other Nations)* published in 1933 by Johanna Rinka and Jānis Ošs (1933, 3-4). There are, indeed, similarities in the musical accompaniment and the patterns of both dances, but the character of the steps is slightly different. In the same notebook Rinka and Ošs published a description of the Swedish folk dance, *Bleking*, in which the same jumps changing feet are described (1933, 15). Thus, looking for dances with similar patterns leads north – to Estonia and Sweden.

Folk dances from different regions of Latvia also exhibit step patterns and compositional structures similar to those observed in *Cūkas*. One of them is *Rupumdeja (Grits Dance)* recorded by Jānis Stumbrs in Nīca, the western region of Latvia. This is a pair dance, in which dancers face each other with hands joined and perform jumps changing feet. The jump pattern is complemented with hand movements. The rhythmic pattern of the jumps is: two slow, three fast, and seven fast

jumps. In the second part: dance round polka in a Latvian style clasp (Stumbrs 1938, 12). *Rupumdeja* was also danced in Vidzeme (places: Ķeipene, Plātere, Lielāmuiža) (Lasmane 1962, 53).

There are several folk dances recorded in different parts of Kurzeme (Nīca, Alsunga) called *Towel Dances* that also resemble *Cūkas*. *Dvieļu Deja* (*Towel Dance*), as recorded in Nīca by Milda Lasmane, is a dance for a group of four women. The dance is performed holding towels that are two meters long. The dance has a complicated compositional structure, accentuated by the actions of the towels (Lasmane 1962, 155-56). *Vadžu Deja* (*Hook Dance*), was recorded by J. Stumbrs in Alsunga. The number of dancers is unlimited, and they use towels which are hung on hooks. It can be performed by only men, only women, a mixed group, or by a solo dancer (Stumbrs 1940, 16). Another *Dvieļu Deja* is *Wedding Dance with Towels*, danced in Nīca and recorded by Jānis Kūlis. This dance encompasses patterns of an ancient wedding ritual, and its ornamental compositional solution has symbolic meaning. It is performed by eight dancers (four couples). All *Towel Dances* have common features - jumps changing feet are performed in the first part of all dances, followed by polka steps. As J. Kūlis mentions: "In Latvian folk dances jumps changing feet are iconic. These jumps are included in a wide range of mummer's, wedding, and funeral dances, i.e., in all occasions when a man's life, lifespan, and fertility is praised" (Kūlis 1973, 153).

In tracing the evolution of this one particular dance and trying to prove or refute its Latvian origin, it can be concluded that the steps performed in the dance *Cūkas Driķos* (jumps changing feet) are a specific feature of Latvian choreographic folklore. There are many examples of the use of the same step pattern (sometimes with a different rhythmic pattern) in the dances that are performed in different regions of Latvia. Similar step patterns also occur in Estonian, Swedish

and German dances. The polka and skips that are performed in the second part of the dance are also specific features of *CūkasDriķos* that are often seen in Latvian folk dances.

Latvian folk dance has changed through the centuries as it has assimilated new dance steps, new compositional structures, and adapted musical materials from the dances of other regions. The process of assimilation and modification is so deep and wide that, from a contemporary point of view, specifically Latvian folk choreography cannot be imagined without these borrowed means of expression.

### **Folk dance in Latvia today**

Today, Latvian folk dance has a new quality. Grown from the depths of folk art, folk dance was once a part of traditional social life, work and festivities. Folk dance has now stepped outside this frame and developed into a theatrical, presentational performance form (Mažāne, 2016, 9). A unique genre of dance performance has developed, combining traditional folk dance structures and steps with new, creative ideas and stylizations inspired by other forms of dance, including ballet, show dance, and modern dance. However, it is understood that these new ideas should preserve Latvian national mentality and features specific to the nature of Latvian folk dance (Grinvalds 2007, 32). The amateur dance movement involved in presentational folk dance events is vast, and it reaches its culmination in the Latvian Song and Dance Celebrations.

Every five years, Latvia celebrates the Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration that is one of the largest amateur choral and dance events in the world. It was proclaimed a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on November 7, 2003 and is an important event in Latvian culture and social life (Helper for Visitors 2007, 1). There are other festivals in addition to this Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration, including a School



Youth Song and Dance Celebration that also boasts a great number of participants.

Approximately 603 dance groups represented by 14,764 dancers of different generations participate in the Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration (Saulīte 2007, 220-222). To make it possible for such a big dancing “family” to be represented in these festivals, a number of large-scale dance performances are created. Special interpretations of folk dances are staged by choreographers, as they must take into account the large dancing floor for the performances, as well as the great number of dancers.

The story of *Cūkas Driķos* can continue to be traced through these presentational festival venues. At the 2015 XI Latvian School Youth Song and Dance Celebration, *Cūkas Driķos* was staged by Arta Melnalksne and performed within the large-scale dance performance *Līdz Varavīksnei Tikt (To Reach the Rainbow)*. It was performed by 1760 dancers from 110 dance groups (Mažāne 2015). Jānis Purviņš also utilized *Cūkas Driķos* in his choreography of a folk dance suite titled *Lec, Saulīte! (Rise the Sun!)*. This performance was presented the evening before summer solstice, bringing together annual traditions with contemporary means of expression (Grinvalds 2007, 25-26).

### **Dance notation in Latvia**

To ensure the quality of the song and dance festival performances and to facilitate the creation of the large-scale performances and new choreography, methodical materials are needed. A Latvian verbal-graphic notation system has been developed over time and is used as a means of folk dance preservation and communication. According to Rita Spalva, in addition to playing a role in preserving dances, dance notation has stabilized dance terminology. “The combination of words and images created the historically most stable approach to dance notation

with the easiest type of overview” (Spalva 2014, 505). Notation and word descriptions are used alongside video materials in preparation for the traditional Latvian dance festivals, facilitating staging and helping group leaders understand the vision for the dance’s structure (Spalva 2014, 505). In the festival staging by Melnalksne mentioned above, it is evident that notation would have been crucial in creating and organizing an event of this magnitude. Dancers from all over Latvia with different degrees of dance training participated, and there would have been minimal time to coordinate the groups, let alone teach the step sequences. In older folk dance books, realistic drawings were used in order to illustrate precise positions in dances, but graphic signs are now used to depict facings, positions, and formations, as well as different holds and clasps (Alpa 2012). This verbal-graphic system is part of dance teacher education in Latvia and is a requirement for obtaining certification (Spalva 2014, 505).

Folk dance vocabulary has also become increasingly codified. Positions of the feet in Latvian folk dance correspond to those in character dances. There are also specific arm and hand positions in Latvian folk dances (e.g. hands on waist, hands crossed in front of the chest, arms alongside of the body, one hand lifted). Many guidelines have been established for clasps and holds in folk dances. These are updated quite often, along with descriptions of dance steps. Typical static formations in folk dances include circles, circles with joined hands, punnets, lines, alleys, columns, and rows. Other formations like spirals, clews, knotting, and garlands move through the space. Precise definitions of terms and accompanying symbol usage indicate the rigor of folk dance technique and establish standards for performance quality, while simultaneously assisting with communication via the verbal-graphic system.

While highly effective for the purpose of staging festivals, the Latvian verbal graphic system precludes access to those unfamiliar with Latvian folk dance technique and/or the Latvian language. Moreover, when used to document dance, the written word can be difficult to interpret. Recording *Cūkas Driķos* in Labanotation makes the dance accessible to a broader audience in addition to corroborating theories about its history and the sources of different variations seen in current social dance settings.

The session ended with participants viewing the Labanotation score of *Cūkas Driķos* and learning and performing two variations of the dance.

## **Conclusion**

This project represents a first step toward ongoing research into Latvian folk dances and documentation of them in Labanotation. Several conclusions emerged through this project:

1. The significance of Labanotation as an ethnochoreological research tool.
2. The necessity of accessing primary sources to understand the evolution of folk dances through time and place.
3. The importance of distinguishing between participatory and presentational folk dance and understanding the relationship between the two contexts.

This lecture-demonstration explored the relationship between the participatory and presentational versions of a Latvian folk dance. The story of the traditional dance, *Cūkas Driķos* (*Pigs in a Buckwheat Field*), begins in the Vidzeme (northern) region of Latvia. The history of this dance was traced through its manifestations as more ornate and complex presentational performance pieces, as well as in related participatory dances. Demonstrations

of standard variations of the traditional dance were performed in authentic costume, and examples of the Latvian verbal-graphic system were viewed and explained. Video footage of applications of *Cūkas Driķos* in the enormous and prestigious Latvian folk dance festivals was shared, demonstrating the power of traditional song and dance to unite tens of thousands of dancers for the entertainment of even more observers. Finally, the Labanotated score of *Cūkas Driķos* was distributed and explored through movement as a means of further disseminating this historic folk dance and its story.

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### **Biographies:**

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**Valda Vidzemniece**, choreographer and educator, teaches Dance Composition and Dance History at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Music Academy. Vidzemniece has a Masters degree in Choreography from *JVLMA* and is currently working toward her doctoral degree. Vidzemniece has numerous publications, and she was artistic director of the dance company *Allegro* (1997-2010).

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## **Making Dance Visible at The New York Public Library**

**Arlene Yu**

Abstract: Since its founding, the Jerome Robbins Dance Division has sought to legitimize dance as art and academic subject, establishing the terms by which dance is described in library catalogs and amassing a broader range of materials than is traditional in archives. While the Division acquired material on Asian American dance, however, it failed to describe the materials in a way that encouraged scholarship. I will use Asian American dance to explore interactions between dance scholarship and dance archives, illustrating how scholars must understand the archival labor—and theory—involved in collections building in order to engage fully with the collections they use.

The Jerome Robbins Dance Division—which for clarity today we’ll call the Dance Division—began as the Dance Collection, a part of the Music Division at The New York Public Library. From its inception, the Dance Division’s first curator, Genevieve Oswald, aimed to “preserve every aspect, historical, theatrical, educational, therapeutic, economic, of every phase of dance: ballet, modern, ‘expressionistic,’ social, ethnic, primitive, folk, national, and variety—and to gather complementary materials of all kinds” (Oswald 1968, 147) in order to foster recognition of dance as an independent cultural phenomenon and a subject worthy of developing its own literature. Oswald’s concept of “total documentation” included all physical materials related to dance, including newspaper clippings, photographs, programs, journal articles, scrapbooks, unpublished manuscripts, manuscript collections, oral histories, moving image recordings, prints, designs, notation, rare books, and libretti.

The range of topics and materials in the collection presented a daunting project for the Dance Division’s catalogers, as there were no official lists of topics, titles, or names for dance figures, both personal and corporate. To make the material discoverable by researchers and

encourage more scholarship, the Dance Division undertook a nine year project to create the Library's first official headings for dance, to catalog every object in the collection under those headings on keypunched cards, and to publish an alphabetized, automated catalog in book form. Catalogers needed to wrangle the multitude of names and pseudonyms, work titles and variants, and topical subjects represented in the Division's still growing collection, as well as devise still more, to develop authoritative terms under which each item in the collection could be listed alphabetically and grouped with related items (Lourdou 1970). In 1974, the Library finally published the *Dictionary Catalog of the Dance Collection*, ten-volumes strong. Christena L. Schlundt hailed the publication three years later, calling the "magnitude of entries . . . impressive" and listing, among its other achievements, 8,000 newly created subject headings (Schlundt 1978, 31).

*Asian American dance* was not among them.

The omission of *Asian American dance* as a subject term in 1974 is perhaps understandable, for it was only that same year that Eleanor Yung founded the New York-based Asian American Dance Theatre, now known as the Asian American Arts Centre, "to address the distinctive concerns of Asian Americans in the United States" (Asian American Arts Centre, About Us, n.d.). The company taught dance classes at the Chinatown branch of the New York Public Library and began performances as a dance company in 1975 (Asian American Arts Centre, Brief History of the Organization, n.d.). Yung later joined with fellow Asian American choreographers, each already heading their own company, to form the Asian New Dance Coalition in 1978 (Dunning 1979). By the early 1980s, there were numerous choreographers of Asian descent working in New York, including Yung, Reynaldo Alejandro, Saeko Ichinohe, Sun Ock Lee, Chiang Ching, H.T. Chen, Eiko and Koma, Ping Chong, Kei Takei, Muna Tseng, Mel



Wong, Satoru Shimazaki, and Ruby Shang. By the mid-1990s many of these choreographers were represented in the Dance Division's collections, often donating their work after having been approached by the curator.

Why, then, did the Dance Division not propose and create a new subject heading, *Asian American dance*, to group the work of these choreographers together, when their materials were first being cataloged, or indeed since? The Dance Division continued contributing terms to the official Library of Congress lists for years after Asian American dance materials were collected. What oversight or other impediment was there to recognizing *Asian American dance* as an official term? The remainder of this paper will examine the forces at play in the failure to name Asian American dance even while the Dance Division was collecting Asian American dance and working hard to give Dance many different names in library catalogs.

Librarians today continue to follow cataloging principles based on those first laid out by Charles Ammi Cutter at the end of the nineteenth century. These include:

1. Making the convenience of the user paramount,
2. Maintaining logic and simplicity in subject headings,
3. But sacrificing logic and/or simplicity when they conflict with what is a generally accepted term

These rules have been expanded and codified over the years and are the basis for formulating controlled vocabularies, or lists of authoritative terms, such as that used by the Library of Congress name, title, and subject authorities, as well as by the Dance Division's *Dictionary Catalog*. Controlled vocabularies enable catalogs to group similar items together under standard terms to increase discoverability.

Literary warrant is a related library principle dating from the early twentieth century, under which classification terminology must be derived from the printed literature rather than from philosophical or theoretical constructions. In this manner terms are thought to be determined by users' requirements in users' language, fulfilling Cutter's principles. Catalogers may not pull terms from the ether, or derive them logically in their own heads, because the result may not be a term anyone would ever use to search a catalog. Literary warrant is the primary methodology used in the development and maintenance of the Library of Congress Subject Headings list.

First issued in 1898, Library of Congress Subject Headings, or LCSH, are continually updated through the Library of Congress Subject Authority Cooperative Program, or SACO, which gathers suggestions from participating libraries as well as the Library of Congress's own catalogers to arrive at consensus on proposed new or changes to existing subject headings. The LCSH are presumptively comprehensive and are the dominant topical vocabulary in use in libraries in the U.S. and, through computerized catalog record sharing, effectively worldwide.

In 1971, Sanford Berman, a U.S.-trained cataloger who had spent several years working in libraries in Zambia and Uganda, published a screed decrying the "humanity-degrading, intellect-constricting rubbish that litters the LC list" (Berman 1993, 16) and saying it would only work for

parochial, jingoistic Europeans and North Americans, white-hued, at least nominally Christian (and preferably Protestant) in faith, comfortably situated in the middle- and higher-income brackets, largely domiciled in suburbia, fundamentally loyal to the Established Order, and heavily imbued with the transcendent, incomparable glory of Western civilization. (15)

Librarians since then have worked and achieved some success in amending many of the terms Berman denounced as chauvinistic (Knowlton 2005), such that headings like *Negros as*

*businessmen* became *African American businesspeople* and *Legends*, *Oriental* became *Legends* with specific geographic subdivisions. The focus of these reformatations, however, was primarily on subjects related to people, not on the arts, and certainly not on an outlier subject like dance. Dance catalogers had their own battles to fight.

As the Dance Division grew and cataloged its collections in its early years, Oswald forged relationships with and sought contributions from major New York-based dance figures. She focused on making the case for dance as an art in its own right, working in tandem with influential dance critics like John Martin and garnering high profile collections, mostly of ballet and modern dance. The primary focus of the Dance Division's cataloging efforts was on making sense of these materials, and since early dance scholarship was generally focused on ballet and modern dance, the cataloging focus was on work titles and performer and company names. Creating title and name headings helped to elevate the status of choreographic works to independent creations analogous to theatrical plays or musical compositions, thus serving the American dance scholars, critics, artists, and donors of the time.

Dance Division catalogers had to ignore the strict application of literary warrant as they worked to develop these headings, since the vast majority of the Division's collections comprised non-book holdings and published literature on dance was limited. Nevertheless, the focus was still on making materials findable by terms then in general usage among researchers, and much time was spent deciding upon the correct and most useful official term for, say, *Swan Lake*. Should it be *Swan Lake*, or *Le Lac des Cygnes* or *Лебединое озеро*? What standard format should be used to differentiate *The Rite of Spring* music from *The Rite of Spring* ballet, and to differentiate different choreographic visions of the ballet? Should different versions of the ballet

be identified as separate works, or derivative works, and at what point does a different version become a separate work? How should Cyrillic personal names be Latinized? Kirov or Mariinsky?

For topical subjects, however, the Division resorted to a stricter literary warrant methodology, consulting printed books to understand “the richness and variety of dance subjects” (Brooks 2011, 472). So while topical subject headings were indeed created and expanded by the Dance Division, the cataloging principles followed meant that the headings tended to reflect the standard understanding of culture reflected in the printed dance literature of the 1960s and 1970s: Western high art, popular culture, and the rest of the world. One 1977 review of the *Dictionary Catalog* did note these biases (Armelagos 1977, 30) but the overall achievement for the field of dance drowned out the criticism.

Even when the Dance Division worked with fellow members of the Dance Heritage Coalition to develop a union catalog for dance—combining the catalog holdings of different libraries—and to add dance-related terms to the Library of Congress controlled vocabularies in the mid-1990s, the most significant achievement was deemed to be the inclusion of about 53,000 personal name headings and title headings for choreographic works. These headings were not only added to the name and title authorities to identify creators and work titles, but also to the subject authorities, to identify works *about* those creators and works. Some topical subject headings were added, but the vast majority of headings centered around ballet and modern figures and dance works. And as the Dance Division and others in the DHC continued to contribute to dance-related headings by later participating in the Library of Congress Name Authority Cooperative Program, or NACO, there was no corresponding push to be included in SACO.

At first consumed by the need to create name and title headings, and then by computerized catalog and union catalog projects like the *Dictionary Catalog*, dance catalogers, many of whom came from the worlds of ballet and modern dance themselves, could not or would not address the problematical terminology that elevated “ballet,” with its multitude of names and works and eras, over the eternally unchanging “folk dancing” or “ethnic dancing.” The Dance Heritage Coalition project did manage to change numerous headings with the past participle, *dancing*—an activity—with *dance*—an art—but this was in the mid-1990s, more than twenty years after Berman began his campaign (Hiatt 1994).

Since the mid-1990s, the Dance Division’s ability to influence the cataloging of dance beyond the addition of names and titles has waned, as larger currents in libraries have resulted in what some have called institutional McDonaldization (Quinn 2015; Nicholson 2015), involving among other trends the prioritization of efficiency, the reliance on measurable, quantitative statistics to evaluate performance, and the elimination of human quirkiness through the practice of copy cataloging (Quinn 2015). Earlier in the Dance Division’s history, the nature and demands of its pioneering work meant that its catalogers had largely been home grown, working outside of regular library rules to develop headings without full literary warrant, and deeply informed by the work of the reference staff, if not providing reference themselves. Working as reference librarians meant that catalogers could stay informed about current dance research trends and terminology.

In many of today’s libraries and archives—including the Dance Division—however, the pursuit of efficiency has resulted in a division of labor separating catalogers from reference staff. Catalogers no longer have any interaction with researchers, and spend their days largely doing what is known as copy cataloging, simply transferring an already created catalog record into

their own library's holdings. Speed and quantity of records produced are valued over creative original cataloging, so often catalogers make no enhancements at all to the original, basic record. And to make their offerings more attractive, publishers are often providing ready made catalog records, which library catalogers then simply import into their own library's catalog. Thus the assignment of formal subject headings may end up being determined by publishers rather than librarians (Debus-López et al. 2012) in this regime of efficiency and speed, and the creation of new subjects is more determined by literary warrant than ever.

So while "Asian American dance" was used in company names like the Asian American Dance Theatre in New York and the Asian American Dance Collective in San Francisco, because the *topic* was not yet named as such in printed books the subject heading was never created. This panel today, with its associated published papers, would not suffice as literary warrant. Even a 1992 report on the Society of Dance History Scholars conference that mentioned Asian American dance as a topic (Maddux 1992) would not spur the creation of the heading because journal articles are usually not cataloged.<sup>1</sup> It was not until the publication of 2016's *Contemporary Directions in Asian American Dance* (Wong) that literary warrant for the term was established and *Asian American dance* became a subject heading at last (Library of Congress 2016).

### Notes

1. The Dance Division has cataloged the individual article, but only generally classified it as a report on the conference.

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## **Material Matters: The Representation of Choreographic Events in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Festival Books and Court Ballet Programs (1573-1651)**

### **Abstract:**

Prints for ballet in early modern France offer a number of material elements, such as information regarding their formats, period editorial conventions, and variations in the ballets' form and content that resulted from experimenting with the poetics of the ballet *libretto* as well as the ballets' topics, structure and dramaturgy. This paper is based on a catalog of prints related to ballets at the French courts and the courts of the Austrian Habsburgs from 1573 to 1651. It sheds light on the shift from festival books to ballet programs and how the printed information affected the representation of choreographic events for contemporary audiences and today's scholars.

How do we know what we know about European court ballets? Or how do we know about other ballets performed in the Western world at a time where no modern media such as photography and video recording existed to catch the moment of the ephemeral art of dance? How did information about dance travel through geographical space and time? With what kind of transmission are we confronted?<sup>i</sup> The study of material matters reveals significant information for the reconstruction of ballet performances as well as the implications of the contemporaries' will to communicate about the choreographic event by writing and printing. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the shift from festival books to ballet programs and how the printed information affected the representation of choreographic events for contemporary audiences and today's scholars.

When dealing with what is commonly called a *livret de ballet* or ballet *libretto*, the question arising touches the genesis of this particular type of printed document. Unfortunately,

the research field of librettology (Honolka, 1979; Gier, 2000)<sup>ii</sup> as well as many modern dictionary entries are mainly focusing on the *libretto* for operas, referring to ballet only incidentally, mostly designating a literary text produced for an underlying inspiration regarding the narrative and dramaturgy of the ballet. The expression *livret de ballet*<sup>iii</sup> is widely used in seventeenth century court ballet research, although it is an anachronistic term. It covers a range of prints created for ballet performances, from small modest brochures to prestige editions (Canova-Green, 2017). In the first half of the seventeenth century, the more common terms were “*relation*”, a kind of report, or “*discours*”, or “*sujet*” an explanation of the subject. In any case this print was considered a key to the work and its reading (Canova-Green, 2017).

The literary texts could vary from dedications to readers and highly placed persons, poems dedicated to the author, to descriptions of the occasion for which the ballet was performed, as well as its setting and the progress of the performance or an explanation of the subject. Sometimes the intentions of the author or the sponsor are outlined. Often the *récit* or songs are also published. In addition, verses for the characters and their interpreters could be added in the order of the entries. However, in quite some cases the order of entries and/or the verses for the characters and/or the dancers are the only textual content of some prints. (Barthélemy, 1992, 409; Franko, 1998, vol. IV, 172; Canova-Green, 2017)

A case in point for the demonstration of the use of a print for a ballet performance is the beginning of the *Ballet of Nations – the Ballet des nations* from Molière’s 1670 *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme – The Citizen turned Gentleman*. In the Ballet’s first entry, excerpted below from its 1732 English rendering by John Watts, Molière staged the distribution of programs for the ballet, and he used the word “*livre*”, book, instead of “*livret*”:

“A Man comes to give the Books of the Entertainment, who is immediately teiz'd with a multitude of people of different Provinces, demanding 'em in *Recitativo*, and particularly by three troublesome People, whom he finds always at his Heels.

*A Dialogue in Recitativo.*

*One and all.*

To me, Sir, Pray, to me, to me, Sir,

A Book, if you please, for your humble Servant.

*A Beau.*

Sir, distinguish us, among the Crowd that makes this Noise;

Some Books here, the Ladies desire it of you.

*Another Beau.*

Hola, Sir, Sir, have the Goodness

To throw one of 'em on our side.” (Molière, 1732, 223)

It might well be that Molière chose the term “*livre*” on purpose, because the programs for court ballets under the reign of Louis XIV were all printed in the then established format in-4°, which is not quite to be considered as a size for small brochures. In his reprinted collection of ballet prints from the French National Library, Paul Lacroix declares that: “Most of these ballets are programs printed exclusively for the performance; they were handed out to the spectators, to the actors.”\* (Lacroix, 1868, t. I, XXIII).

Looking into the writings of ballet theoreticians of the seventeenth century, both [Nicolas?] de Saint-Hubert and Michel de Pure consider the print as an essential element for the understanding of the ballet performance. Saint-Hubert does not recommend or describe the

material presentation of these prints, although he underlines the functionality of the ballet program:

“I strongly approve that one prints the discourse of the *sujet* of the ballet, either in prose or in verse, to be thrown in the hall before the dancing starts, in order to make easier the understanding of the audience, who will doubtless take more pleasure in seeing the dancing.”\* (Saint-Hubert, 1641, 11)

De Pure also recommends the use of prints for the performance, for the understanding of the audience, implying that certain ballets are insufficiently explicit and that the visual nature of ballet requires verbal elaboration:

“It [Ballet] is a mute performance, where the gestures and the movements signify what one could express by words. So it is easy to see the defects of these ballets, where one does not understand anything but by the *récits* that are sung, by the books which are distributed and by the verses which are inserted there in order to unravel the *sujet*, and to present the main idea, the development, and the link between the one and the other – since this entertainment is almost only destined for the eyes.”\* (Pure, 1668, 210)

The real question is how and why the program (*livret de ballet*), not in the sense of the poetic invention for the ballet, but the program – a material object, a print destined for the choreographic event and a constitutional part of it – was invented in the first place. To answer this question, it is necessary to use different research tools besides textual interpretation.

Therefore, it seems more important than ever to consult the original source, which is actually facilitated by the on-going digitization of holdings in libraries all over the world. Textual reprints from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century of early modern French ballet *librettos* tend to be selective, omitting a number of material elements that the original prints had offered, such as

information regarding their formats.<sup>iv</sup> Research on these documents often focuses on the political and symbolic contexts of court ballet performances based on historical or philological approaches and textual criticism. Eminent scholars, – such as Margaret M. McGowan, Marie-Françoise Christout, Philippe Hourcade, Georgie Durosoir, Nathalie Lecomte, Marie-Claude Canova-Green and Mark Franko as well as VK Preston, – mostly concentrate on the content, the text and its significance for choreographic traces, body politics and strategic as well as poetic agency (McGowan, 1963, 2008; Christout 1987, 2005; Hourcade, 2002; Durosoir, 2004; Lecomte, 2014; Benserade, 1997; Canova-Green 2010, 2012; Franko, 1993; Preston, 2015, 56-89). Until now, the various issues of the historical development of the different sorts of prints for ballet performances have never been investigated in a complete study, which I have undertaken in my thesis.

In order to address material matters, that were central to the production and distribution of prints, I argue that it is necessary to use a methodology that derives from book archaeology, analytical bibliography and print analysis: or as Roger Chartier defines it: “textual criticism, bibliography and cultural history”<sup>\*v</sup> (Chartier, 1992, 14). The standard works of Martin Boghardt and Alain Riffaud are indispensable inspirations and tools for creating what the French call “*bibliographie matérielle*” (Boghardt, 1977, 2008; Riffaud, 2011). In this kind of analytical research, the focus is not only on the text, the content, but also on the print and its material aspects, its practical purpose and functionalities. From the perspective of cultural history, investigation of the link between the object *livret de ballet* and the reader is essential for understanding the impact this sort of print made.

For my research, I created a database allowing me to identify and catalog the different prints from 1573 to 1651 for ballets performed in France or abroad by French aristocrats – and

for a comparative study; I included prints for ballets danced at the courts of the Austrian Habsburgs. When starting my investigation on French *ballet de cour* – court ballet of the sixteenth and seventeenth century<sup>vi</sup>, my main interest was the choreographic event and the various issues of a court ballet performance, as well as questions about ballets danced not at court, but as part of an urban dance culture. Concerned by the problematic of unreliable chronologies, I held on to what seemed to be a solid source, meaning a printed one, only to be then confronted with other problems of definitions and terminology, together with doubts about the reliability of prints. The first obstacle was the identification of the different editions, versions and states. For a certain number of prints quoted and described in catalogs and bibliographies by Pierre-François Godard de Beauchamps, Louis-César de la Baume Le Blanc, duc de La Vallière and Lacroix, it was possible to identify the version they were referring to by taking their indications on format, the number of sheets and the name of the editor into account (Beauchamps, 1735; La Vallière, 1760; Lacroix, 1844, 1868-70). The textual, if not literary production of these prints is not to be separated from their material aspect. That is the problem of the re-edition of Paul Lacroix in the nineteenth century: although he indicates formats and publishes notes on these material aspects, all sorts of texts are reproduced without critical reflection and distinction as to what sort of text and/or print confronts the reader. It is therefore necessary to redefine categories and to use precise terminology in order not to confound the different types of functional prints. Only then is it possible to demonstrate how the *livret de ballet*, a print destined for the performance, emerged and differed from the festival book.<sup>vii</sup>

### **Different Types of Print Media for Ballets**

In the second half of the sixteenth century the first prints solely destined for the official report of ballets were festival books – *relations de fête* – retrospectively shaping the event for the

intended readership, such as the Latin text *Magnificentissimi Spectaculi* by Jean Dorat for the *Ballet des Polonais*, 1573 (Dorat, 1573), and of course the famous *Ballet comique de la Reine*, printed retrospectively in 1582 for the performance in October 1581 (Beaujoyeux, 1582). Both are illustrated and the latter even includes musical scores. The form of a festival book would be used throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Europe for reporting ballet performances. The strategy of printing prestigious editions of illustrated festival books with musical scores has paid off into the present. For the *Ballet comique de la Reine*, more than fifty copies are to be found in libraries and collections today. As for the print for the *Ballet de la délivrance de Renaud* at least fifteen known copies exist. In comparison, there are only two copies for the famous *Ballet du duc de Vendôme* (n. n., 1610). All three ballets are frequently in the spotlight of scholarly research. The prints for the *Ballet comique de la Reine* and the *Ballet de la délivrance de Renaud* have been reprinted, reedited and analyzed in depth (Beaujoyeux, 1982; Werden, 2011; Prunières, 1913; Greer, 2010; Canova-Green, 2017, 509-20). Both prints have been partly examined for their material aspects by Preston in her article “How do I touch this text? Or the interdisciplines between Dance and Theater in Early Modern archives” (Preston, 2015, 56-89).

Another type of print is the anthology of texts for ballets – *recueil de ballets*. The first anthology with texts for ballets performed in 1592 and 1593 in Tours was printed in 1593 (n. n., 1593). In 1612 an anthology containing a reprint of the text of the *Ballet comique de la Reine* and excerpts of the *Ballet du duc de Vendôme* were published together with verses for ballets of a somewhat less noble and more entertaining character (n. n., 1612). Collections of verses were printed for example in the *Recueil des vers du ballet de la Royne*, 1609, of which exist two prints of identical content and format, although they were printed in two different print shops (n. n., 1609).

The evolution from festival book to the program becomes obvious when focusing the analysis on the formats of the whole production of ballet prints, which development of my database allowed me to pursue. Formats are not just an aesthetic or economic parameter, but provide significant information about the use of the print. In-folio prints, for example, were the most expensive and prestigious format and were only exceptionally used for festival books or ballet *libretti*. Furthermore, their commemorative purpose was predominant. Nonetheless, there are instances of in-folio prints that more closely resemble one-sheet prints, what the French call “*placard*”, which were often sold by peddlers. In these cases it is doubtful whether the print is related to an actual choreographic event, even if it carries the term “*ballet*” in the title. Being similar documents to pamphlets, there is a possibility that the *placard* could be misleading and that the purpose of the print was entirely different.

On the other hand, prints in-8° – the much smaller format – were used exclusively from 1600 to 1610, also for royal court ballets. In the later decades several prints of this size bear the characteristics of common prints, defined by Nicolas Petit as “*occasionnels*”: small brochures sold by the print shops for little money, a quite popular form of reading material (Nicolas, 1997, 51-3, 79). In the following decades it was the format used alongside the more frequently used format in-4°. The reason for period preference for in-4° prints, although they were more expensive, immediately emerges when one compares not only the text, but the way it is typographically organized on the different pages. A small brochure with small letters is less likely to be read in a candle-lit hall, but a print in in-4° with larger letters provides increased reading comfort, as some of the essential information is to be grasped by a glance; namely the nature and character of the entry and then perhaps the name of the performer(s). The more or less



witty and personal verses for some of the more illustrious noble dancers are not easily decrypted today, but were popular then; reading them in situ was facilitated by the in-4° format.

The first mentions regarding the distribution of verses during the performance are to be found in prints for the *Ballet de Madame – Le Triomphe de Minerve*, 1615, where ten Sibylls, after their dance, throw paper rolls with encomiastic verses for the king and the queen by René Bordier into the air (n. n., 1615, 9; Canova-Green, 2010, 35).

At the end of the description of the *Ballet de la délivrance de Renaud*, 1617, the author Étienne Durand reports that after the final *grand ballet* the festivities end with a ball, and he refers also to the reading of the printed verses, which are reproduced in the festival book:

“While the *grand bal* took place, [...] everyone was enjoying themselves reading the verses which the King and the other gentlemen of his suite gave to the ladies, about the character each of them had represented in the *entrées*.”\* (Durand, 1617, 25)

Thus in the second decade of the seventeenth century prints distributed to the spectators on the evening of the performance became customary. In the 1620s a *libretto*, in our modern understanding a program, was written, printed and distributed to the audience of a royal court ballet. They are identifiable because of the format in-4° and their title page, which shows no editorial information besides the title and sometimes the date. Several copies mention the “*Imprimerie du Roy*” or the “*Imprimerie du Louvre*”. When such an edition coexisted with another one, it is possible, that one was for the distribution among the spectators and a second one to be sold in the city. Usually the print shops had to apply for the “*privilège du roy*”, the privilege to print and sell. However, sometimes also other printers produced an edition, perhaps financed by an author or another sponsor, or printed an illicitly copied version. As VK Preston showed in her presentation at the Inaugural Conference of the Dance Studies Association, for

certain court ballets not one but several prints were produced – as in the case of the *Ballet de la Douairière de Billebahaut* – sometimes as many as seven or eight editions and/or versions and states (Preston, 2017). These were printed in different formats, by different printers, supplying different kinds of description and poetry of the event.

All categories of prints had one goal in common: they were mediums of propagation for aesthetic and political ideas as well as personal strategies, reaching the audience and people in the city – or even far beyond the city's and the kingdom's borders. Hence they became an object of inspiration and imitation, promoting the prestige of choreographic events and in particular French court ballet, thus serving a double media strategy – one for the emergence of this type of print and the other for the dissemination of the model of French court ballet. Both were imitated, adopted and adapted all over Europe. It is important to mention that the number of ballets documented by a print was by no means representative of the scope of choreographic production of this period, either in France or at the courts of the Austrian Habsburgs. When considering sources for court ballets or especially ballets outside court culture, prints are a particular, but falsely objective, object, although they continue to fulfill their major purpose of communicating about the ballet, through today and beyond. Interestingly, title pages rarely mention the name of the author. Sometimes the poets of the verses have their names printed below the last line, but it seems as if authorship was no selling point and that the prestige of this kind of functional writing was rather low. In many cases of court ballet, the texts were written by several authors. Canova-Green has been investigating some possible attributions for court ballets (Canova-Green, 198, 421-26). The fact that more than one hundred prints were published without any indication of the print shop, the place of printing and the year is also a proof that this kind of authorial and editorial product was a common and functional object. In some particular cases it might well be

that the form of the *livret de ballet* was imitated in order to publish entertaining reading material, considering for instance the quite poor, but sexually explicit verses of some of these anonymous prints. That the imitation of this type of print for political pamphlets was not impossible is proven by several examples of *mazarinades*, polemical prints against the minister Jules Mazarin (Jouhaud, 2009). And McGowan analyses the example of the *Ballet politique*, 1627, a print relating in a metaphorical manner the situation of the Thirty-Years War (McGowan, 1963, 172-4).

The prints for the *Ballet des Festes de Bacchus*, performed five times in May 1651, might serve as another example for several printed versions by one editor, but with different formats as well as textual variants, omissions and “*papillons*” - small pieces of paper printed and used to correct a print. Depending on which edition one consults, the information is not the same. The text was printed in two different sizes, two rare prints in in-folio and the more common edition in in-4°, which has become the standard size for ballet programs. For the in-4° edition, Laurent Guillo indicates three states and specifies that “for the third state the subtitles of the *III. Entrée* and the *V. Entrée* were put back and that the erroneous pagination was corrected, several names were modified for the distribution, certain pages have been partially recomposed. The content of the state is nevertheless identical, apart from the distributions”\* (Guillo, 2003, vol. II, 409). But the altered names or even the omission of names draw another picture of the ballet each time, depending on which version the reader holds in his or her hands. The main difference concerns the participation of king Louis XIV in the fourth *entrée des filoux* which is sometimes omitted. In the 6<sup>th</sup> *entrée* either Manican fils or Bonar fils were performing as a demon. In the nineteenth *entrée*, the role of a dream or a phantom is danced either by a professional dancer, Le Vacher, or the Marquis de Villequier. In several *livrets de ballet* the names, when not printed, were added in

handwriting and in one case a *papillon* for “*Le Roy*” and for “*Sainctot*”, was affixed on the page. The consequential dissemination of such variants in the prints can be traced to the printed version of this ballet by the print shop of François Boude in Toulouse, copying one of the Parisian versions printed by Ballard clearly mentioned on the title page: “*iouxte la copie de Paris*” (n. n., 1651; Benserade, 1997, t. I., 53-89). It has been established that several prints for royal ballets were reprinted in other French cities, thus spreading the knowledge and the reputation of the choreographic event. French court ballets were not only performed in royal residences, but also in the province, where French aristocrats followed the fashion of the court. In some cases, prints for these ballets still exist, although they are quite rare and their paper and print, as well as their poetic quality, is rather poor.

From 1651 all programs for French royal court ballets were printed by one print shop only: the privilege belonged to the family Ballard. The form, typographical presentation and the textual elements of these *livrets de ballet* were standardized under the reign of Louis XIV. At the same time, the court poet Isaac de Benserade was solely responsible for composing the poetry. The time for experimentation was over: all art forms, including court ballet and the appertaining prints, were put into service for the construction of the god-like image of the king in an as yet unprecedented manner (Burke, 1992). During the first half of the seventeenth century Italian court ballet, dance and music influenced and shaped the choreographic events at the courts of the Austrian Habsburgs. This changed in the second half of the century, when the Habsburgs and the Bourbons were rivaling with each other for European hegemony. The French court ballet and the festivities at the court of Versailles became a model for other European courts – which was made possible through the propagation of ballet programs, festival books and literary magazine reports.

Throughout the paper, I have illustrated some ways in which the ballets and the different types of print media correlate by retracing the emergence of the printed program as a constitutive part of the performance. I have illuminated the complexity of various cases with their different editions, variants and states as well as the consequential information they provide. However, the examples in this paper can only give a glimpse of the intricacies. In my thesis in progress, I shed more light on these different editions, states and versions. In addition, I will elucidate intentions for writing, printing and circulating prints for ballets or avatars inspired by the models of this emerging genre of authorial and editorial productions. Another important investigation is the picture each print draws from a ballet performance and in particular its dramaturgic structure and choreographic features, most of the time reflecting only a very pale shadow of these glamorous performances.

Besides the well-studied court ballets, there are still waiting for analysis those hundreds of prints mentioned above, which provide very little information at all. At the time, in general, the only information always provided by this kind of prints was the title, the order of entries and then perhaps the verses for the characters, without mentioning any kind of performance date or circumstances, nor the names of the dancers. These rather poor documents are problematic, but worthwhile to investigate. Perhaps they will reveal to us the existence of a choreographic culture flourishing in the city of Paris, alongside the royal court ballets? More ink will have to flow...

1 I am very grateful to Linda J. Tomko for having invited me and Karen Eliot to participate in the joint panel “Dance Information Travels: Three Cases in Three Centuries.”

2 Obviously case studies on ballet *libretti* exist for ballets of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, but it is particularly for the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century that research interest focuses on the narratives and forms of ballet *libretti* (Laplace-Claverie, 2001).

3 In most of French dictionaries of the seventeenth century the term *livret* has no entry. It is to be found only in the English-French dictionary by Randle Cotgrave, meaning “a pamphlet, a little booke” (Cotgrave, 1611, n. p. LIV-LOC), and in the dictionary by Antoine Furetière, where he writes that it is a diminutive and means “*petit livre*”, a small book (Furetière, 1690, n. p.).

4 Most scholars use the reprint collection edited by Paul Lacroix in six volumes (Lacroix, 1868-70). In the editions of Marie-Claude Canova-Green for the ballets for Louis XIII the exact shelf-marks of the used versions are published, together with an exact reproduction of the format and content of the title page. (Canova-Green, 2010, 2012). Unfortunately, the exact description of each edition or version would exceed by far the scope of this article.

5 All texts marked with an “\*” were translated from French by the author.

6 As a starting point, I used existing chronologies and I visited Parisian libraries and all French libraries classified as “heritage” libraries by the French cultural ministry as well as a number of libraries in Europe. I also contacted libraries in the United States of America.

7 For specific studies on the festival book see (Watanabe-O’Kelly, 2004; Rahn, 2007; Bolduc, 2016).

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