

CONVERSATIONS
ACROSS THE FIELD OF
DANCE STUDIES

Entering the Academy

Photo Credit: Tamara Tomic-Vajagic

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A word from the Editor

Dear Reader,

The call for this issue of 'Conversations across the field of Dance Studies' sought to encourage writers to consider their own experiences of 'entering the academy' and reflect upon the implications for dance when shaped by academic institutions. What happens, for example, to choreographic methodologies when they become honed to a weekly curricular delivery pattern? How are dance styles and techniques developed and transformed when part of degree programmes? In what ways do the requirements of doctoral studies alter the ways in which we reflect upon histories and approach practice?

There is no doubt that the environments in which we work and the manner in which we set about our research topics affects what we 'find', what it is possible to 'see', or to 'know', at least as much as the subject of study itself. Indeed it is worth considering the ways in which academic contexts, our teaching and other frameworks in which we operate and live, affect the choices we make in our research. Indeed we might mull over how Dance Studies as a field (however loosely framed) is changing the way we look and think about the practice and study of dancing.

I am delighted that this issue of 'Conversations' includes writings from senior scholars and those new to the dance academy, from a range of University contexts in the US, UK and AUS. Writing from their varied positions these authors give voice to personal experiences and perspectives. With a generosity of spirit they are open and transparent in their interests and forthright in their points of view. Reflecting on current modes of dance research, doctoral studies, history, pedagogy and ethics, collectively they give rise to a picture of academic life and dance scholarship.

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Researching Dance

Pitfalls of Dance in Academe

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While dance scholarship has flourished, it has also hit some bumps and caution signs for future research. "With all our effort to expand the scope of dance, we must be careful not to lose the beginnings of that scope because we have already begun to dim those early lights," said venerable modern dancer Murray Louis.¹ His comments about dance were echoed at the 2008 Dance Critics Association Meeting and also apply to dance scholarship. Reputable academic disciplines have a heritage that their researchers recognize, if only to challenge. Other hitches in dance in academe are scholars borrowing but too often misusing the theories and methods of other disciplines, misconceptions about one's sensual knowledge representing that of others, dance recording, subjectivity, and reliance on the internet.

Astonishing "Innovation" ²

Authors talk about "charting new directions of inquiry hitherto unexplored," "radical shifts in research," and "thoroughness in a scholarly field" – often without knowing the extant corpus of work. Graduate students have been told only to "look at literature of the last decade." Obviously, current research is most important in some fields of science and medicine. But who in the last ten years has replaced Plato, the Bible, or Einstein? More than a half-century of theory, method, research findings, and analyses have been lost to many contemporary dance scholars. Moreover, fieldwork data can be reinterpreted.

To read that x has not been done when, in fact, x has been done very well years ago astonishes. To extend knowledge in a particular domain requires first knowing the state of knowledge often not on the Internet.³ To cite reviews of the literature of a specific domain of dance as "excellent" and "thorough" without having read, digested, and analyzed the literature, noting omissions and erroneous statements, is problematic. What are the criteria for literature that provides the baseline for new work?

Botte and Beile (2005:3) point out, "A substantive, thorough, sophisticated literature review is a precondition for doing substantive, thorough, sophisticated research. 'Good' research is good because it advances our collective understanding." They suggest what is

needed: to identify relevant authoritative material; summarize, analyze and synthesize selected literature; distinguish what has been done from what needs to be done; place the topic within broad scholarly literature and gain new perspectives on it; clarify and resolve inconsistencies and tensions in the literature; identify methodologies and analyze advantages and disadvantages. The authors provide a Literature Review Scoring Rubric.

Some researchers claim innovation with so-called “new” semiotic, poststructuralist, postcolonialist, and postmodern methodologies that purport to unmask power relations inscribed on the dancing body or reveal fusions of different dance traditions. Related concepts that often appear as mere buzzwords include reflexivity, hegemony, globalization, multiple perspectives/truths, embodiment, and writing and rewriting the body. But since the 1920s numerous anthropologists and sociologists contributed a substantial literature on dance dealing with these issues. “Old” scholars such as sociologist J. Clyde Mitchell (1956) examined how dance reflects and influences culture and social structure within a political arena of colonized and colonizer as well as tradition and change. He showed how dance embodied ethnicity, social class, and aspirations to new identity.

To speak of African American dance, should scholars have familiarity with dances in Africa – more than a thousand different language groups and that many dance-pattern constellations?⁴ Too often researchers assert historical roots, race, sex, and politics without providing evidence. Moreover, what one person calls racism, another may see as a person’s bad manners toward everyone. Note that the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States challenge the postmodern and postcolonial rejection of ethical judgment and espousal of relativism.

Certainly dance is not the only discipline with unsubstantiated claims to “me first.” “Many would probably argue that today’s academic job market forces younger people to have this drive to impress, to promote themselves at every turn.... One of the nastiest—and unfortunately pervasive—forms of self-promotion we see being deployed is the claim of originality. Perhaps occasionally a truly original idea crops up, but let’s face it: virtually everything we do as scholars...is to find ways to describe and analyze things that people know, at some level, but do not focus on enough to be able to talk about. We might connect things in ways that are not commonly done, or invent a new terminology for ideas that have been around for time immemorial, but by and large we are not inventing the wheel. Just reinventing it. And packaging it in persuasive analytical and descriptive phrasing.... Our response to these claims of originality, more often than not, is ‘Are

they ignorant, or lying?’ Does the person making these claims just not know the history of the ideas they are espousing, the various permutations that have been used by others in the past? Are they hoping that we, the audience will not know any better, or will be sufficiently dazzled by their brilliance that we fall for their lies” (Gleach and Santiago-Irizarry 2008).

Borrowing from Other Disciplines

Much current research gives mere lip service to idioms of trendy theories. Theories should direct a scholar’s search and help to explicate research observations. Disparaged by some investigators for being static and stifling, theory can be dynamic in response to data, such as the voices of informants and objective measures of dance and related activity. Appropriation of theory and methods from other disciplines is sometimes enriching. Dance research is conducted by scholars in many academic disciplines whose members may not attend dance research conferences or publish in dance journals. Fragmentation and change within these disciplines further extends the palette of theories, methods, and dance knowledge. To be a viable discipline, then, dance must respond to major developments in other disciplines. Dance departments cannot fully encompass the theory and method of all disciplines related to dance research topics.

But when a dance researcher uses another discipline’s theory or method, is the work accountable to its standards? Are divergences explained? Dance scholars drawing upon American, African, Asian, black, critical theory, cultural, feminist, literary, multicultural, performance, and other studies have claimed, for example, the mantle of anthropology’s ethnography but often not its standards. Anthropologists state their sources: how many people they observed and interviewed and how representative these people are of a group. Anthropologists indicate what historical documents they investigated and recognize that fieldworkers are not neutral, invisible conduits mechanically recording “facts” and “truths” with objective, ideological neutralism. Ways of questioning can bias answers. Reflexivity to expose personal motives, emotions, and beliefs creates the context for the pursuit of “truths” and an account that allows the reader to understand the researcher’s position in it. Viewing dance as communication, anthropologists show the relationships between movement and meaning. Their task in translating into words the experience of their own or others’ dance encompasses the movement (text) and the surrounding spaces (context, including history); they then seek comment on their translation from the people they study, and revise as appropriate. Collaborative research is an approach to achieve excellence recognized by the discipline of dance and other related disciplines.

Sensual Knowledge and Verbal Exegesis

How can one know another person's dance experience by reporting one's own kinesthetic embodied practice of it? Contemporary dance research recognizes sensual epistemologies, a corporeal mode of knowing, and mind/body integration of cognition, feeling, and emotion that constitute realities for both performers and perceivers. However, researchers who use their own bodily movement experience as if it were that of another person's dance to describe the way sensation is organized and felt by that person may well be speculative, narcissistic, and ethnocentric. Even English-speaking people of the same culture and place can be distinguished by their voices. Everyone carries a distinct repertory of biological characteristics, cultural understandings, and beliefs.⁵

Reliance on an informant's verbal exegesis alone for description and analysis may also preclude understanding a people's dance. The language of dance is nonverbal and not always easily translatable into words—many features of dance generally lay beyond the conscious awareness of dancers and viewers—but movement analysts are familiar with the elements comprising dance. Krebs (1975), in a valuable approach subsequently followed by other researchers, used film playback of Thai dance for Thai informants to elicit meaning. However, even when an informant comments on dance, it may be difficult to know what actually is being said: words often have multiple meanings; things taken for granted may not be articulated; lies, rationalizations, jokes, and metaphors are possibilities. Like poetry, dance is often layered with many meanings, and like a Rorschach inkblot test, each person interprets dance on the basis of individual experience, situation, and culturally influenced perception. To discover a culture's perspectives on dance, how many people does one ask?

When a group does not have verbalized aesthetic views about its dance culture, the researcher's intervention in trying to elicit verbalizations rather than observe activity may trigger a new concept that is the researcher's artifact. If a group does not analyze the dance it performs, a researcher may then rely on the disciplinary heritage in a scholarly field, even though it may be ethnocentric. The analytic categories, however, should be viewed as open-ended and alterable in light of new theory and research. Usually we want to know more about the researched than the researcher.

Dance Recording

Recording dance is invaluable for preserving history, reconstructing dance, and analyzing dance. But using notation in the field has

problems. Seeing is creating meaning, and even highly trained movement analysts may variously perceive, interpret, and notate a dance. Accurate and speedy notation of a dance in its field context is nearly impossible because some dances may be performed only once during a research visit, and some dancers may be unable or unwilling to replicate a performance. Film and video make actions more objectively accessible and permit valid and reliable analysis and reanalysis of detailed units of movement in slow motion,⁶ especially when viewed through a grid-marked lens. Of course, film and video are not palpably three-dimensional, and there is selectivity in what is filmed and how. Consequently, an ideal situation would involve several cameras to obtain different perspectives and samples of time and place.

Dance research requires competence in movement analysis, but one can learn the concepts of a notation system without using the notation itself. Verbally articulating movement analysis allows a broader dissemination of dance research. But, "How will a simple notation which is sophisticated in the interpretation of form account for the empirical content of ... a dance?" asks Layiwola (1999:104). He faults Western notation for being unable to deal with empathy and story line.

Although tools existed to analyze the physical movements of dance, for example, the Laban, Benesh, and Eskhol notation systems, no tool existed for probing for meaning in the movements. In response to this need, I developed a semantic grid to serve as a tool for creating and discovering meaning in movement. The grid, which evolved through the exploration of semiotics and the efforts of numerous dancers and researchers attempting to make sense of dances in different parts of the world, represents a broad canvas of possible ways in which dancers embody the imagination. The grid's concepts helped to shape my analyses of dance movement in studies of gender, children, and American theater.

Internet Resources

For some researchers, the traditional library has become irrelevant (Craig 2008). And for some, if information isn't online, it doesn't exist. The keyword search on the internet overlooks books and articles that aren't digitized, and what gets digitized is partially market driven. For instance, "Columbia University has converted less than one-tenth of one percent of its special-collections material" (p. 31). Many depositories cannot afford to digitize their materials. Moreover, old manuscripts with typographical errors can throw off keyword searches and impede database analysis.

So?

The big question is what do we want to know? For example, how do effectively communicative dances evolve? How do the processes dif-

fer over time and in various cultures? What is the mind-body relationship in dance, the intertwining of cognition, emotion, and kinesiology? What are career motivations and restraints to becoming a dancer? How does the role of the critic impact choreographers, dancers, companies, and audiences? What happens to the dancers and spectators in a performance? How can a company appeal to diverse audiences? How does dance mark various personal and group identities and toward what end?

An interrelated question to what do we want to know is, what difference would the answer make to the advancement of knowledge? There are quests for a fundamental understanding and for solving problems. An issue is, how can the topic we want to investigate be carried out so that the contributions to fundamental understanding are as large as possible? Another concern is how can we situate dance research so that it contributes to practice, such as better choreography, dance training, health, education, and the public appreciation of dance? Then we link the question to the theory, methodology, and method of the discipline(s) most relevant to seeking the answer.

Notwithstanding some of my observations and concerns, I am delighted with the vibrant explosion of excellent dance research articles, books, organizations, journals, dance studies in universities, and dance education K-12. But reputable academic disciplines recognize their roots and offshoots upon which knowledge grows and develops. The effort to be at the forefront and recognized as first to do something in "dance" at the expense of being wrong and superficial does not advance knowledge. Rigorous work is needed to combat the rhetoric of innovation and cutting edge against the backbone reality of continuity, change, and accuracy.

Notes

¹ Keynote address at the Dancing in the Millennium Conference, Washington, D.C., July 2000.

² Reading, producing, and reviewing dance research in various disciplines for nearly half a century provides a distinct perspective. See www.judithanna.com.

³ See, e.g., Fleshman 1986.

⁴ Hanna 1987; Dagan 1997.

⁵ See Hanna 1983 on different perceptions of emotion of audience members at eight different dance concerts, American and Asian.

⁶ See Hanna 1989.

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Doctoral Studies – Three Perspectives

Dancing at the doctoral level: looking back, and the move forward between 1975 and 2008.

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The new style of this publication¹ and its first contributions tempt me to respond with reflections on the doctoral experience and process over some thirty years. From the list of suggested topics for this issue I suppose mine falls into the category of what excites me (still..) about the changing mode and positioning of dance within graduate studies.

Dancers, dance students at all levels, and indeed, academics, still face the incredulity of others (and sometime ridicule) at their practice of dance, and particularly the idea that it is suitable subject matter for advanced study, yet while I understand, I invite the reader to reflect on what it must have been like, more than thirty years ago, to begin doctoral studies in England and to take heart from the astounding progress we have (together) made. I am not asking for sympathy, it can be an advantage to be a pioneer in a new subject.

We are beset historically by binaries and remain peculiarly attached to them, (body and soul/mind; the dancer and the dance etc., etc). They sometimes work to our advantage as we seek to emphasise the non-verbal, the imaginative and poetic. Although I normally reject them, anxious to show how irrelevant they are, and how dangerous, carrying the value of theory over practice, mind over body, male over female, etc. I choose to present this in a series of contrasts between then and now, to demonstrate just how far we have come.

So, as I often ask my students, where were you in 1975 (if a sentient being at all) and what were you doing? I had completed some ten years of dancing and teaching dance to graduate level in the U.K. (though this barely existed), and had just finished my own master's degree. Therein lies a story, since only by re-interpreting the tenets of a physical education programme and working around regulations was I able to complete it entirely in dance.

Where there were no postgraduate master's level courses in dance (in the UK), there are many now, some free-standing (UK) and some in effect integrated into a doctoral programme (US), often combining practice with theory or having a particular emphasis on one or the other (MA or MFA).

Similarly, there were no 'departments' or 'programmes' in dance as such at doctoral level in U.K./European universities, and few indeed, in the US. As I contemplated doctoral studies I knew of no-one else, anywhere in the world doing this. In fact, there were several people, scattered in strange departments, in several countries, but there was no real network of communication for dance in academia. I don't dismiss Laban (then the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance) and recognise that it has innovated in many ways, but it is part of the conservatoire tradition rather than a conventional UK university, and its academia of which I speak. The challenges are different.

As another historical aside, the job of the student researcher was painstakingly hard, finding sources was complicated and fraught with difficulty. The New York Public Library Dance Catalogue was only just available (multi-volume and very expensive) – no on-line stuff then – the internet did not even exist. Everything was paper based. To read newspaper reviews one had to go to the Newspaper Library in the outer reaches of London (and not all regional papers were there) and trawl through paper or microfilm. Its opening hours were limited, and much time was laboriously spent trawling through paper volumes. Trying to find books at the British Library could be tedious, sometimes having been destroyed in WW2, but almost always in a stack somewhere that took 2-3 days to retrieve. It was fascinating of course in dealing with the actual documents but incredibly time consuming, limiting the time spent on other aspects of research and in some ways limiting the very horizons of what was possible. In contrast, last week's news was of the 200 year history of the London Times now becoming available to anyone, anywhere in the world, via the internet.

Neither was there a sense of research community. Bear in mind that SDHS/CORD were embryonic North American organisations, while the British Society for Dance Research only began in 1982 and there was no European network of any kind. Some of us attached ourselves to research organisations and read publications in drama, history, physical education, music, anthropology, French literature etc. and this still continues, but it could not provide a subject specific network or support structure or research context. In all those domains one was 'different', 'odd', somehow not quite legitimate, and constantly

attracted by the power of long-standing subjects which seemed to have it all sorted. If we now publish in the journals of other disciplines we do so by choice, not necessity since we have our own research journals.

Now we have regular major international conferences (CORD/SDHS) and other occasional meetings in many countries, of varying length and regularity - the World Dance Alliance is gaining strength in bringing scholars together world-wide. We also present our work at conferences primarily devoted to other fields, music, history, performance, gender studies etc, but again by choice, not necessity.

Thirty-five years on I read with a degree of envy, but primarily gratification and amazement, of the publications we produce, of the profiles of those putting themselves forward for office with CORD/SDHS/SDR, of the posts that are now available in universities, and of the subject matter of the research that we attempt. It was so hard then, to find like-minded colleagues, to develop a sense of a discipline at all, to locate and share common concerns and issues.

It is so easy now, comparatively – I know many will not agree, but imagine what it was like to be the only full time PhD student in Europe (as far as I knew). In 1975 it was challenging in a way that it is no longer, since others have gone before, have graduated, have taken up university posts, have written impressive articles and books, have themselves developed university programmes where none formerly existed.

Many of those early PhDs were broad in scope, sketching areas of the discipline, constructing relatively straightforward histories, positioning the activity and the study of it. In my own thesis I attempted a conceptualisation of the discipline as a whole (what arrogance!) which, in the absence of any such work, seemed essential to me. Faced with an undergraduate curriculum that consisted in learning Laban's theories, using them in creating choreography and in teaching, I am sure I was not alone in asking why we were doing this or why our concerns were so limited compared with degree courses in other arts. There was no explanation of who Laban was, or why his work was important, neither could we see any of it in the theatre (post-war abhorrence of all things German). Somewhat similarly, it was on the basis of very little theatre experience that American Modern dance took over higher education. Neither was totally satisfactory while now, however, we have an increasingly rich, home grown (European) range of dance forms to enjoy and study.

In contrast, PhD theses (dissertations in the US) have become more like those in other disciplines, with a narrower focus and greater depth of analysis, gradually building the conceptual landscape of our subject. I often quote an instance of one I tutored where I became seriously concerned that the whole thesis (75,000 words, 200 pages) would essentially focus on one phrase of the first section of one 20 minute dance work! It didn't, in the end, but it was a fine example of the potential depth of analysis that had become possible.

To cut to the end, since then, over 28 years at the University of Surrey, I have facilitated the development of more than 100 MA students and more than 40 PhD students (with colleagues to whom I am indebted, particularly June Layson, Theresa Buckland, Giannandrea Poesio, Sherril Dodds, Janet O'Shea, among others), and the work continues.

Add this to the world-wide total (and I invite colleagues to fill out the picture in their own countries and institutions) and we have a discipline that has moved well beyond the nascent and embryonic, a discipline that can stand alongside other arts and cultural disciplines, potentially equal to all.

I have direct evidence of this since the examination of the PhD in Europe requires an oral/viva/public statement conducted by experienced examiners from outside the student's home university. In these examinations respected scholars from other disciplines, and increasingly from dance, judge the quality of the work, not those who tutored it. It delights me that, without exception, the written/performed thesis is seen to be (at least) the equal of those in literature, sociology, theatre, music, anthropology etc. We need the respect of colleagues in related fields, and it is a function of our confidence, and the quality of our students' work, that it is readily forthcoming.

While this is not the place to conduct an extended discussion of types of thesis/dissertation it is important also to note the shift from a rigid, theoretical/empirical set of values and judgements in evaluating research, to a wider-ranging theoretical base and a willingness to understand that research takes place in many modes and with many methodologies, some employed in the library, some in the dance studio, some in the street, some in talking to others. Which we choose depends on the research questions that we pose – how might they best be addressed? By what means? And hence how best reported and presented? An inter-related series of questions, dependent one upon the other. DVD and CD Rom already play a part in the final product.

That we can ask research questions with clarity and expect detailed and thoughtful answers is something to be celebrated. We have moved a huge distance forward in the thirty years that I have witnessed. We have a clear sense of centre for the discipline and an expanding set of inter-related disciplines at our disposal, disciplines which we are capable of understanding and using to illuminate the diverse but highly particularised questions to which the dancing body and the dance event give rise.

1. The former 'Newsletter' of the Society of Dance History Scholars was redesigned as 'Conversations Across the Field of Dance Studies' 2007.

For a full listing of University of Surrey PhD theses in Dance Studies, or to contribute to an ongoing survey and analysis of doctoral research please contact Janet Lansdale, Emeritus Professor, at j.lansdale@surrey.ac.uk or j.Lansdale@waitrose.com

The shaping territory of Australian post graduate dance education

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WA Academy of Performing Arts

Within postgraduate education, disciplines concentrate on the conceptual or theoretical tenets of their particular positioning, giving only a nodding acknowledgment to the fact that these tenets probably emanated from specific milieus in Europe or the US. Knowledge, in spite of Lyotard and Thébaud's observations about its partiality and localisation (Lyotard & Thébaud, 1985), is generally still perceived as universal, even though that precise term may have slipped off the radar.

The nuances that place inflects upon knowledge provides the focus of this discussion and has been prompted by a collaborative research project between the Queensland University of Technology, Deakin University and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts at Edith Cowan University, *Dancing between diversity and consistency: Refining assessment in postgraduate degrees in dance*. Over the course of interviews and forums conducted across the states of Australia, participants suggested that the geographical situated-ness of Australian post graduate dance studies produces a valuing of these degrees that is calculably different from that expressed in equivalent studies in other parts of the world. Place, in other words, impacts on the perceived value of phenomena because place constructs its particularities, its valleys and plateaus, its creeks and harbours and its own histories.

Stuart Laing and Tara Brabazon caution against what they perceive to be a paradigm shift in higher degrees towards industry control (the vocational turn) and individualism (degrees to advance personal graduate salaries), principally because arts' courses have been directed to bolster the 'creative economy.' They raise a valid criticism for those who seek to reaffirm the freedom of academic endeavours but their position does assume that a close relationship between academia and industry is necessarily negative or limiting. By contrast, in the Australian environment, cultural undervaluing and its resultant lack of resources unite with embodiment's late entry into academic circles to make the conjunction between the two spheres potentially fluid and constructive.

Legitimation of dance as a fully-fledged disciplinary body of knowledge proved a prominent response in our interviews with candidates, supervisor/examiners and community members alike. Access to resources; reflective time; theoretical and conceptual understandings expressed in, through and about practice; and investigative critical debate were perceived to be those attributes which contribute to the validation process. Taking this legitimising momentum into account presents dance as a special case within 21st century university environments that counters arguments forwarded by commentators such as Laing and Brabazon. Arguably, a certain degree of such a case's specificity is due to cultural formations driven by place.

Knowledge and its territory/ies

Excellence, independent critical thought and, most particularly, originality are held to be the criteria of assessment in doctoral studies (Denicolo 2003; Pakes 2003; Powell & Green 2003; Cantwell & Scevak 2004; Brooks 2005; Piccini 2005; Barrett 2007). Since there is little dissent about those particular attributes, the statement suggests that examiners should not encounter major difficulties in determining their judgements. Again that assumption about universality slides around in the background. In actuality however, no matter what the discipline, scrutiny of the three returned examiner reports for each doctoral candidate patently shows that consistency is not the norm. The usual answer to this divergence is that each disciplinary knowledge set is split into a number of variable approaches following certain theoretical lineages such as Marxism, feminism or, splitting finer hairs, French feminism. While this observation rings true to through lines found in master/disciple and institution/graduate transmissions, it does not obviate the undergirding patterns wrought by place and/or by particular people being in a certain place. Big-picture culture and limited enclaves bound to specialised principles are not homogenous across a terrain but, as in relationships in a complex ecosystem, neither do they escape the grounding of their landscape.

In other words, even before examining the particular case of dance in Australian higher degrees, place is implicit in how human groups know as well as in what they know. Knowledge, to echo Lyotard and Thébaud's maxim, is localised, selective and partial.

Distance, histories and cultural traits

So what might be the particular characteristics of place that have enabled a discipline and its proponents to gain credibility and imaginative expansion through post graduate engagement?

The most stereotypical factor, distance and its associated state of isolation is a promising point of departure to examine specific influences of place on dance doctorates down-under. Distance encompasses many meanings such as the scale of the continent's landmass that has, so the story goes, produced dancers with athletic expansiveness. There is an apparent intrepidity of approach that contrasts with the highly detailed introversion and compact group work of their European or US counterparts. Such extroverted physicality also derives from cultural isolation, prompting pioneering solutions when issues or opportunities of change arise. When one of our respondents replied to a question about the advantages of embodied research, he/she replied that it generated "a way of thinking about research that differs from the tradition." There has been, and to some extent still is, a pioneer spirit about the practice-based endeavour that necessitates emergent thinking from all involved; candidates, supervisors, examiners and university research departments. Needless to say this participant's response was tempered by adding that "the field [needs] to articulate where this approach connects with traditional research paradigms and where it departs from them and why it departs from them is a very important task." Tradition, therefore, is not an imprisoning factor so much as a sounding board on which ideas and actions can be gauged.

Backtracking to pick up some historical contexts of Australian dance's emergence in the early 20th century, there is a clear pattern of visiting artists, mainly European, who one by one, began to stay in the 'new' country, initiating ballet schools and later performance companies. This movement produced training regimes wedded to a private system that educated Australians in ballet and some modern dance techniques but could not overcome the pervasive cultural cringe which implicitly dictated the dancers' need to go overseas to be 'finished.' That situation inevitably instigated another variant of the pattern in the 1970s of returning Australians who brought the latest disciplinary ideas, markedly from the US, drawing on a close association between new performance modes and university education. These returnees, by and large, initially formed small contemporary companies and later became the generation who currently head dance departments across the country. As artistic directors come educators, they initiated undergraduate training situations and joined with another small band of practitioners, who during the 90s had ventured via the backdoor into masters and doctorates through other disciplines (history, education, administration, literature, cultural studies), to gradually introduce research degrees in dance and, more profoundly, practice-based PhDs. The strong practitioner presence in the Australian scene

forged courses from an amalgam of influences from traditional PhDs, the US Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) programmes catering for artistic enterprises and their own knowledge of the profession.

So research in the practices of dance emerged essentially from within the profession itself where an emphasis on the attainment of technical performance virtuosity is, in most instances, inextricably linked with experimentation and innovation via choreographic processes. In simplified terms, this situation means that dance research deviated in two respects from the usual conventions of academic study. Firstly, the practice-based researcher is dependent on specialized and embodied theory acquired as much in his/her performance profession as in undergraduate training and, secondly, high level researchers/dance-makers, generally choose to undertake postgraduate study after some ten to twenty years as professional practitioners. Both points suggest that there is a logical progression of advancement in the discipline which involves both industry and academia.

This is not to say that there are not complications and contradictions involved within the relationship. Some respondents affirm research as integral to practice: "there are some artists who constantly question their own practice as a natural thing: so I think if you're the sort of person who has curiosity and asks questions anyway then you're going to question your own practice and I suspect that's one of the attributes required of a good researcher." On the other hand, oppositional voices still point to practitioner fears of being misunderstood in academic environments and the changed nature of practice when exposed to academic expectations. In spite of the varying agendas, very few responses utterly negated the significance of the relationship between academia and the profession within the Australian situation. Suggesting ways in which that relationship may continue to work to the benefit of all concerned is the challenge ahead.

Aussie make-do resourcefulness or negotiation driven by limited means is another factor for dancers who have used other disciplines to gain their knowledge credentials or for course coordinators who have steered practice-based doctorates through university regulatory systems. Such resourcefulness, however, additionally touches on a cultural suspicion which gives weight to contemporary enquiries while downplaying ballet, opera and legitimate theatre as potentially viable investigative forms. Here the tall poppy syndrome plays its part, dismissing perceived elitism that may interfere with staunchly held democratic beliefs. However, the situation is complex, involving a

number of other variables not least being the place of Indigenous and other ethnic cultures' presence in the practice-based repertoire.

Interestingly, the overwhelming affirmation of critical dialogue as crucial to the art form's well-being suggests an emphasis on the intellectual capacities of practice. No doubt the implied intellectualism of the study itself prompted such responses but this emphasis might also be explained by embodiment's sense of inadequacy and unfamiliarity within higher degree contexts and/or by the impediments to understanding embodied knowledge that assumptions embedded in word language tend to emphasise. There may also be a peculiarly Australian slant to the perceptions received which the study has not expressly solicited. In contrast to European culture, contemporary dance forms are not considered to be a subject for general debate but something obscure and esoteric. Consequently, the legitimisation which university environments can give becomes paramount. This situation provokes both a need to comply with the perceived rigour of academic structures and perhaps, fortuitously, explorations of the thought/language/conceptualisation of practice to a depth required by higher degree studies and by the profession.

This need to bolster the credibility of Australian contemporary dance lies in tension with perceptions that nominate contemporary dance as the only legitimate investigative dance genre. I exaggerate the two positions to point out contradictions born of pitting the cultural levelling of the mateship ideal against a national undervaluing of the arts bred in part from a defensive response to isolation geographically and culturally from white Australians' European roots.

The topology of dance research thus involves the histories of practitioners who have wrought an alignment between academia and the profession; tendencies towards an expansive physicalisation and a corresponding formation of new traditions free of embedded rules and expectations; and a disciplinary validation which, though complex and sometimes contradictory, builds on the investigative nature of choreography. The latter point, tied to the tenuous recognition of contemporary arts on the local scene, also encompasses the relative economic impoverishment of the profession in comparison with performing arts' departments within universities, which naturally is another point in favour of affiliation.

Finally, when everybody else extols the significance of creativity, the respondents of our research leave this term and its associated imaginative renderings of human experience aside. Does this perspective mean that dance artists are no longer interested in the serendipity and accidents of play? It seems more likely that the

pressures upon these artists of cultural undervaluing and competition from screen-based 'do-it-yourself' platforms means that live performance itself is under threat.

Fortunately, resistance to adversity is firmly planted in the Aussie spirit, so arresting the momentum of the dance, intellectually informed or otherwise, will be a difficult if not a creative impossibility in a land stretched open for movement.

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A Visual Artist in Dance Academia – A note on the virtues of multidisciplinarity

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Photos: Dance by Aimee Dawn Robinson

Photo credit: Tamara Tomic-Vajagic

The photographs are part of the visual-dance project *Gledala sam te kako igras-l* Watched Your Dance that choreographer-improviser Aimée Dawn Robinson and Tamara Tomic-Vajagic collaborated on during the Summer of 2007. The idea for the project emerged through our graduate course Interdisciplinary Collaborations (in Toronto at York University).

It feels comforting to keep rediscovering the multidisciplinary spirit of current dance academia. Perhaps this openness came to dance quite naturally – not a surprising quality in a complex, multifaceted performing art. Still, even if the broadness of interests is innate to dance, it is perhaps still useful to remind ourselves to continue carefully nurturing this strong streak in the academic context.

After having completed studies in two different universities, and just entering the programme in the third one, I can safely assert that there still exist differences in the cross-disciplinary collaborations. My fellow artists in Belgrade universities are yet to fully discover that it is possible to cross over fields during the course of their studies, or to collaborate with the different fields within the academia. Like many of them, I attended the coveted and otherwise progressive programme that regrettably has not changed its operations for several decades. With all the great qualities that the Fine Arts school was famous for, the interdisciplinary discourse was not high on its list of priorities. In the sizeable arts university the segregation of departments was complete, although in their own rights all the faculties had built comprehensive and gratifying programmes. But, the four departments (Drama and Film, Music, Applied Arts and Design and Fine Arts) were scattered all over the city, with no shared facilities, libraries or lecture halls. The students did not run into each other, and had no information about each others' seminars and workshops. Such operational separation did not promote the opportunities to venture into mutual projects, except outside of university confines. After five years of rewarding hard work, the students found themselves with plenty of information and admirable skills in their respective chosen fields. But, the understanding of the wider cultural context could have easily eluded them.

Fast forward ten years. After being engaged in theatre reviewing and dance promoting projects, I enrolled in graduate Dance Studies in Toronto. I was one of the rare visual artists – turned dance researchers in the programme, but the other colleagues I met all fostered the fascinating breadth of interests. This is how I fully realized the merry possibilities of interdisciplinary studies. The choreographers, musicians and dancers revealed their research areas that gravitated toward other fields such as Social and Political Thought, Community Organization, Medievalism and Disability Studies. In some classes it was interesting to have the graduate students from different departments, now interested in understanding certain aspects of the performing arts. Some of those young scholars slowly revealed their inner dancer, and we were privy to the first

solos choreographed by an anthropologist, a musicologist and an environmentalist. How much we have all brought to each other will be measured in the future, but we are all probably improved researchers because we saw our respective disciplines interplay and interact with one another.

On a personal note, during the course of the MA studies in dance, it was comforting to spot the obvious connections between my education in the visual arts and dance. The anatomy classes from fine arts were very handy in dance. The movement analysis process recalled the exercises in sharp observation during the Quick Sketching and Drawing. As the arts movements and periods intertwined and overlapped, the five years of art history I studied, greatly helped placing the information into context. Certainly, there were some puzzling moments too – for example, the historic timelines of the art movements and periods did not always align in fine arts and dance. The terminology particular to the visual arts did not always transition smoothly into my dance research ideas. But all the bumps and bewilderment felt healthful as they made one rethink the ideas from alternative lenses, and helped to clarify the structuring of research methodology.

The cultivation of multidisciplinary programmes seems so very important as it is evident that there are plenty of important overlapping issues where the disciplines can learn from others' examples. For us art students, the possibilities for collaborations are empowering and inspirational. The potential from these interactions often outlasted the university days. This note is meant as an encouragement to my fellow dance students to keep fully capitalizing on all the possibilities of cross-disciplinary communications, to continue expanding interests and auditing courses in other departments, and to continually request and promote the new ideas for the interdisciplinary courses at our respective universities.

Now, as a student entering Dance studies in a different institution, it feels uplifting to once again discover the vast opportunities for multidisciplinary work. It also feels good to return to the Visual Arts projects and conversations, and hopefully approach them with an expanded outlook.

Re-entering History

Introducing Baroque Dance to Undergraduate Music Students: the Terpsichore Project

Sarah McCleave
Queen's University Belfast
and
Edith Lalonger
Paris

Introduction

On 8 May 2008, Queen's University Belfast was the site of an exciting modern revival of G.F. Handel's *Terpsichore* (London, 1734) an opera prologue which was specially written to showcase the talents of dancer-choreographer Marie Sallé (1709?-1756). This prologue conveys a celebration conducted by Apollo and the Muses, during which the sung roles introduce affects which are then demonstrated by Terpsichore as Muse of Dancing. The Belfast production was directed by Dr Sarah McCleave, a lecturer at the School of Music and Sonic Arts at Queen's University Belfast; Edith Lalonger created the choreography and performed the title-role. Student singers Marcella Walsh, Nathan Morrison, and Clara Costley took the singing roles, while Queen's graduate Geoffrey Higgins directed the choir and student orchestra. Undergraduate Film students made a recording; "The Trials of Erato", a short documentary which was created by them, can be viewed on YouTube UK .

Background to the Teaching Project

As a trained musicologist who is also a dance historian, most of my teaching has been on topics relating to baroque music. I have been a lecturer at Queen's for a decade now, and was looking for ways to refresh my oldest module, "Opera in England from Purcell to Handel." This normally runs in a traditional lecture format, with students being assessed on written essays and seminar presentations. In the spirit of wanting to engage them more directly with the repertory, I decided in spring 2007 to put on an actual production of an opera. I realized from the module's pre-enrollment that I had an ideal cast to stage Giovanni Bononcini's *Camilla*, an Italian opera which had become a firm favorite on the London stage in the first three decades of the

eighteenth century. My Head of School was so taken by the project that he offered me funding from the School's Innovation Fund to bring over Ian Caddy, a leading specialist in baroque gesture, for a series of workshops. The students were facing a steep learning curve, as they had a very limited experience of this repertory (mostly confined to singing the odd aria from Handel oratorios); it was also their first opera production. Initially taken aback by the level of commitment I expected from them, they all became enthusiastic learners during their first workshop with Ian, who has a very sympathetic manner which helped to build their confidence. During the three months of rehearsal, I learned a great deal about teaching from watching and helping them to master their parts. My pre-conceptions about what was obvious and what was intuitive were completely undermined, and I became a firm convert to the notion that practical projects facilitate deep learning. The performance element not only engaged them more directly with the repertory, but connected me more directly to them, and to their learning experience.

The 'Terpsichore' Project and the Student Learning Experience

Student response was so enthusiastic that I resolved to attempt another production, and instantly thought of Handel's *Terpsichore*, as I had long wanted to work with Edith on a piece from Sallé's repertory. This project could benefit the School's string players as well as the singers, for the discipline of accompanying a dancer would be a new and valuable experience for them. The string players – whose performance experience was mainly within the Classical and Romantic repertory, would also have to become accustomed to baroque bowing patterns and a far more articulate playing style.

In the autumn semester, we had a visit from baroque dancer Philippa Waite as part of an international Bach Symposium, and I arranged that the string players should have an opportunity to play one or two of the dances from *Terpsichore* for her (she danced while they played); they were also encouraged to attend one of her dance workshops to learn a few core movements, as well as a step or two. As a former student of Philippa's, I knew she would be good at putting any unconfident students at their ease, and that she would be very effective at explaining the rhythmic concepts to them. Student enjoyment of the workshops was evident from the relaxed yet engaged atmosphere at them, and learning journals returned at the end of the opera module revealed they instantly realized the importance of offering a very steady accompaniment for the dancer. All were surprised, however, to discover that they had been taking liberties with the tempo as each had been convinced they were already playing "in time".

Once the opera module started in February, I knew it was important to re-enforce the lessons learned in the autumn, so incorporated some dance warm-up exercises into each lecture, and also had the students attempt to walk to various recordings of baroque dance music, deliberately selecting some examples where the performers did not observe strict time. This direct experience of trying to move to dance music proved beneficial, as several students noted in their learning journals. (In an ideal world, I would have had them all learn baroque dance on a regular basis for a year or so before the production, but this was not practical.)

Edith came over for an intensive day's rehearsal about a month before the performance; tempos were adjusted, the orchestra's sense of pulse and rhythm were further secured and enlivened, and the singers were particularly inspired by Edith's very expressive performance (after seeing Edith, it was notable that their faces became more expressive and they were more willing to experiment). We entered the final month of rehearsals with a renewed clarity of purpose, and thus were able to use the dress rehearsal to polish the performance. During the three months of lectures and rehearsals, the string players had not only taken on board a new style of bowing, but had to adopt an entirely different role within the ensemble to that of an orchestral musician. Each of their learning journals expressed an appreciation for the *active* role which was required of them, first learning general principals concerning baroque performance practice and then applying these, and finally absorbing their experience of accompanying the dancer and using this to project and articulate the music in a very stylish and accomplished manner.

Sources for the 'Terpsichore' Project

While the students-learners were faced with a stimulating range of challenges, Edith was essentially offered a blank page with which to start her choreography, for there are no notated sources relating to the original choreography, nor even any eye-witness accounts of Sallé's performance. Handel's autograph and performing score are now lost, so we don't have the benefit of any information which might have been contained in them (experience of working with these sources for other works to which Sallé danced, however, suggests no information concerning the choreography would have been contained within them). One important source is the libretto, which makes explicit the affects or moods which *Terpsichore* is meant to convey: "Joy and Mirth"; "Ardent Love"; "Hope and Fear". Contemporary theatrical and musical sources can give indications about the general practical and aesthetic principles to which Sallé may have worked, but we have no notations for any of

Sallé's choreographies, and the few eye-witness accounts convey the effect of her work, but not the detail of how it was executed.

To create a choreography in the style of the beginning of the 18th century I use first of all the vocabulary of steps described in the treatises from that period: Pierre Rameau, *Le maître à danser* (1725) Feuillet's *Chorégraphie ou l'art de décrire la dance* (1700) or dances in Feuillet's notations are good examples.

To recreate the style of expression is more difficult. The music is my first source of course! The music gives the general character and points to the most important moments to bring out. In Handel's *Terpsichore*, the musical gestures are quite clear and inspire the structure of my choreography. To respect the style of performance at the beginning of the 18th century, I had to study theatre gestures from books and also paintings of that period. Marie Sallé comes from an actor's family and I believe that she was influenced by theatrical conventions. So I tried to blend theatre gesture with dancing's academic arm movements. To express a sentiment, I think about the fact that human sentiments never change from century to century! Sadness in the 18th century must have had the same body language as it does today: that means the person is "retired into themselves"; if I have to express happiness, the natural way to be is to use expansive movements. This is something very simple but universal that I try to keep in mind and it means that I also have to be careful of the character and style of the movements.

One difficulty that arises when creating a choreography is being obliged to work with a recording before rehearsing with live musicians (this is because we don't have the opportunity to work hours and hours together). Therefore, the choreography is based on a specific interpretation of the music which could be quite different from the interpretation of the musicians with whom you will work. So I had to review my work after the first meeting because I believe that the dance has to reflect the musical ideas. The conductors and the choreographer have to express the same ideas to make it convincing! I always like to work with students because they are open enough to reach that goal, and at Queen's University, Belfast we did!

Conclusion

Edith created a stylish and expressive interpretation of Terpsichore's role, and completely over-turned the students' image of baroque dance (learning journals revealed that they were surprised at how expressive Edith was in performance). Audience reception was highly enthusiastic,

and I am already looking forward to next year's project – Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*.



Marcella Walsh as Erato



Edith Lalonger as Terpsichore

Reflections on Writing a Biography of Martha Hill

Elizabeth McPherson
Montclair State University

Martha Hill was a prominent dance educator for more than seventy years during the course of the twentieth century. She was the founding director of three degree-granting college dance programs or departments (New York University, Bennington College, and Juilliard) and two summer dance festivals (The Bennington School of the Dance and Connecticut College School of the Dance/American Dance Festival). These dance programs were early and diverse models that other colleges and universities followed in establishing their own. I wrote my doctoral dissertation on Hill and then re-worked the material into a book (*The Contributions of Martha Hill to American Dance and Dance Education, 1900-1995*), just published with Edwin Mellen Press. It was a lengthy process and a learning process.

Selecting Materials

One major issue that I struggled with was what to include and what to leave out. While writing my dissertation, I read a biography of a choreographer that took an in depth look at his personal life. I came to wonder, why? I didn't see the need for detailed descriptions of sexual encounters (like from a romance novel) that then were not linked in any way to his career. Reading these personal details coincided with my needing to make decisions on what parts of Hill's life I would include and exclude.

I heard and read bits of information about Hill's relationships prior to her marriage, including her relationship with her husband when he was still married to his first wife, incapacitated by illness. I had to decide how to deal with what was essentially rumor that, however plausible and believable, I did not feel was fully substantiated. How can we know for sure what went on in private between two people who are no longer alive? Are these events brought up as possibilities? And if they are brought up as possibilities, will some people assume that they are fact? If these are left out, does it forego a sense of the humanness of the person, making them seem more iconic than personable?



Photo credit: Donald McKayle, William Louthier, Martha Hill, Mabel Robinson, Dudley Williams, and Pina Bausch at Juilliard, 1959-60
Photo courtesy of The Juilliard School Archives

In the final version, my writing delved deeply into Hill's teaching and mentoring but did not include parts of her personal life that did not appear to have bearing on the issues of importance to me and to the focus of my book. Personal details I included are substantiated through letters, first-hand accounts (often Hill's), and other means, such as Hill's wedding announcement.

Another issue that arose was how to convey Hill's personality and way of dealing with her students and colleagues. What had become apparent during my interviews with my four participants, as well as with other people, was that while Hill helped some people enormously in their careers, there were others whom she did not. She made their lives difficult as students, and then did not help them when they graduated. One woman confided in me that Hill controlled all the dance teaching jobs on the east coast for years, and, of course, these jobs went to people she liked. There were those to whom I spoke who would not say anything much about Hill, which led me to think they were going by the "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything" or "Don't speak ill of the dead" rules. I did not want to ignore this part of Hill because it was an aspect of whom she was—she was a complex person with faults and attributes. In addition, I felt it was important to validate the experiences of people who did not develop the warm personal relationships with Hill that many of her students did.

Implications for the Field

Moving forward towards the end of my process, I found that the study of Hill's life and career informs the fields of dance and dance education in many ways. First, Martha Hill was a phenomenal mentor to those to whom she chose to be. Over the course of a seventy-five year career, this was an enormous number of people whom she remembered by name, and even remembered personal details about their lives such as family members' names. She followed her students' careers, as evidenced in her papers, through large amounts of correspondence, performance programs, photos, and newspaper clippings. At the end of her life, she clipped weekly something about one of her students. They were, by this time, dancing in almost every major modern company, many ballet companies, and even directing quite a few. I find this attention to her students a model of the utmost importance in the field of dance education and education in general. All of us want to matter, and that kind of attention makes us feel that we do. Our students deserve no less.

During my research, another aspect that struck me deeply was how committed Hill was to nurturing the art form and preserving its legacy, within the professional arena and in education. She was instrumental in the founding of New York City's High School of Performing Arts and the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, and she served on numerous and important boards and panels. She held her jobs at Bennington College and NYU simultaneously for nineteen years! She attended at least two performances a week, from loft spaces to the Metropolitan Opera House. She adjudicated companies all over the United States through the National Association for Regional Ballet. Her life was dance, and she gave selflessly to it. In her nineties, Hill said in an interview with Carl Wolz, "My profession's been very kind to me." She was "very kind" to the dance field.

Hill was extraordinary at making and building connections between people, between organizations, and within organizations. She was a master facilitator and communicator, able to draw competitors Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm onto the same faculty to work together. Collaborations and communication strengthen any field. When we can join together, we are stronger in numbers and influence. Hill was acutely aware of this. She drew on her deep connections in the dance field when the dance department at Juilliard was in grave danger of being eliminated during the move to Lincoln Center from Claremont Avenue (1969). Letters supporting Hill and the dance department arrived in droves to Peter Mennin, then president of Juilliard. It was a public relations nightmare, and so the

dance department was allowed to continue, in major part because of the connections Hill had developed.

I see Hill as a model for being a pioneer, for believing that modern dance would take hold, for believing that dance in higher education would take hold, and for believing that modern dance and ballet as a dual training program (initiated at Juilliard in 1951) would work. She was willing to experiment, to try out new ideas. At times, she had a supportive administration behind her, and other times not, yet she continued to push the envelope. Today, with struggling for tenure and possibly fighting to keep a dance program or department viable, it takes fortitude and a certain fearlessness to initiate change, yet our field has been founded on that. Its continuing health requires vision, change, and advancement, not merely maintaining the status quo.

Final Thoughts

The writing and promoting of my book has brought me back in touch with people with whom I had studied, danced and taught, and I have met people through the book who will continue to be a part of my life. This was an unexpected but very welcome result. The book has deepened my connections to the dance community and enriched my life. Some people say when they finish a book that they will not write another. Not me. I will not be starting tomorrow, but maybe next year.

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1. Martha Hill Video Project, 1990. Videotaped at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. July 1990. Dance Collection. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Teaching Dance in the Academy

Musings

Melanie Bales
Ohio State University

How nice it is to have this space to muse, provoke and converse across the field! From my perspective, the “field” of dance studies is a bit of a rough terrain, with peaks and valleys, chasms and bridges, deserts and swamps. The upside is that it is an exciting place with great possibilities and opportunities. The downside is that most of our students, graduate and undergraduate, have terribly limited views of it. While other disciplines have the luxury of assuming students come with a broad grounding in their chosen study, we are lucky if they have seen live concert dance. Scholars may fret over the unfair supremacy of “canonical” works under consideration, but our incoming students are unlikely to know what those are, much less to have seen them. If you haven’t seen much of Balanchine, how do you view Forsythe? With fresh “innocence” or uninformed naïveté? If you haven’t deeply and more or less consistently studied one movement language, how do you tackle another? To say that their knowledge is spotty – even graduate students, unless they have spent time in a dance-enriched region – is a large understatement. The challenge for us educators is to furnish background as the student forges on with his or her foreground; it is a messy job, and a game of fill in the blank and catch up.

The reader may notice that I have not separated the artist from the scholar so far. With Ann Cooper Albright (in the previous *Conversations*) I lament the separation of theory and practice, both in theory (values) and practice (curricula). But zooming out further from that consideration is the reality that dance students – despite their passion and energy – come to the academy needing both an overview and deeper experience. As the field expands, it also deepens. Today’s dance student needs to be more informed and more versatile than a couple of decades ago, when there were way fewer books and dance companies. I propose there is no other way to approach the study of dance than through the combining of theory and practice, experience and reflection, whether within the same class, or across several courses of study. By offering our students the chance to concurrently acquire various forms of knowledge – technical, compositional, theoretical, historical – dance studies will continue to progress as an integrated discipline. We (in my program, and I hope in yours) think we are doing it; but perhaps we need to remind ourselves, and our students, how it works.

In every technique class is embedded history, theory and composition. What is the lineage of the teacher? What kinds of markers does the teacher identify with - modern, postmodern, improvisation then, whose method? How does the teacher interact with the students? What is the dominant "subject" of the class - aesthetic values, historical reconstruction, somatic movement principles? History classes place performance and choreography in social-political-cultural contexts and offer fascinating narratives. What does the style say about the choreographer and why did she work in that genre? What are the fusions present in this dance? Why do you like that dancer, but not that one? Is this work even theater, or something else? The following words from an essay by Mark Franko are welcome in this regard:

All dances *embody* their own historical context; one cannot separate context from embodiment. Analysis of the conditions of production and reception also serve to historicize different embodiments of a dance.

(From Franco and Nordera (eds.)(2007), *Dance Discourses: Keywords in dance research*, p. 27, n.25)

Sometimes our students need to be pushed beyond the frame of the program or their personal histories; we should ask them the hard questions about their work. Who is it for? How does it respond to other people's work? Why are you doing it? They may not have the answers, but isn't it good to keep those things in mind as they go along? Perhaps they feel (mistakenly in my view) that putting themselves in broader contexts diminishes their "originality" and fails to preserve a certain sense of self. This is an attitude that pervades modern dance, so we should recognize and be patient with it, while assuring them that their individuality is not in danger. Shouldn't we instead remind them that creativity is invention through and by limitation, not freedom from limits or comparisons?

OK - so our students need more knowledge and they need to integrate various forms of it. How programs rise to the challenge will depend on the profile of the program, resources, politics and belief systems, all the real life stuff that takes energy and vision, luck and planning. An example from my program: a two-year jam-packed MA became an even more jam-packed MFA that eventually grew to a three-year course of study. As faculty were hired from professional companies armed with advanced degrees, they not only shared their knowledge from those experiences, they developed other kinds of expertise; again, wider and deeper at the same time. For a time we

offered an MA and an MFA, grappling with the identity of each in relation to the other. The scholarly component continued to expand in the MFA - most students welcomed the beefed-up history/theory/criticism component and became more articulate about their projects in performance, choreography, technology. I believe that our brand-new PhD program was more or less an outgrowth of this process. So yay! a success story in many ways, but not without disagreement, resistance, and continual questioning. I hope these two degrees continue to reflect the theory/practice ideal: our MFAs continuing to read, write and put their creative work in context, while the PhD students engage with their experiences in the studio or stage as they seek to advance dance scholarship through a written dissertation.

Three modes of engagement may provide a template for our students as well as describe pathways through the field:

Experience (dance, compose, see, read. . .)
Discern (genres, figures, contexts, identities. . .)
Create (write, perform, teach, choreograph. . .)

Sometimes one mode dominates our attention for a prolonged period and then morphs into another (ballet dancer turned teacher turned choreographer); sometimes all three modes are active concurrently (the life-long artist/scholar). What I think we want to avoid is letting our students believe that the fascinating background of the field they are studying is only there for them on a "need to know" basis. Anticipating the argument from, say, a composition student, that many wonderful choreographers lacked formal education, I say: go read about those wonderful choreographers! They educated themselves through their experiences with other figures, disciplines and by constant inquiry. Similarly, many exciting scholars from the recent past - among them you perhaps, reading this piece - have brought their histories as movers into dialogue with other histories and methodologies. I have found that working with students across boundaries gives them the satisfaction of seeing knowledge in one area inform another. Sometimes they can make the connection from one class to the other (something about Laban Effort theory changes their ballet technique) and other times I must be more explicit (let them know how my choreography reflects an experience with Baroque dance).

A word before concluding about the context of my remarks: I am speaking from the perspective of American university dance programs, each having its own legacy in regard to its location within

the university or college, the identities of the founders and the type of program (conservatory or liberal arts, big or small, etc.). As a group, American programs have some things in common in the ways they were established and maintained. In other parts of the world, dance as an art form, a theatrical tradition and a movement practice has intersected with dance/arts inquiry in creating programs shaped differently from U.S. institutions. I am curious to know more about the challenges of programs abroad. Many American university programs are still walking a line between H'Doubler's vision of dance as *Ausbildung*, and the idea of a department as a professional training ground. Our students should know something about this distinction as it pertains to the history of the program they inhabit. Also, the curricular chasm between practice and theory may be more or less difficult to overcome in a given department depending on how long and how deep the separation. Because in America the history of modern dance is so bound up with the history of dance in the university, I think knowing more about the institution per se is part of that critical overview.

One bright (if flawed) spot in the search for more exposure – technology to the rescue – YouTube! Despite the lack of citations, uneven quality of the clips, etc. there is a ton of dance out there. I can ask my ballet technique class to watch and comment on five international ballerinas dancing the same Balanchine solo. On the way to that assignment, they can see Korean popping and locking, a Bolshoi version of *Petrushka*, film footage of Tanaquil LeClercq, interviews with people who worked with Jerome Robbins, and performances of Argentine tango. Ditto for blogs and online reviews – opportunity to talk about dance with peers. As with the information on the Internet, it all takes sorting and sifting, skepticism and discernment. They will need our help.

Looking In, Looking Out: Perspectives on Entering the Academy

Melanie S. Aceto
University at Buffalo

I entered the academy with three days notice. I was offered the job on a Friday and was asked if I could be there Monday, as classes had already begun. In two days, I packed a one-bedroom apartment into storage, packed a two-door Honda Civic solid, and drove seven hours upstate – never to return. I didn't know at the time that my one semester offer would turn into a full year offer, which would lead to another one year position at a neighboring university, segueing into a tenure track position. I was a member of the academy before I could catch my breath!

I think because of my "I never thought I'd be here so soon" frame of mind, I am keenly and simultaneously aware of two perspectives in relation to academia: the perspective of the dance artist on the outside looking in on the academy, and the perspective of an academy member looking out.

Looking in from the outside

Dance peers outside the academy assume that all of my artistic and financial worries must be gone now that I am on faculty at a university. They respond with amazement and envy, wondering how in the world I landed this "gig", looking at me as though I've "figured it out". They give the impression that they are suddenly considering the same "solution".

I can see how, to an independent artist, teaching in a university appears to be a dream job: regular and sufficient pay, free rehearsal space, dancers, access to funding, access to other artists, summers off, healthcare...what more could an artist want? It would seem that any artist with a position in the academy must be without complaint.

For the most part, my peers are right - teaching in academia is wonderful. It is rewarding on a daily, semester and yearly basis. You see a student grow technically and mature as an artist through

their four years under your tutelage; very different from teaching open classes in a major city.

The school calendar is therapeutic. There is nothing more satisfying than to be able to reassess three times per year. Each fall semester brings a new excitement for possibilities. Each spring semester allows for re-prioritizing; a second chance for goals not achieved in the fall and the creation of new goals for the spring. Summer is a blessing – an opportunity for rest or productivity. You can choose to do more, create more, make more money, write more, etc. You can use it to catch up on all the things that you couldn't get done during the year or you can use it to rest – to reward yourself for a job well done. And, summer is long enough so that you can really do all of these!

As a choreographer, I find it much easier to make dances, to create, to do my work in academia than as an independent artist. My materials (my body, dancers, studio space) don't cost money here and are relatively abundant. But there are also challenges. Working with student dancers, requires extra rehearsal time and patience and, after all of that work, they graduate! In order to utilize work for professional venues that is danced by student dancers, I find one has to develop exquisite directing skills, coaching the students so well that the "student" is undetectable.

Life is more efficient in academia. I take class, teach class, choreograph, have meetings, eat (and sometime sleep) all at the same place. There is little time lost in transition. For me and other over-achievers, this does create the irresistible urge to schedule nose to nose. It somehow seems perfectly acceptable to get out of class at 1:30, have a meeting from 1:30 to 3:00 and then schedule a rehearsal for 3:15. The opportunities to collaborate in academia with composers, musicians, visual artists, writers, poets, filmmakers abound – and everyone is within spitting distance.

Artist as teacher

My first year teaching, I remember feeling like I was just on a long weekend away from the City and I was simply sharing what I knew. Teaching came easy because I had so much to share. Thankfully, this sense of sharing has stayed with me. As an artist with one foot still in NYC, (often it is more of a mental foot), I feel like I am here sharing the movement, the skills and awareness of what my students will need when they graduate. I feel a strong sense of truth. What I am telling them, teaching them, sharing with them is true and real, and they will be well prepared when they arrive at their next destination. I

know that continuing to show my work and to perform professionally perpetuates this excitement for sharing. If I had stopped performing, I think I would have run out of "share" very soon. It is through performing and showing my work that I come back to class, back to academia, excited and ready to share.

What I couldn't have anticipated

I am a better dancer and performer because of my teaching. I am forced to be very clear in my work, in my demonstrations and descriptions of what it is I am doing physically. My dancing is cleaner and clearer and the quality is richer. Teaching feeds my performing because I am performing every day in class. I come to class with performance energy and a desire for the audiences' (my class) attention. Teaching is my coping mechanism for performance nerves. When I perform I tell myself that I am simply sharing with the audience what I've made; then it feels like teaching, and I am not nervous when I teach. It is amazing how teaching relates so closely to performing. And I find it is just as fulfilling.

The nature of dance

As dancers/artists, we continue to train by taking technique class, never losing the perspective of being a student. When I take someone else's class, I am a student – a better student now that I am a teacher than I ever was when I was only a student!

The student-teacher relationship in dance is unique. The fact that we are casually dressed with bare feet brings teacher and student to a common ground. The hierarchy of modern dance is subtle. Instead of standing in front of the class to demonstrate, I often stand in the middle of class or teach in a circle, creating a sense of community and equality. We are also physically close to the students in technique classes, allowing the breakdown of barriers often experienced in other subjects where students are separated from the professor by desks or technology. The reality of the field is that a 20 year old and a 45 year old may dance in the same company, so this common ground feels appropriate.

The teaching of dance requires individual attention and feedback, so there is continual interaction with the students. Not only does this provide for rapid student learning, it provides me with instantaneous pedagogical feedback. I can see immediately from the actions of the student if my feedback was clear, assimilated and effective. Dance is fortunate; by nature, the classes are small enough so that you get to know the students on an individual basis.

Looking out from the inside

Faculty work hard. They juggle the duties of their teaching and creative activity, their research, relationships with students and colleagues, service to the academy, family and more. As is human nature, faculty also have a lot of complaints. They complain about meetings, committee work, demanding students, incompetent students, too many students, not enough funding to support their work, lack of resources, not earning enough, the cost of health care, parking, their department chair...the list goes on.

The good news is that the great majority of faculty I know seem to be engaged in their responsibilities, rising above all of the complaints, restrictions and labor of the academy. They figure out how to thrive in this energizing, but challenging academic situation. At times, they look out and see the energy and passion of independent artists on the outside. There is an envy of their apparent freedom; freedom from students and meetings and academic service. Seeing the artist on the outside ignites doubt, if only momentarily, in artists within the academy as to whether they are in the "right place" and causes them to question their choice to do their work within an institution.

I think a position in the academy is controversial for someone in the arts. It raises questions about one's ability to continue to create, having to divide their focus between their art and the rigors of teaching, research and the academy. There is a stigma of leaving the real world and entering an institution. This is exaggerated with dance. There are only a few coveted dance faculty positions in New York City, the dance capital of the world. The vast majority must leave the dance capital and enter an academy isolated from professional performances, continued training and the dance fervor of a city. There is a reality in becoming out-of-touch with what is going on in the dance world once you leave a city dance center. One has to work extra hard in order to stay current.

Keeping perspective

Because I am only in my third year within the tenure track academy, I feel I have the ability to see both from the outside looking in and from the inside looking out. I understand the allure of a faculty position to an independent artist, and I equally understand the frustrations of faculty wanting more and wanting to do less within the academy. I think the happiest, and most successful, academicians are those who have utilized and arranged both the opportunities and the limitations that academia has to offer. I can now comfortably use the phrase "take advantage of" because I realize that is exactly why the

resources are there – for me to take advantage of them. Because I take advantage of so much the academy has to offer, I am more accepting of the limitations that the institution presents.

I hope to maintain this outlook and encourage it in other faculty. My work and my students are what bring me joy. By continuing to work as an artist while teaching in the academy, I hope to keep a healthy perspective, remembering to look in from the outside and out from the inside.

“I usually don’t yell, but I can become terribly threatening. I’ve actually hit dancers. I’ve bitten little fingers that stuck out too much. I’ve slapped wrists. I’ve threatened to throw people out of the window. People don’t usually learn unless there’s a little pain involved.”

Paul Taylor in ‘A Conversation with Paul Taylor and George Tacit,’ by Tobi Tobias, *Dance Magazine* (April 1985): p.57)

Ethics

Ethics 101 **Naomi Jackson** **Arizona State University**

Welcome back to the column on dance and ethics. In my first entry I gave my top 5 reasons for caring how ethics relates to dance. This time I will provide some basics about moral philosophy. Such a foundation allows us to become more educated in certain core concepts of ethics, provides important means of understanding how people usually make moral judgments, and provides choices about what might be more acceptable and better behavior for each of us individually and collectively in the dance field.

What is morality anyway?

How should we draw the line between right and wrong?

What are good pedagogical practices in the dance studio?

First, it is important to understand that the field of ethics is often divided into 3 distinguishable, though interconnected subject areas, namely, metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Each of these addresses different kinds of questions and concerns, as reflected by the questions listed above.

First is *metaethics*, which asks the “big” questions about the fundamental nature of ethical judgments, including what motivates us to be moral, where our ethical principles come from, and whether they are universal or not. Many of us, whether consciously or not, follow some kind of ethical system that reflects specific strands of thinking in metaethics that date back at least to Plato. These traditions may stress, for instance, the eternal, independent nature of moral values issuing from God’s will. Or they may emphasize the invented, relative nature of moral values, emanating from varied human nature. There are a variety of perspectives possible, as well as fascinating debates over the roles of emotion and reason in motivating moral

assessments. If, for instance, I make the statement "biting dancers is wrong" (Paul Taylor, as stated above, has claimed to have bitten little fingers that stuck out too much), am I making a rational assessment or only expressing my feelings? Hmm. Food for thought. Any takers?

Second is *normative ethics*. This is the branch of ethics devoted to the development of moral theories that specifically address what actions, policies, institutions, etc. should be morally acceptable. What should be the criterion for moral conduct? How should we draw the line between right and wrong? Answers to these questions also have a long history of falling into one of three different groupings, which I will briefly list here and expand on in the next column. These are: Virtue Theories, which are person - or character-centered, Deontological Theories, which are act-centered, and Consequentialist Theories, which are outcome-centered. For those of you, for instance, who thought that it was okay if Paul Taylor bit his dancers' little fingers if it made them better dancers, then you are following consequentialist logic. If you thought that biting the dancers' fingers was excusable because Taylor is basically a good guy who cares about his dancers, then you are following virtue theory. And if you thought that biting dancers' fingers is just plain wrong, period (regardless of intentions or results) then you are a deontological ethicist. To be continued.

Finally is the category of *applied ethics*, which consists of the analysis of specific, often controversial, moral issues, attempting to apply ethical theory to real-life situations. Common topics falling within the discipline include abortion and the death penalty. Recently, applied ethical issues have been divided into such realms as medical ethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, and bioethics. Focusing on the question "What are good pedagogical practices in the dance studio?" for instance, would fall under the realm of applied ethics in terms of dance, especially if we zoomed in on a specific incident. So, to return to our example, if we closely examined the case involving Paul Taylor, we would be functioning primarily in the realm of applied ethics. And clearly, as is so often the case, there would be many competing perspectives, depending on the normative ethical theories being applied.

Interestingly, one modern approach that strives to resolve conflicts in applied ethics is called "case-based" reasoning, or casuistry. This

approach strives to avoid starting with theory and applying it to a situation, and instead argues to examine the immediate facts of the case before drawing on theoretical principles. It can often lead to consensus in terms of the best moral decision to be made in a given instance, even if people disagree on the reasons why. Thus, for instance, after analyzing the specific instance in which Taylor bit a particular dancer's finger, including his motivations, the dancer's reactions, how the choreography was affected, etc. etc., it may well be that everyone agrees that it was a poor choice, even if they don't agree on how come. They may just all agree that in that specific instance it may have been better to indicate a change in finger location by a different method.

'Dance ethics' here we come! (I mean, why should business and medicine have all the fun?)

Next time: More on normative ethical theories and how they inform the dance field.

Suggested Reading:

The Elements of Moral Philosophy by James Rachels and Stuart Rachels, McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages; 5th edition (April 24, 2006).

SOCIETY OF DANCE HISTORY SCHOLARS

Awards for Outstanding Scholarship 2008

The **de la Torre Bueno Prize®** went to Jacqueline Shea Murphy for 'The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance History' (University of Minnesota Press, 2007). Her book is a path breaking historical and ethnographic study of Native American dances from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries. As part of their citation, the judges noted: "This revelatory text allows readers to appreciate the extensive range and prominence of dance in Native American cultures as an aspect of larger constellations of social, spiritual, and artistic practices." Jacqueline Shea Murphy is an associate professor in the Dance Department at the University of California, Riverside.

The de la Torre Bueno Prize® is awarded annually to an outstanding book published in the English language that advances the field of dance studies. Named after José Rollins de la Torre Bueno, the first university press editor to develop a list of titles in dance studies, the Bueno Prize has recognized scholarly excellence in the field since 1973.

Two authors received special citations: Janice Ross for Anna Halprin: Experience as Dance (University of California Press, 2007), a biography of the pioneering West Coast dancer; and Sydney Hutchinson for From Quebradita to Duranguense: Dance in Mexican American Youth Culture (University of Arizona Press, 2007), a study of Mexican American popular music and dance forms. Janice Ross is an associate professor in the Drama Department, Stanford University. Sydney Hutchinson is a research associate at the University of Arizona's Southwest Center as well as a doctoral candidate in ethnomusicology at New York University,

The **Gertrude Lippincott Award** for an outstanding English-language article published in dance studies was shared by two authors: Priya Srinivasan for "The Bodies Beneath the Smoke or What's Behind the Cigarette Poster: Unearthing Kinesthetic Connections in American Dance History" (published in Discourse in Dance, Ramsey Burt and Susan Leigh Foster, editors, Volume 4 Issue 1 2007, pp. 7-48); and Rebekah Kowal for "Dance Travels: 'Walking With Pearl'" (published

News

in *Performance Research*, 12(2), pp. 85-94, 2007). Priya Srinivasan is an assistant professor in the Dance Department, University of California, Riverside. Rebekah Kowal is an assistant professor in the Dance Department, University of Iowa.

The Gertrude Lippincott Award is named in honor of its donor, a devoted teacher of modern dance in the Midwest and mentor to many students.

Selma Jeanne Cohen Awards, which recognize excellence in dance scholarship by SDHS members who are graduate students, went to Elizabeth Arden Thomas of Stanford University, Victoria Phillips Geduld of Columbia University, and Victoria Fortuna of Northwestern University.

The Selma Jeanne Cohen Awards were inaugurated by the Society of Dance History Scholars at its 1995 conference. The Selma Jeanne Cohen Award aims to encourage graduate student members of SDHS by recognizing excellence in dance scholarship. Up to three awards are offered at each conference. Each award includes an invitation to present a paper at the annual conference, waiver of the registration fee for that conference, and a grant to help defray costs of attending the conference. Awards are based on the originality of the research, the rigor of the argument, and the clarity of the writing.

In 2006 the Society of Dance History Scholars initiated Graduate Student Travel Grants, aimed at encouraging broad graduate student participation in its annual conference. This year a grant was awarded to Nyama McCarthy Brown of Temple University to attend the SDHS conference.

In addition to the presentation of annual awards, George Dorris and Richard Long were named **Honorary Fellows of SDHS**. George Dorris was honored for his work as one of the founders of SDHS and as co-founder and co-editor of the important scholarly journal, *Dance Chronicle*. His citation read, in part: "George Dorris has worked steadily and tirelessly for his entire career in the service of the field of dance history." Richard Long's citation included the following remarks: "As a longstanding member of SDHS and a renowned scholar of the arts, Professor Long has inspired and supported the careers of innumerable members of the academy in Dance Studies, American Studies, and African American letters. His 1989 book *The Black Tradition in American Dance* has set a standard for historiography that honors the past and points to vibrant future possibilities."

SDHS Awards

The Society of Dance History Scholars is proud to offer awards for scholarship in the field of dance studies: the de la Torre Bueno Prize®, the Gertrude Lippincott Award, the Selma Jeanne Cohen Award, and the Graduate Student Travel Grant. Winners are announced at the SDHS annual conference.

- **de la Torre Bueno Prize®**,
Awarded Annually to the Best Book in the Field
- **Gertrude Lippincott Award**,
Awarded Annually to the Best Article in the Field
- **Selma Jeanne Cohen Award**,
Awarded to up to Three Students for Exemplary Conference Papers
- **Graduate Student Travel Grant**,
Granted to Subsidize Student Travel to Conferences
- **Distinguished in Dance Award**,
Awarded to individuals whose professional or scholarly work has made a significant contribution to the field of dance

For further details and submission please go to our website at www.sdhs.org.

Extension Of Deadline For 2009 Conference Proposals: December 1, 2008

Call for Proposals

The Society of Dance History Scholars Annual Conference
Stanford and San Francisco, California June 19-22, 2009

New deadline for proposals: December 1, 2008

Further information: http://www.sdhs.org/upcoming_conferences.html

Topographies: Sites, Bodies, and Technologies

The Society of Dance History Scholars invites submissions for its 2009 conference, "Topographies: Sites, Bodies, and Technologies," to be held at Stanford University and downtown San Francisco dance studios, June 19-22, 2009. Inspired by the idea of "topographies" as the mapping of the physical features of a place or landscape, we invite presentations from scholars and artists that investigate moving bodies as they occupy, mobilize, and traverse diverse terrains.

While we welcome submissions on any new research in dance studies, we especially encourage papers that are organized around the conference theme of the mapping of sites, bodies, and technologies. Possible questions for investigation include:

- How do we dance our locale?
- How does place, marked by history and national struggles, change how we dance?
- How can dance and new technologies create new sites of encounter?
- Can we imagine different, even fantastic geographies of movement and exchange?

This year's conference offers a unique opportunity to explore the San Francisco Bay Area. Accommodations in Palo Alto will be available

for rates between \$89 and \$150 per night. Transportation between Stanford and San Francisco will be provided at a low cost. Please join us for an encounter with different sites, bodies, and technologies in motion and transformation.

We would like to extend special thanks to Mrs. Alfred S. Wilsey, Mr. Warren Hellman, and the Stanford University School of Humanities and Sciences and Department of Drama for supporting the 2009 SDHS Conference.

Other Topographies: Out-of-Site at ODC Dance Commons

To extend our artist/scholar dialogues, in addition to meeting at Stanford University, our presentations, roundtables, and performances on Sunday, June 21st will be held at ODC Dance Commons in San Francisco. We will move our conferencing through the topographies that mark the dance of the northern California bay and coastal regions.

Proposal Formats

We encourage proposals for papers, panels, and roundtables. We will also consider alternate formats such as seminars, topic-specific research groups, reading groups, forums, workshops dance inventions or interventions, demonstrations, or formats you may propose that rethink or redo the standard conventions for presenting scholarship, choreography, and performance. We stress the involvement of the dance community and all participants in the infrastructure of the creation and staging of dances. We invite artists and scholar/artists to make works-in-progress that we could encounter together; we invite engineers, scientists, and media artists to join us and present on their work in new media and technologies of motion. Interdisciplinary artists and researchers who experiment with motion, design, and/or corporeal studies are welcome to submit panels, papers, and roundtables. We hope to also have screenings of vintage dance on film and experimental dance media works.

Please note the new deadline for proposals is December 1, 2008. Address all conference proposal questions to SDHS's Account Executive, Ashanti Pretlow, at ashanti@sdhs.org. We look forward to meeting you in 2009 in California.

Topographies Committee Members

The conference committee members include: Sherril Dodds, University of Surrey; Anne Fiskvik, University of Trondheim; Carrie Gaiser Casey, University of California Berkeley; Cindy Garcia, University of Minnesota; Anita Gonzalez, State University of New York, New Paltz; Anthea Kraut, University of California Riverside; Katherine Mezur, University of Washington Seattle (chair); Jacqueline Shea Murphy, University of California Riverside; Sara Rubidge, University of

Chichester; Priya Srinivasan, University of California Riverside; Arden Thomas, Stanford University; Yutian Wong, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Graduate Awards and Grants for 2009

In recognition of Selma Jeanne Cohen's great contributions to dance history, the Society of Dance History Scholars inaugurated an award in her name at its 1995 conference. The **Selma Jeanne Cohen Award** aims to encourage graduate student members of SDHS by recognizing excellence in dance scholarship. Up to three awards will be offered at each conference. Each award includes an invitation to present a paper at the annual conference, waiver of the registration fee for that conference, and a grant to help defray costs of attending the conference. Awards are based on the originality of the research, the rigor of the argument, and the clarity of the writing.

Papers submitted in competition for a **Selma Jeanne Cohen Award** must be based on unpublished research or interpretation and must be designed for oral delivery within twenty minutes, including use of audiovisual aids. (Papers running eight double-spaced pages are ideal.)

Students interested in applying for the Selma Jeanne Cohen Award should follow the regular guidelines for conference submission and check the appropriate box on the submission form. If proposals are accepted by the program committee, a full-text version of the paper will be due by **15 March 2009** at the SDHS Office. The full-text version should be sent via email to sdhs@primemanagement.net.

The Society of Dance History Scholars offers **Graduate Student Travel Grants**, aimed at encouraging broad graduate student participation in its annual conference. Each year three grants will be made to graduate students to help defray the costs of attending the annual conference. Applications for the next round of Graduate Student Travel Grants are due at the SDHS office by **15 March 2009**. Please download the application form from www.sdhs.org. Although postal submissions may be sent to the SDHS office at 3416 Primm Lane, Birmingham AL 35216, email submissions to sdhs@primemanagement.net are strongly encouraged.

Any student member of SDHS enrolled in a graduate degree program and engaged in dance research is eligible. Students need not have a paper accepted for presentation at the conference in order to apply. Although applications from students presenting papers are encouraged, applications from students interested in attending a Working Group or simply listening and learning also are welcome. In all cases, applicants must persuade the evaluation committee that attending the conference will further their research. There is no presumption that

presenting, participating in a Working Group, or simply attending is the most grant-worthy application.

Individuals are eligible to receive a Graduate Student Travel Grant only once during their graduate career. Although student members of SDHS may apply for the Travel Grant and the Selma Jeanne Cohen Prize or Gertrude Lippincott Prize in the same year, they may not accept both a travel grant and a prize in the same year. Applicants must be current (paid-up) members of SDHS at the time of applying for the Graduate Student Travel Grant. Contact the SDHS accounts manager at sdhs@primemanagement.net to verify membership status.

For additional information on these grants and other awards, consult the SDHS website at www.sdhs.org.

FACULTY POSITION OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

Position: Full-time, Tenure Track Faculty Member
Dance Department, Columbia College Chicago

Start Date: August 16, 2009

Essential Functions: Teach and mentor undergraduates in dance history and theory, cultural perspectives in dance, and at least one other subject area (dance technique, dancemaking, improvisation, somatic practices, pedagogy, concert production, technology, and/or music for dance). Incumbent will serve on college and departmental committees, may participate in choreographing for and/or producing academic concerts, will advise students within the major, and will engage, with distinction, in creative and/or scholarly activities in the field.

Qualifications: Terminal degree (PhD or MFA). Candidates should demonstrate broad knowledge of dance history and theory, with depth in areas of focus. The ideal candidate will be experienced in ethnographic methodologies and demonstrate a sustained interest in race and/or ethnicity as materialized in dance contexts. Prior teaching experience at the college/university level and a strong commitment to teaching undergraduates are essential. Columbia College Chicago encourages qualified female, deaf, GLBT, disabled, international & minority classified individuals to apply for all positions.

Application Procedure: A complete application will include: a letter of interest that addresses the candidate's qualifications for the position as well as a statement of their teaching philosophy as a scholar/teacher, vita, and three references (names and addresses with phone numbers are sufficient). Applications will be accepted in hard copy format only. All materials should be sent to:

Richard Woodbury, Chair, Faculty Search Committee
Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago
1306 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605

Application Deadline: December 1st, 2008

Columbia College Chicago's Dance Center is one of eight departments in the School of Fine and Performing Arts: Art & Design, Arts Entertainment and Management, Dance, Dance/Movement Therapy, Fiction Writing, Music, Photography and Theater. The Dance Department emphasizes contemporary dance training in improvisation, composition and modern dance technique, with supporting technique training in classical ballet and various dance styles and forms; along with substantial studies in dance history, cross-cultural perspectives, contemporary trends in dance, pedagogy, somatics and kinesiology, rhythm and music for dancers, performance and choreographic projects, internships, and dance production. The program, with 200 majors, offers both BA and BFA degrees in Dance. Our faculty of eight full-time and 30 part-time teachers is comprised of accomplished dance professionals who are active in the regional and national dance scene. We host guest artist/teachers each semester, recently including Reggie Wilson, Lar Lubovitch, Joe Goode, Wendy Rogers, David Gordon, Simone Forti, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Danny Buraczeski, Millicent Hodson, and Rebecca Lazier. The Dance Center produces an internationally recognized presenting series in our 272-seat, state-of-the-art black box theater. Recent companies and artists include White Oak Dance Project, Chandraleka, Joe Goode Performance Group, Doug Varone and Dancers, Stephen Petronio Company, Susan Marshall and Company, Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, Random Dance Company, Australian Dance Theater, and Urban Bush Woman. Our facility includes six dance studios plus a theater, a sound/media lab, two student lounges, a media library, and an experienced support and technical staff. For more information, please visit our website at www.dancecenter.org.

Columbia College Chicago is an undergraduate and graduate college whose principal commitment is to provide a comprehensive educational opportunity in the arts, communications, and public information, within the context of an enlightened liberal education. An urban institution, our students reflect the economic, racial, cultural and educational diversity of contemporary America.

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